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# [***Sizing Up Candidates Who Are Competitive in Iowa***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y4B-4W61-DXY4-X0Y3-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Reid J. Epstein and Adriana RamiÄ‡

**Body**

A historically large Democratic presidential field has been narrowed to 11, with these seven candidates mounting competitive efforts in Iowa. If history and the laws of mathematics are any guide, no more than four of them will emerge from the caucuses on Monday with a plausible case to be the Democratic nominee against President Trump.

Public polling averages show Senator Bernie Sanders and former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. atop the field, with Senator Elizabeth Warren and former Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., bundled close behind. Yet there are few close observers of Iowa politics who feel confident in their prognostications. Other than a widespread belief that Mr. Sanders will place first or, at worst, second, the other three leading candidates could each place anywhere from first to fourth without it being a shock.

Iowa awards just 41 delegates to the Democratic National Convention, a tiny fraction of the more than 1,900 required to become the party's nominee. But all the candidates competing here agree that whoever wins, or at least overperforms expectations, will suddenly have momentum as the field moves to New Hampshire, Nevada, South Carolina and beyond.

Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Former vice president, 77

The choice of establishment Democrats since he entered the race, Mr. Biden will aim to overcome a substandard organization in Iowa and the state's historical skepticism of the next-in-line candidate. His biggest advantage is the idea, put forth by his campaign and allies and supported by most public polling of swing states, that he would do best against President Trump in a general election.

But Iowa has historically rewarded campaigns that spend months doing the hard work of organizing and creating a sense of excitement -- two areas where Mr. Biden lags the field. Alone among the candidates, he has a super PAC pouring money into Iowa TV ads backing his candidacy.

Mr. Biden is also the only candidate who can perhaps survive a poor showing -- provided he maintains his strength with black voters.

Days spent in Iowa: 58

Money spent on TV: $4.09 million

Iowa polling average: 22%

National polling average: 27%

Bernie Sanders

Senator from Vermont, 78

He almost won Iowa four years ago and is poised to claim what would be a seismic victory Monday night. Leading in the recent polls, Mr. Sanders has drawn big crowds to rallies when he's been able to slip away from the impeachment trial over the last week.

Popular especially with ***working-class*** voters and young people, Mr. Sanders's biggest advantage may be that he figures to reach the 15 percent viability threshold in more caucuses than any of his opponents, giving him more chances to accrue delegates than anyone else.

Days spent in Iowa: 58

Money spent on TV: $10.1 million

Iowa polling average: 22%

National polling average: 24%

Pete Buttigieg

Former mayor of South Bend, Ind., 38

Regardless of where he finishes in Iowa, Mr. Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., has cemented his status as the breakout star of the 2020 presidential campaign. The youngest major candidate in the race at 38, his support is strongest among Iowa's white-haired set, particularly in the state's rural areas.

With the impeachment trial confining the senators to Washington on weekdays, Mr. Buttigieg has had an opportunity to be the only candidate on the ground in a lot of places on his final barnstorming tour. He's also been the most aggressive in attacking his rivals, denouncing Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders by name in the last few days.

Mr. Buttigieg has a lot riding on a strong Iowa finish -- without one, he has less of a chance to do well in subsequent states.

Days spent in Iowa: 62

Money spent on TV: $9.99 million

Iowa polling average: 18%

National polling average: 7%

Elizabeth Warren

Senator from Massachusetts, 70

There was a time this fall when Ms. Warren was the Iowa front-runner. She led the field in the Des Moines Register's September poll, then got eclipsed first by Mr. Buttigieg and then by Mr. Sanders. Her crowds in the final days were smaller than they'd been months earlier. Polls have shown her slipping, with even some of her own supporters doubtful that she'd have the best chances to defeat Mr. Trump.

Still, she is widely said to have the strongest field organization, which can boost a candidate on caucus night. She figures to be strongest among college-educated women in the state's suburban enclaves.

Days spent in Iowa: 56

Money spent on TV: $6.14 million

Iowa polling average: 15%

National polling average: 14%

Amy Klobuchar

Senator from Minnesota, 59

Did you hear she's from Minnesota, the state just to Iowa's north? Ms. Klobuchar's bet is that Iowans will pick someone who stresses the just-like-them argument in searching for a moderate candidate who can carry the Midwest.

But she's never broken double digits in Iowa's polling, leaving her well behind the top four candidates. Ms. Klobuchar would declare Iowa a victory if she sneaks into the top four, especially if she winds up ahead of Mr. Biden or Ms. Warren.

<. But she has run a very Iowa-centric campaign and a poor finish there risks her chances of advancing in the other states.

Days spent in Iowa: 67

Money spent on TV: $3.74 million

Iowa polling average: 8%

National polling average: 5%

Andrew Yang

Former tech executive, 45

The outsider's outsider, Mr. Yang has used his pitch for a universal basic income and the perils of automation to keep himself in the race longer than far more established and famous politicians. He's spent the most days in Iowa of any remaining candidate, even though he's operated with far less media attention.

His supporters skew male more than anyone else in the field and are likely to shift to Bernie Sanders, or just go home, in precincts where Mr. Yang fails to meet the 15 percent viability threshold.

Days spent in Iowa: 71

Money spent on TV: $6.52 million

Iowa polling average: 3%

National polling average: 4%

Tom Steyer

Former hedge fund investor, 62

Since joining the race in July, Mr. Steyer used his billions to blanket the Iowa TV airwaves for months. After spending two years pushing for impeaching President Trump, he's focused his presidential campaign on protecting the environment. Iowa isn't his strongest state -- his polling numbers are much better in Nevada and South Carolina -- but he is widely known because of his pre-campaign work to turn out the Democratic vote in the state's college towns.

Days spent in Iowa: 47

Money spent on TV: $14.27 million

Iowa polling average: 3%

National polling average: 2%

Other candidates

Other candidates who campaigned heavily in Iowa last year have shifted their focus from Iowa to New Hampshire. Tulsi Gabbard invested in billboards all over the state. Michael Bennet moved most of his resources from Iowa to New Hampshire. Deval Patrick visited Iowa once and hasn't been back. Michael R. Bloomberg is skipping the first four states and has focused his TV advertising on other states. None of them are likely to make much of a dent on Monday, though they may have a handful of supporters caucus for them.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/01/us/politics/03-iowa-preview.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/01/us/politics/03-iowa-preview.html)

**Graphic**

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[***Election Jars Liberals' Vision of Multiracial Bloc***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:619R-H6X1-JBG3-638K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Democrats may need to rethink their strategy as the class complexities and competing desires of Latino and Asian-American demographic groups become clear.

The proposition seemed tailor-made for one of the nation's most diverse and liberal states. California officials asked voters to overturn a 24-year-old ban on affirmative action in education, employment and contracting.

The state political and cultural establishment worked as one to pass this ballot measure. The governor, a senator, members of Congress, university presidents and civil rights leaders called it a righting of old wrongs.

''Women and people of color are still at a sharp disadvantage by almost every measure,'' The Los Angeles Times wrote in an editorial endorsement.

Yet on Election Day, the proposition failed by a wide margin, 57 percent to 43 percent, and Latino and Asian-American voters played a key role in defeating it. The outcome captured the gap between the vision laid out by the liberal establishment in California, which has long imagined the creation of a multiracial, multiethnic coalition that would embrace progressive causes, and the sentiments of many Black, Latino, Asian and Arab voters.

Variations of this puzzle could be found in surprising corners of the nation on Election Day, as slices of ethnic and racial constituencies peeled off and cut against Democratic expectations.

''We should not think of demography as destiny,'' said Professor Omar Wasow, who studies politics and voting patterns at Princeton University. ''These groups are far more heterogeneous than a monolith and campaigns often end up building their own idiosyncratic coalition.''

Asian-American Californians opposed the affirmative action measure in large numbers. A striking number of East and South Asian students have gained admission to elite state universities, and their families spoke to reporters of their fear that their children would suffer if merit in college selection was given less weight. That battle carried echoes of another that raged the past few years in New York City, where a white liberal mayor's efforts to increase the number of Black and Latino students in selective high schools angered working- and middle-class South and East Asian families whose children have gained admission to the schools in large numbers.

''There's more texture to California blue politics than you might think,'' said Lanhee Chen, a fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution at Stanford University and policy director for Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential run. ''Identity politics only go so far. There is a sense on affirmative action that people resent being categorized by progressives.''

Latinos, too, appear sharply divided. Prominent Latino nonprofit and civil rights organizations endorsed the affirmative action proposition even as all 14 of California's majority-Latino counties voted it down.

Latinos make up more than half of San Bernardino County's population, although significantly fewer turn out to vote. More residents there voted on the affirmative action proposition than for president, rejecting it by a margin of 28 percentage points. In rural Imperial County, in the southeastern corner of the state, 85 percent of the population is Latino. The voters there who gave Joseph R. Biden Jr. a nearly 27-point margin of victory went against the affirmative action measure by 16 percentage points.

The results suggest that Democrats may need to adjust their strategy as the complexities of class, generation and experience, and the competing desires of these demographic groups become clear. Since the dawn of the 21st century, it has become commonplace for party leaders to talk of a rising demographic tide that is destined to lift the Democrats to dominance. That liberal coalition is seen as resting on a bedrock of upper-middle-class white voters, alongside working- and middle-class Black, Latino and Asian voters.

In broad strokes, that narrative held. Black voters, along with a shift in the white suburban vote, played a pivotal role in delivering Georgia to the Democratic column (although so closely that a statewide audit is taking place). So, too, Black voters in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia voted overwhelmingly for Democrats -- as did well-to-do majority-white suburbs -- and gave Pennsylvania and therefore the national election to President-elect Biden.

In Arizona, Latino voters piled up large margins for Mr. Biden and tipped the state narrowly into the Democratic column for the first time since 1996. Representative Ruben Gallego, the Democratic congressman from Phoenix who is a former Marine and a Harvard graduate, noted that several decades of aggressive tactics by Republican governors and white sheriffs had stirred activism among the young Latinos who dominate politics there.

''The Republicans caught Latino lightning in the bottle in Florida and South Texas, but not here,'' Mr. Gallego said. ''We are very politicized. It's just important that white liberals don't impose their thoughts and policies on us.''

Aside from those successes, however, the election presented complications wrapped one inside another for Democrats. In Texas and Florida, in California and in Colorado (where New York Times exit polls found that roughly 40 percent of white voters and 38 percent of Latino voters cast ballots for President Trump), the assumption that people of color would vote as a liberal Democratic bloc often proved illusory.

John Judis is a liberal writer and scholar who in 2002 co-wrote ''The Emerging Democratic Majority,'' which became a seminal text for those who saw the Democratic Party as a political tide rising. He has since backed off that a touch.

'''People of color' is a term that's been adopted by the cultural left as a way of arguing that if these groups proportionately voted Democratic in the past, they will do so in the future,'' Mr. Judis said. ''I don't see how you can make the argument.''

Viewing the Latino vote as monolithic fails, of course, to capture the often sharply varying politics and ethnicities of people hailing from nearly two dozen countries on two continents. The same is true when examining the behavior of Asian-American voters.

Philadelphia offers a snapshot: A record number of Latinos in the city, which is heavily Puerto Rican and Dominican, turned out and buoyed Mr. Biden. Yet exit polls also found that Latino voter support there for Mr. Trump leapt to 35 percent this year from 22 percent in 2016. In Milwaukee, an analysis by Urban Milwaukee reported an uptick in the Latino ***working-class*** vote for Mr. Trump, although a majority still favored Mr. Biden.

Along the Rio Grande in Texas, where some Mexican-American families, known as Tejanos, have roots that extend back four centuries, the vote margins shifted dramatically in 2020. Latino turnout soared, almost entirely to the benefit of Mr. Trump. Although Mr. Biden obtained more total votes in the four counties of the Rio Grande Valley than Hillary Clinton did in 2016, his margins of victory fell sharply.

The reasons offered for these results include poor field organizing by the Democratic Party, the cultural conservatism of some older Tejano families, and the fact that many in these often-dense counties find good-paying jobs with the Border Patrol.

Many voters, too, worried that Mr. Biden and the Democrats would impose a new coronavirus-driven shutdown, with dire consequences for the many thousands who own and labor for small businesses. Prof. Omar Valerio-Jimenez grew up in the Rio Grande Valley and teaches history at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Several of his old friends and cousins voted for Mr. Trump.

''They faced this challenge: Do they continue to open our stores and restaurants and churches, which lets us pay our bills,'' he said, ''or do we quarantine and not have the money to pay our bills?''

Muslim voters also confounded Democratic strategists with their support for Mr. Trump reaching 35 percent, according to The Associated Press. This, too, is a constituency difficult to pigeonhole, as it encompasses Africans, Arabs, South Asians and Europeans.

''A sizable number of Muslims have experienced Donald Trump and to the surprise of Democrats they said, 'We want more of that,''' Shadi Hamid of the Brookings Institution said.

Analyzing vote shifts is a tricky business, particularly when trying to gauge why some Latino, Black or Arab voters moved from supporting a liberal Democratic candidate like Mrs. Clinton in 2016 to voting for a populist authoritarian Republican like Mr. Trump. Some analysts pointed to the appeal among male voters -- regardless of color or ethnicity -- of Mr. Trump's masculine persona. Others mentioned the performance of the national economy, which had hummed along until the plague arrived.

There were small, intriguing changes in the Black vote as well. The Times's exit polls in Georgia found that 16 percent of Black men voted for Mr. Trump. (Compared with 7 percent of Black women there.) And to chart the votes along the so-called Black Belt in Mississippi, which includes 10 counties along the Mississippi River, was to find that although Mr. Biden won handily, his margin in nearly every county was two to three percentage points smaller than Mrs. Clinton's.

The unanswered question is whether the 2020 election will be a one-off, the voting patterns scrambled by an unusually polarizing president who attracted and repelled in near equal measure. If it signals something larger, political scientists noted, some Latino and Asian voters might begin to behave like white voters, who have cleaved along class lines, with more affluent residents in urban areas voting Democratic while a decided majority of rural and exurban residents support Republicans.

Then there is California, where the sands of change blow in varying directions. In 2018, Democrats swept the Orange County congressional seats. In 2020, the Republicans have rebounded and taken at least two of those seats.

The Republican candidate Michelle Steel, who is Korean-American, came out against the affirmative action proposition, a stance that proved popular with her Asian-American constituents, as well as many white voters. And on election night, Ms. Steel rode that support to a narrow win against the incumbent Democratic congressman, Harley Rouda.

''This is the challenge for liberal Democrats,'' Professor Wasow said. ''In a diverse society, how do you enact politics that may advance racial equality without reinforcing racial divisions that are counterproductive and hurt you politically?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/liberals-race.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/liberals-race.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Voters in Los Angeles on Election Day. Californians chose by a large margin not to overturn a state ban on affirmative action. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELLA ANGOTTI-JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

A billboard cast California's ballot measure as a vote for diversity, but Latino and Asian-American voters were key to its defeat. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMIAN DOVARGANES/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A19)

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Georgia Is Getting More Blue. The Senate Races Will Tell How Much.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61NT-P9R1-JBG3-64FV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 3, 2021 Sunday 16:01 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1781 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Martin and Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** A reliably red state for almost two decades, Georgia no longer resembles its Deep South neighbors. President Trump and Joe Biden head there Monday to help rally the bases.

**Body**

A reliably red state for almost two decades, Georgia no longer resembles its Deep South neighbors. President Trump and Joe Biden head there Monday to help rally the bases.

With President Trump touching down in North Georgia on Monday to court white rural voters and President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. rallying support from a diverse electorate in Atlanta, the high-stakes Senate runoffs are concluding with a test of how much the politics have shifted in a state that no longer resembles its Deep South neighbors.

Should the two challengers win Tuesday and hand Democrats control of the Senate, it will be with the same multiracial and heavily metropolitan support that propelled Mr. Biden to victory in Georgia and nationally. And if the Republican incumbents prevail, it will be because they pile up margins in conservative regions, just as Mr. Trump did.

That’s a marked change from the 2000 election, when George W. Bush won decisively in the Atlanta suburbs to capture the state and Democrats still ran competitively with right-of-center voters in much of rural North and South Georgia.

After resisting the tide of Republicanism longer than in other parts of the South — it didn’t elect its first G.O.P. governor until 2002 — Georgia became a reliably red state in the nearly two decades since. But now, it’s fast becoming a political microcosm of the country.

Although Georgia still skews slightly to the right of America’s political center, it has become politically competitive for the same demographic reasons the country is closely divided: Democrats have become dominant in big cities and suburban areas but they suffer steep losses in the lightly-populated regions that once elected governors, senators and, in Georgia, a native-born president, Jimmy Carter.

“Georgia is now a reflection of the country,” said Keith Mason, a former chief of staff to Zell Miller, the late Democratic governor and U.S. senator from a small town in North Georgia. Mr. Miller helped hold off Republican realignment in the state in the 1990s only to accelerate it in the early 2000s when he crossed party lines to endorse Mr. Bush’s re-election.

Conservative Democrats like Mr. Miller are rare, as are the sort of liberal-to-moderate Republicans who were also once found in Georgia. Today, though, the standard-bearers of the two parties in the state reflect thoroughly nationalized parties.

After nominating a string of candidates for statewide office who they hoped would be palatable to rural whites, only to keep losing, Democrats elevated three candidates in the past two years whose views placed them in the mainstream of the national party and whose profiles represented the party’s broader coalition.

[*Stacey Abrams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/05/us/politics/stacey-abrams-georgia.html), a Black former state representative whose district includes portions of Atlanta, fell 55,000 votes short of being elected governor in 2018; Jon Ossoff is a white, 33-year-old documentary filmmaker from a prosperous Atlanta family; and the Rev. Raphael Warnock grew up in impoverished circumstances in Savannah before becoming pastor at the country’s most storied Black church, Ebenezer Baptist in Atlanta.

“It looks nothing like the party of the ’90s and early 2000s,” said Jennifer Jordan, a Democratic state senator. She recalled how the former governor Roy Barnes, a Democrat who succeeded Mr. Miller in 1999, “used to brag about his N.R.A. affiliation.

The Senate hopefuls are embracing the change. “Think about how far we’ve come, Macon, that your standard bearers in these races are the young Jewish journalist, son of an immigrant, and a Black pastor who holds Dr. King’s pulpit at Ebenezer Baptist Church,” Mr. Ossoff said during a recent drive-in rally in the central Georgia city.

The two candidates are also gladly accepting help from their national party, something Georgia Democrats once shied away from. In addition to Mr. Biden’s Monday visit, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris was campaigning in Savannah on Sunday.

It was no accident that Republicans steered Mr. Trump away from greater Atlanta in his two trips to the state during the runoffs: In December, he visited Valdosta, in South Georgia, and on Monday he will appear before voters in Dalton, which is far closer to Tennessee than the state capital.

Yet even bringing the president back to Georgia at all marked a risk for Republicans, after weeks in which he roiled G.O.P. politics in the state. He demonstrated his willingness to intervene once again this weekend: in an extraordinary phone call on Saturday, Mr. Trump pleaded with Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to find enough votes to reverse his loss in the state, [*The Washington Post reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/05/us/politics/stacey-abrams-georgia.html).

Although today’s Georgia candidates are a better fit for the current Democratic Party, and may more easily energize the young and nonwhite voters who make up its base, they have struggled in much of the state’s rural areas. Mr. Biden was able to defy this trend in his November victory, outperforming Ms. Abrams’s 2018 showing and Mr. Ossoff’s November performance in some of the state’s most conservative redoubts.

“That was enough to win the state by 12,000 votes,” said Michael Thurmond, the chief executive of DeKalb County. “And it shows why we need to do better reaching ***working-class*** white voters.” (The president-elect also ran better than Ms. Abrams and Mr. Ossoff in much of metropolitan Atlanta.)

If the Democrats have shifted away from putting forward candidates like Mr. Miller and former Senator Sam Nunn, another centrist from small-town Georgia, Republicans have turned to elevating candidates much like their national leader: David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler are wealthy business executives with little political experience.

And just as with Mr. Trump, the attempts by the two incumbents to rebrand themselves as populists to appeal to rural Georgians have had the effect of alienating many suburban voters who were once steadfast Republicans but now recoil from the party of Trump.

Had Mr. Perdue run just slightly better in the former Republican pillar of Cobb County, for example, he could have reached 50 percent statewide in November and avoided a runoff. But he didn’t even garner 44 percent in the county, which encompasses the northwest suburbs of Atlanta, after winning it six years ago with more than 55 percent of the vote.

“We’re more Trumpian, more populist than the Johnny Isakson party,” said Ralph Reed, a former state Republican chair and conservative Christian activist, referring to the conservative-but-courtly former senator whose resignation prompted the appointment of Ms. Loeffler. “Both parties changed because the grass roots in both parties want more.”

Taken together, this has created a state that’s nearing 50-50 parity and fostered a style of politics in which mobilization takes precedence over persuasion, because the bright lines between party and region have left few Georgians up for grabs.

“There are very few swing voters,” said Ms. Abrams, now a voting rights activist. She said that this was particularly the case in a general election runoff when turnout typically falls and “you are trying to convince the core of your base to come back a second time in a pretty short period.”

Still, Ms. Abrams acknowledged that “electoral politics tends to lag behind demographic changes.”

The demographics, though, account for much of the reason that the state has grown more politically competitive.

There has been a population explosion around Atlanta, thanks to an influx of Asian, African and Hispanic immigrants as well as a migration of native-born Americans, white and Black alike, who have moved to the region because of family ties, the relatively affordable cost of living and expansive job opportunities.

Although long identified with Coca-Cola and Delta Air Lines, the city has become a corporate behemoth, home to companies like UPS and Home Depot as well as to the American headquarters of the carmakers Mercedes and Porsche.

Atlanta itself has long been a mecca for African-Americans but the entire metropolitan region is now diverse, and counties that were once heavily white and solidly Republican are now multiracial bulwarks of Democratic strength.

In 2000, for example, Al Gore received only 31 percent of the vote in Henry County, an exurban Atlanta community that was once dominated by farmland, including that of the former segregationist Senator Herman Talmadge. In November, Mr. Biden won almost 60 percent of the vote in the county, and the jurisdiction elected a Black sheriff for the first time.

Ms. Jordan, the state senator who represents a suburban Atlanta seat, said the population changes would have made Georgia more closely contested this decade but “Trump put a turbo booster on it” in large part because he energized such strong opposition among women.

Sheron Smith, 59, who attended Mr. Ossoff’s drive-in rally in Macon, said her own activism illustrated how the state had changed. Ms. Smith said she was always politically liberal, but did not get involved in organizing until 2016, when Mr. Trump’s election prompted her to join a progressive women’s group in town.

“I think a lot of people were like me,” Ms. Smith said, “and after 2016 we thought: ‘I have to do more. I can’t just sit on my hands. I have to get involved.’ And that energy has just stuck around. I want to be involved now.”

This engagement has prompted a full reversal of the old formula, in which Republicans hoped their overwhelming support in the suburbs would offset the Democrats’ historical rural strength.

“It’s a total 180 in terms of strategy,” said Mr. Thurmond, the DeKalb County executive, recalling the hotly-contested 1980 Senate race in which political junkies stayed up late watching the metro Atlanta returns — except then it was to see if Mack Mattingly, a Republican, could claim enough votes in the region to overcome Mr. Talmadge’s rural strength.

Four decades later, Georgia is close to evenly split again — but in ways that better reflect the Sun Belt than the Old South.

Jim Hobart, a Republican pollster reared in Georgia, said his home state was most politically similar to another battleground that Mr. Biden narrowly carried: Arizona.

“Both have increasingly large minority populations and are dominated by one large media market,” said Mr. Hobart, alluding to greater Atlanta and Phoenix.

Georgia, he added, is “a purple state now.”

PHOTOS: Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, above, campaigned in Georgia over the weekend for the Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff. Georgia Democrats once kept their distance from the national party, but today, “it looks nothing like the party of the ’90s and early 2000s,” a state senator said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20)

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2021

**End of Document**



[***The Future Of American Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y3N-GKK1-DXY4-X04C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 31, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 27

**Length:** 1157 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

After tribal war, the politics of weaving.

Men and women are primarily motivated by self-interest. No other partial truth has done as much damage as this one.

If you base your political and social systems on the idea that the autonomous self-interested individual is the basic unit of society, then you will wind up with an individualistic culture that widens the maneuvering room between people but shreds the relationships and community between people.

You will wind up with a capitalism in which superstar performers get concentrated in superstar cities and everybody else gets left behind. In a system based purely on competitive individual self-interest, those who are advantaged get to race out further ahead year by year. The sense of common community and equal dignity is annihilated.

This is the flaw of unrestrained liberalism, what the radicals call ''neoliberalism'' or ''late capitalism.'' And they are not entirely wrong.

Populists on the right and the left look at this current reality and they come to a swift conclusion: The game is rigged! Liberalism is a con! Then they come to a different conclusion. The essential logic of society is not actually individuals seeking their self-interest. It's groups struggling for power. Society is an arena where certain groups crush other groups.

On the Trumpian right it's the coastal cultural elite trying to crush and delegitimize the white Christian patriots of the heartland. On the cultural left it's the whole Michel Foucault legacy. Language is a tool the oppressor class uses to permanently marginalize the oppressed. On the economic left it's the Bernie Sanders class war. The greedy capitalist class rigs the system and immiserates the ***working class***.

The populist narratives differ but all have the same underlying structure. We're locked in a life-or-death struggle of oppressor vs. oppressed groups. It's Us versus Them -- the good people here and the bad people there. The problems in society didn't just happen; they were consciously engineered by The Evil Other, who must be broken. Our very existence is at stake!

If the anthropology of unrestrained liberalism is the autonomous individual making his own way, the anthropology of populism is warrior ants in a ruthless tribal war. These are very different views of human nature, but they have something in common: Both narratives make us miserable!

In one, life is isolation, inequality and the feeling of being invisible. In the other, it's malice, fear and constant war. And that's because both of these political tendencies are wrong about human nature. They create societies that pulverize who we are and are made to be.

Human beings didn't evolve into the world's dominant species because we are more autonomous. We didn't do it because we're more vicious in tooth and claw. We thrived as a species because we are better at cooperation.

We evolved complex social networks in our brains to make us better at bonding, teaching and collaborating. We don't cooperate only to get things we want individually. Often, we collaborate to build shared environments we can enjoy together. Often, we pick a challenge just so we can have the joy of collaborating. Relationships are ends to themselves.

Thus, the best future for American politics is not based on individual competition or group war. It's based on this narrative: We are an incredibly diverse society that got good at collaboration because we had to. The best future politics puts collaborative pluralism, weaving, at the center.

That means, first, electing leaders who are masters at cooperation. No offense, but if you're supporting Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders this year, collaboration skills are not high on your list of priorities.

Second, it means infusing cooperative weaver values into all of our organizations. There's a fantastic community organization in Baltimore called Thread that has a few core competencies that shape its culture. We'd be in much better shape if every organization in America lived out these values:

Show all the way up. Be fully present, honest and vulnerable in all interactions. Recognize your own value. Push through discomfort to connect deeply with others.

Learn from all voices. Most of our challenges are complex. It takes every perspective to see an issue whole. Assume people have the best of intentions, and actively focus on the value they bring. Be intentional about being with those different from you.

Treat relationships as wealth. Human bonds are the chief resource of your organization. Recognize the inherent value of each person and meet each person where she or he is.

Fail forward. Life is iterative. Your vision is not always the answer, but rather a step in a creative learning process. Set up feedback mechanisms that support change and personal growth. Dogma won't get you to the solution. Openness and adjustment will.

The third task of weaver politics is reforming institutions so they encourage collaboration. Some of our institutions, like Congress, have been completely subsumed by tribal warfare. Other institutions, as Yuval Levin writes in his book ''A Time to Build,'' are no longer formative places where we learn and serve; they have become platforms individuals use to broadcast their supreme selves.

Still other institutions have become dehumanized. Our schools, hospitals, prisons and welfare systems don't embed people in thick relationships. They treat them as units to be processed and shoved out the door. Still other institutions cease to exist. Why do we still not have a national service program?

America has an enormous task of institutional reform ahead of it, just as it did in the Progressive era.

The fourth and final task of this kind of politics is transformative policies that directly address our most serious divides. For example, reparations are a way to acknowledge the wrongs inflicted on African-Americans and to begin to heal that breach. Congressman Ro Khanna has a proposal that would show rural America that everyone has a place in the new economy. He would fund research and technology hubs throughout the country -- a land grant college system for the 21st century.

The politics of weaving grows out of the acknowledgment that there is no dominant majority in America. There is no moderate center. Your group will never pulverize and eliminate your opposing group. There's no choice but to set up better collaborative systems across difference. This is not a problem, it's an adventure.

Yes, human beings are partly selfish and self-interested. But we are also supremely social and collaborative. This is the part we have to work on now.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/opinion/us-politics.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/opinion/us-politics.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Liberals Envisioned a Multiracial Coalition. Voters of Color Had Other Ideas.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:619H-C8Y1-JBG3-613X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 16, 2020 Monday 21:33 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1814 words

**Byline:** Michael Powell

**Highlight:** Democrats may need to rethink their strategy as the class complexities and competing desires of Latino and Asian-American demographic groups become clear.

**Body**

Democrats may need to rethink their strategy as the class complexities and competing desires of Latino and Asian-American demographic groups become clear.

The proposition seemed tailor-made for one of the nation’s most diverse and liberal states. California officials asked voters to overturn a 24-year-old ban on [*affirmative action*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/18/us/politics/affirmative-action-university-of-north-carolina-court.html) in education, employment and contracting.

The state political and cultural establishment worked as one to pass this ballot measure. The governor, a senator, members of Congress, university presidents and civil rights leaders called it a righting of old wrongs.

“Women and people of color are still at a sharp disadvantage by almost every measure,” The Los Angeles Times [*wrote in an editorial endorsement*](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-06-12/editorial-of-course-race-matters-put-affirmative-action-back-on-the-ballot).

Yet on Election Day, [*the proposition failed by a wide margin*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-california-proposition-16-repeal-ban-on-affirmative-action.html), 57 percent to 43 percent, and Latino and [*Asian-American voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/03/us/politics/asian-american-voters.html) played a key role in defeating it. The outcome captured the gap between the vision laid out by the liberal establishment in California, which has long imagined the creation of a multiracial, multiethnic coalition that would embrace progressive causes, and the sentiments of many Black, Latino, Asian and Arab voters.

Variations of this puzzle could be found in surprising corners of the nation on Election Day, as slices of ethnic and racial constituencies peeled off and cut against Democratic expectations.

“We should not think of demography as destiny,” said Professor Omar Wasow, who studies politics and voting patterns at Princeton University. “These groups are far more heterogeneous than a monolith and campaigns often end up building their own idiosyncratic coalition.”

Asian-American Californians opposed the affirmative action measure in large numbers. A striking number of East and South Asian students have gained admission to elite state universities, and their families spoke to reporters of their fear that their children would suffer if merit in college selection was given less weight. That battle carried echoes of another that raged the past few years in New York City, where a white liberal mayor’s efforts to increase the number of Black and Latino students in selective high schools angered working- and middle-class South and East Asian families whose children have gained admission to the schools in large numbers.

“There’s more texture to California blue politics than you might think,” said Lanhee Chen, a fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution at Stanford University and policy director for Mitt Romney’s 2012 presidential run. “Identity politics only go so far. There is a sense on affirmative action that people resent being categorized by progressives.”

Latinos, too, appear sharply divided. Prominent Latino nonprofit and civil rights organizations endorsed the affirmative action proposition even as all 14 of California’s majority-Latino counties voted it down.

Latinos make up more than half of San Bernardino County’s population, although significantly fewer turn out to vote. More residents there voted on the affirmative action proposition than for president, rejecting it by a margin of 28 percentage points. In rural Imperial County, in the southeastern corner of the state, 85 percent of the population is Latino. The voters there who gave Joseph R. Biden Jr. a nearly 27-point margin of victory went against the affirmative action measure by 16 percentage points.

The results suggest that Democrats may need to adjust their strategy as the complexities of class, generation and experience, and the competing desires of these demographic groups become clear. Since the dawn of the 21st century, it has become commonplace for party leaders to talk of a rising demographic tide that is destined to lift the Democrats to dominance. That liberal coalition is seen as resting on a bedrock of upper-middle-class white voters, alongside working- and middle-class Black, Latino and Asian voters.

In broad strokes, that narrative held. Black voters, along with a shift in the white suburban vote, played a pivotal role in delivering Georgia to the Democratic column (although so closely that [*a statewide audit is taking place*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/13/us/georgia-recount-presidential-election.html)). So, too, Black voters in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia voted overwhelmingly for Democrats — as did well-to-do majority-white suburbs — and gave Pennsylvania and therefore the national election to President-elect Biden.

In Arizona, Latino voters piled up large margins for Mr. Biden and [*tipped the state narrowly into the Democratic column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/12/us/biden-wins-arizona.html) for the first time since 1996. Representative Ruben Gallego, the Democratic congressman from Phoenix who is a former Marine and a Harvard graduate, noted that several decades of aggressive tactics by Republican governors and white sheriffs had [*stirred activism among the young Latinos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/06/us/biden-maricopa-county.html) who dominate politics there.

“The Republicans caught Latino lightning in the bottle in Florida and South Texas, but not here,” Mr. Gallego said. “We are very politicized. It’s just important that white liberals don’t impose their thoughts and policies on us.”

Aside from those successes, however, the election presented complications wrapped one inside another for Democrats. In Texas and Florida, in California and in Colorado (where [*New York Times exit polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-colorado.html) found that roughly 40 percent of white voters and 38 percent of Latino voters cast ballots for President Trump), the assumption that people of color would vote as a liberal Democratic bloc often proved illusory.

John Judis is a liberal writer and scholar who in 2002 co-wrote “The Emerging Democratic Majority,” which became a seminal text for those who saw the Democratic Party as a political tide rising. He has since backed off that a touch.

“‘People of color’ is a term that’s been adopted by the cultural left as a way of arguing that if these groups proportionately voted Democratic in the past, they will do so in the future,” Mr. Judis said. “I don’t see how you can make the argument.”

Viewing the Latino vote as monolithic fails, of course, to capture the often sharply varying politics and ethnicities of people hailing from nearly two dozen countries on two continents. The same is true when examining the behavior of Asian-American voters.

Philadelphia offers a snapshot: A record number of Latinos in the city, which is heavily Puerto Rican and Dominican, turned out and buoyed Mr. Biden. Yet exit polls also found that Latino voter support there for Mr. Trump leapt to 35 percent this year from 22 percent in 2016. In Milwaukee, an analysis by Urban Milwaukee reported an uptick in the Latino ***working-class*** vote for Mr. Trump, although a majority still favored Mr. Biden.

Along the Rio Grande in Texas, where some Mexican-American families, known as Tejanos, have roots that extend back four centuries, the vote margins shifted dramatically in 2020. Latino turnout soared, almost entirely to the benefit of Mr. Trump. Although Mr. Biden obtained more total votes in the four counties of the Rio Grande Valley than Hillary Clinton did in 2016, his margins of victory fell sharply.

The reasons offered for these results include poor field organizing by the Democratic Party, the cultural conservatism of some older Tejano families, and the fact that many in these often-dense counties find good-paying jobs with the Border Patrol.

Many voters, too, worried that Mr. Biden and the Democrats would impose a new coronavirus-driven shutdown, with dire consequences for the many thousands who own and labor for small businesses. Prof. Omar Valerio-Jimenez grew up in the Rio Grande Valley and teaches history at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Several of his old friends and cousins voted for Mr. Trump.

“They faced this challenge: Do they continue to open our stores and restaurants and churches, which lets us pay our bills,” he said, “or do we quarantine and not have the money to pay our bills?”

Muslim voters also confounded Democratic strategists with their support for Mr. Trump reaching 35 percent, [*according to The Associated Press*](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/ap-votecast-trump-wins-white-evangelicals-catholics-split). This, too, is a constituency difficult to pigeonhole, as it encompasses Africans, Arabs, South Asians and Europeans.

“A sizable number of Muslims have experienced Donald Trump and to the surprise of Democrats they said, ‘We want more of that,’” Shadi Hamid of the Brookings Institution said.

Analyzing vote shifts is a tricky business, particularly when trying to gauge why some Latino, Black or Arab voters moved from supporting a liberal Democratic candidate like Mrs. Clinton in 2016 to voting for a populist authoritarian Republican like Mr. Trump. Some analysts pointed to the appeal among male voters — regardless of color or ethnicity — of Mr. Trump’s masculine persona. Others mentioned the performance of the national economy, which had hummed along until the plague arrived.

There were small, intriguing changes in the Black vote as well. The Times’s [*exit polls in Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-georgia.html) found that 16 percent of Black men voted for Mr. Trump. (Compared with 7 percent of Black women there.) And to chart the votes along the so-called Black Belt in Mississippi, which includes 10 counties along the Mississippi River, was to find that although Mr. Biden won handily, his margin in nearly every county was two to three percentage points smaller than Mrs. Clinton’s.

The unanswered question is whether the 2020 election will be a one-off, the voting patterns scrambled by an unusually polarizing president who attracted and repelled in near equal measure. If it signals something larger, political scientists noted, some Latino and Asian voters might begin to behave like white voters, who have cleaved along class lines, with more affluent residents in urban areas voting Democratic while a decided majority of rural and exurban residents support Republicans.

Then there is California, where the sands of change blow in varying directions. In 2018, Democrats swept the Orange County congressional seats. In 2020, the Republicans have rebounded and taken at least two of those seats.

The Republican candidate Michelle Steel, who is Korean-American, came out against the affirmative action proposition, a stance that proved popular with her Asian-American constituents, as well as many white voters. And on election night, Ms. Steel rode that support to a narrow win against the incumbent Democratic congressman, Harley Rouda.

“This is the challenge for liberal Democrats,” Professor Wasow said. “In a diverse society, how do you enact politics that may advance racial equality without reinforcing racial divisions that are counterproductive and hurt you politically?”

PHOTOS: Voters in Los Angeles on Election Day. Californians chose by a large margin not to overturn a state ban on affirmative action. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELLA ANGOTTI-JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); A billboard cast California’s ballot measure as a vote for diversity, but Latino and Asian-American voters were key to its defeat. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMIAN DOVARGANES/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A19)

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2021

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[***The Post- Presidency of A Con Man***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6199-YYT1-JBG3-64HJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 15, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1712 words

**Byline:** By Michelle Goldberg

**Body**

Out of office, Trump might seem a lot less formidable.

It's hard to tell whether Donald Trump is attempting a coup or throwing a tantrum.

Crying voter fraud, his administration has refused to begin a presidential transition despite his decisive electoral defeat. Some Republicans have floated the idea of getting legislatures in states that Joe Biden won to disregard vote totals and instead appoint pro-Trump electors to the Electoral College. The president has decapitated the Pentagon, putting fanatical loyalists in some of its highest ranks. Anthony Tata, who called Barack Obama a ''terrorist leader'' and tweeted a lurid fantasy about the execution of the former C.I.A. director John Brennan, is now the Pentagon's policy chief. This is all supremely alarming.

But there's cause for comfort, of a sort, in signs that the president is preparing for life outside the White House in exactly the way one would expect -- by initiating new grifts. Trump has been sending out frantic fund-raising requests to ''defend the election,'' but as The New York Times reports, most of the money is actually going to a PAC, Save America, that ''will be used to underwrite Mr. Trump's post-presidential activities.'' Axios reports that Trump is considering starting a digital media company to undermine Fox News, which he now regards as disloyal.

These moves suggest that while Trump may be willing to torch American democracy to salve his wounded ego, at least part of him is getting ready to leave office.

When he finally does, some political observers and Republican professionals assume he'll remain a political kingmaker, and will be a favorite for the party's nomination in 2024. The Times reported, ''Allies imagined other Republicans making a pilgrimage to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida seeking his blessing.'' Senator Marco Rubio told The Daily Beast's Sam Brodey, ''If he runs in 2024, he'll certainly be the front-runner, and then he'll probably be the nominee.''

Maybe. There's no doubt that Trump has a cultlike hold on his millions of worshipers, and a unique ability to command public attention. But there are reasons to think that when he is finally ejected from the White House, he will become a significantly diminished figure.

Once Trump is no longer president, he is likely to be consumed by lawsuits and criminal investigations. Hundreds of millions of dollars in debt will come due. Lobbyists and foreign dignitaries won't have much of a reason to patronize Mar-a-Lago or his Washington hotel. Fox News owner Rupert Murdoch could complete the transition from Trump's enabler to his enemy. And, after four years of cartoonish self-abasement, Republicans with presidential aspirations will have an incentive to help take him down.

''His whole life he's been involved in a bunch of litigation,'' said the superstar liberal attorney Roberta Kaplan. But post-presidency, ''I have to assume that, given the amount of civil litigation and potential criminal exposure, it's going to be at a completely new dimension.''

Kaplan is pursuing three high-profile lawsuits against Trump, including the writer E. Jean Carroll's defamation case. Carroll, you might remember, accused Trump of raping her in a department store dressing room during the 1990s. Trump called her a liar, and she's suing him for damaging her reputation.

Under Attorney General Bill Barr, the Department of Justice has tried to shut down the suit, arguing that Trump was acting in his official capacity when he said Carroll had made up the story to sell books. In October a judge rejected the department's theory, but had Trump been re-elected, Kaplan expected an appeal.

Once Biden is president, Kaplan told me, ''it's hard for me to imagine that the D.O.J. won't change its position.'' So the case is likely to proceed. Kaplan expects it to go into discovery shortly after Biden's inauguration. She anticipates deposing Trump and collecting his D.N.A. to compare with male D.N.A. found on the dress Carroll was wearing at the time of the alleged attack.

If Kaplan and Carroll prevail at trial, it would be a high-profile legal validation of Carroll's claims. Her suit has not, so far, been a major news story -- there's too much else going on. But a verdict in her favor could be the #MeToo version of the civil judgment against O.J. Simpson -- not justice, exactly, but a powerful rejection of impunity.

Carroll's suit is not the only one that could force Trump to answer for his predatory history with women. The former ''Apprentice'' contestant Summer Zervos, who says Trump groped and kissed her against her will, is, like Carroll, suing for defamation because Trump called her a liar. (Her lawyer is Beth Wilkinson, who defended Brett Kavanaugh when he was accused of sexual assault during his Supreme Court confirmation fight.)

In addition to Carroll, Kaplan is representing Mary Trump, the president's niece, who is suing Trump, his sister and his late brother Robert's estate for fraud and civil conspiracy, saying they cheated her out of an inheritance. And she's representing a group of people who are suing Trump and his three oldest children for enticing them to invest in an alleged pyramid scheme, run by a telecommunications company called ACN, which sold clunky videophones.

The plaintiffs are poor and ***working class***, including a hospice caregiver who paid thousands of dollars to ACN because she trusted Trump's fulsome endorsements, having no idea that ACN was paying Trump millions. As with the other suits, there is obviously no guarantee of success. But Trump's alleged involvement in a multilevel marketing scheme that traded on a false image of his business acumen will be a minor subplot over the next few years.

It's too much to expect any sudden exposure of Trump. There will be no cathartic moment when everyone realizes that the emperor was always naked. But the question isn't whether Trump's support will evaporate. It's whether it will erode, especially once he loses the ability to make Republican dreams come true.

Besides, the threats to Trump are not only to his reputation, such as it is. In Bob Woodward's book ''Fear,'' he wrote that Trump's former lawyer John Dowd implored the president not to testify in Robert Mueller's probe because he believed him to be an inveterate liar. (Dowd has denied this.) Should Trump face depositions in these civil cases, however, he'll have no choice about submitting to interviews.

Andrew Weissmann, Mueller's former deputy, told me he expects Trump to pardon himself for any federal crimes he might have committed. That would mean that even if a Biden Department of Justice wanted to take the extraordinary step of prosecuting a former president, it would also have to litigate the constitutionality of self-pardons, a complicated, time-consuming process.

But he might face state charges that he can't pardon his way out of. The New York State attorney general, Letitia James, has a civil investigation into possible financial chicanery by the Trump Organization. Trump is under criminal investigation by Manhattan's district attorney, Cyrus Vance. While the scope of the inquiry is unknown, his office's filings suggest Vance could be looking at tax fraud, insurance fraud and falsification of business records.

The ''Manhattan D.A.'s office is a really good office, and they've done a lot of white-collar cases,'' said Weissmann. ''If they were to prove -- this is now hypothetical -- but if they were to prove tens of millions of dollars in tax fraud or bank fraud, people go to jail for that.''

Let's say Trump, ever the escape artist, avoids prison, setting himself up as the warlord of MAGA-world at Mar-a-Lago. His post-presidency still won't be easy. As The Times has reported, he's personally on the hook for $421 million in debt, most of it coming due in the next four years. If a long fight with the I.R.S. goes against him, he could owe at least $100 million more.

''Mr. Trump still has assets to sell,'' The Times reported. ''But doing so could take its own toll, both financial and to Mr. Trump's desire to always be seen as a winner.''

Trump is already trying to profit off his avid base, and he will surely continue. But it's an open question whether, without the intoxicating aura of presidential power, he can sustain their devotion. There are several examples of once-formidable right-wing leaders reduced to footnotes after leaving office.

As Republican House majority leader, Tom DeLay was frequently described as the most powerful man in Congress. Then, in 2005, he was indicted on a charge of campaign money laundering. Though his 2010 conviction was eventually overturned on appeal, the last time he had any significant public profile was when he appeared on ''Dancing With the Stars'' in 2009.

Sarah Palin, too, was once a Republican icon; in many ways she presaged Trump. ''Win or Lose, Many See Palin as Future of Party,'' said a New York Times headline just before the 2008 election. It quoted the right-wing activist Brent Bozell: ''Conservatives have been looking for leadership, and she has proved that she can electrify the grass roots like few people have in the last 20 years.''

But since resigning as Alaska's governor in 2009, Palin has lost her luster. Once a likely presidential prospect, she recently made headlines for wearing a pink and purple bear costume on the Fox reality show ''The Masked Singer.''

Trump is in for years of scandals and humiliations. We will doubtlessly find out more about official misdeeds he tried to keep secret as president. Republicans who hope to succeed him will have reason to start painting him as a loser instead of a savior. He'll have to devote much of his energy to trying to stay out of prison.

After all that, could he be back in 2024? Of course. Trump is, if nothing else, relentless. But this election was just the latest reminder that he is far from invincible. When he is no longer in office, there will be many more.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR4-SR5)

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Getting Up to Your Eyeballs in Art***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:627R-WXX1-JBG3-63VK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 1; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 2052 words

**Byline:** By Arthur Lubow

**Body**

After a year of sensory deprivation, a critic dips a toe into the new, high-powered immersive art center in Miami.

Feeling a little like Alice in Wonderland as gigantic digital images of red, white and cream-colored dahlias budded, bloomed and shattered on the wall in front of me, I dithered over what I was witnessing. Is this a forward step in the march of modernism or a debasement of art into theme-park entertainment?

The dazzling floral extravaganza by teamLab, a digital art collective based in Tokyo, is the dynamic centerpiece of an inaugural exhibition at Superblue, a Miami ''experiential art center'' (or an E.A.C. to initiates) that begins invitational previews next week before opening to the public on April 22. Backed by the juggernaut Pace Gallery and Laurene Powell Jobs's Emerson Collective, Superblue is the blue-chip contestant in the rapidly growing field of immersive art.

The popularity of this genre is driven by contradictory desires, as demonstrated memorably by the line of visitors in 2019 who waited up to six hours for a one-minute stay amid the twinkling lights in Yayoi Kusama's infinity mirror room at the David Zwirner gallery in Chelsea. Malnourished by their phones and computer screens, people yearn for real-life visceral experiences. And yet they remain stuck in the gravitational pull of virtual reality: The experiences they seek are ones they can record on their phone cameras and post on social media.

The renovated warehouse that Superblue occupies in Miami is across the street from a more traditional contemporary art institution, the Rubell Museum, which reopened at the end of 2019 in Allapattah, a commercial and ***working-class*** area west of its former location in the now-gentrified Wynwood district. Mera Rubell told Marc Glimcher, the chief executive of Pace, about the availability of the building when they happened to be seated next to each other at a large dinner. The structure contains 31,000 square feet of exhibition space, with 30-foot ceilings. It will display installations for a year or a year and a half before they are trucked off to other Superblue sites in yet-to-be-announced cities. ''That's something we have to do to make the economics work,'' Mollie Dent-Brocklehurst, the London-based co-founder, told me on a Zoom call.

For the inaugural exhibition, Superblue included ''AKHU'' by James Turrell, the Southern Californian who is an éminence grise of the experiential art world. The installation is what Turrell calls a Ganzfeld, a German word that denotes the loss of spatial perception that occurs in a featureless, uniform visual field, such as a fog whiteout. (As with Schadenfreude, Ganzfeld has no English counterpart.) In ''AKHU'' (an ancient Egyptian term that roughly translates as ''soul''), an oblong of light is projected onto a smooth blank wall and tints the room. The color of the light gradually changes. If you climb the black-carpeted steps toward the threshold of the illuminated wall, your sense of where you are teeters vertiginously.

Turrell's Ganzfelds are not new to me, but ''AKHU'' provided a useful yardstick to assess the two other art installations in the show. A Ganzfeld creates a contemplative mood in which time slows and space dematerializes. At the same time, it exposes the structures of visual perception (and misperception) that make the magic.

But why was I resistant to the notion that a simple spectacle might also be art? Artists have never eschewed showmanship. Bernini was a theater artist as well as a sculptor. In one of his plays (a 17th-century predecessor of ''Miss Saigon'' and ''Phantom of the Opera''), a torrent of water rushed toward the gasping audience, diverted by sluices at the last moment. Of course, no one remembers Bernini for his divertissements. We salute ''Apollo and Daphne,'' marveling at how a sculptor, using the intractable substance of marble, could depict the fluid transformation of a nymph into a tree. Art certainly can be entertaining, but it must also be enlightening or disorienting. When it only titillates, it loses its claim to be art.

The crowd-pleasing touring shows of immersive projections of van Gogh paintings, which have proliferated as vigorously as sunflowers over the last decade, are to art what military music is to music. Another enterprise, Meow Wolf (why do experiential art organizations have such terrible names?), promotes the artistic credentials of its immersive installations more credibly. Formed in Santa Fe, N.M., in 2008, Meow Wolf recently opened Omega Mart in Las Vegas and plans to inaugurate a space in Denver later this year. Omega Mart resembles a supermarket with weird sets and bizarre commodities, all of them crafted by participating artists.

Underlying Omega Mart is a narrative having to do with a sinister corporation, a mystery waiting for the visitor to pry out. When I asked its co-chief executive, Ali Rubinstein, how Meow Wolf differed from Disney -- a question she was uniquely qualified to answer, because she had worked at Disney for over two decades -- she emphasized that ''Disney's experiences are programmed, and there is an expectation about how a guest will move through a land or an attraction,'' while ''Meow Wolf is all about giving our visitors the opportunity to design their own experience and choose how deeply they want to dive into the narrative component.''

Tellingly, the fantasy novelist George R.R. Martin, whose books were adapted into the HBO series ''Game of Thrones,'' is a major investor in Meow Wolf. Omega Mart transposes the Pop Art critique of American consumer culture that was expressed in Claes Oldenburg's ''The Store'' -- a witty panorama of commercial products, staged in 1961 -- to the realm of Minecraft.

Is it art or something else? A better question might be, is it good? Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, Tristan Tzara's Dada performances, Robert Smithson's land art, Tino Sehgal's constructed situations -- in innumerable ways, modernist artists have crossed and dissolved boundaries.

Immersive art aims to take that mission further.

Es Devlin, whose ''Forest of Us'' is part of Superblue's first exhibition, has worked as a theatrical designer for 25 years, creating celebrated sets for ''The Lehman Trilogy,'' Kanye West tours and ''About Time: Fashion and Duration,'' the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute show last fall. Attending art school in London, Devlin admired the Young British Artists who preceded her, but, she told me in Miami, ''I couldn't get my head around making and selling an object. My natural world was the theater.'' In the last five years, she has progressed from creating designs for other artists to acquiring ''the confidence to write a narrative.''

''Forest of Us'' begins with a film of almost three minutes, in which Devlin depicts branching -- bronchi in the lungs, limbs of trees, rivulets into streams. The voice-over starts, ''Every time I reach a fork in the road, I choose both paths,'' and ends, ''Can you find it? Go and find it!'' At which point the screen parts, and the visitor walks through a portal into a maze. With stretched Mylar film on the ceiling, optical-glass mirror on the surrounding walls, and winding paths bordered by polished aluminum dividers, ''Forest of Us'' is a kind of hedge maze in which the traditional boxwood has been replaced by reflective surfaces.

Staring at my bounced-back image, I was reminded of Kusama's visionary ''Narcissus Garden,'' an expanse of mirror balls lying on the ground. (First created in 1966 at the Venice Biennale, ''Narcissus Garden'' happens to be on view in a later format at the Rubell Museum.) But Devlin's work envelops you. Eventually you come to a shallow pool, 6 feet wide and 35 feet long, where, standing on marked circles at the edge, you can raise your arms and see your reflection as a dendritic filigree and hear the whooshing intake of breath. Chilled, I felt I was standing by the bank of the river Styx, experiencing not my personal demise but the death of the planet.

At Superblue, the barrier between the viewer and the art work has evaporated, which is the long-stated mission of teamLab. One way to regard the group's showstopping displays in Miami is that they allow a visitor to pass through a computer screen, just as the characters in Jean Cocteau's film ''Orphee'' walk through mirrors. ''What makes a boundary is the recognition of one by people,'' Toshiyuki Inoko, a co-founder of teamLab, said, speaking through an interpreter as he tweaked the Miami installations shortly before the opening. ''On a computer screen, once people recognize the screen it becomes a boundary. We are trying to eliminate or soften the boundary.''

Indeed, the largest of teamLab's four exhibitions at Superblue Miami is devoted to two separately conceived works that have been interwoven. ''Universe of Water Particles, Transcending Boundaries'' is a digital waterfall that cascades down two walls and onto the shiny floor; coming into contact with a visitor's feet, the stream parts. Concurrently, another work, ''Flowers and People, Cannot be Controlled but Live Together,'' is erupting with huge blossoms that grow and die. The flowers bloom on the ground only in those spaces that have been cleared of the watery image by the visitor's presence.

The teamLab collaborative embraces its Japanese heritage most directly in a single-channel video, ''Life Survives by the Power of Life II,'' which transmogrifies the Kanji symbol for ''life'' into a tree branch passing through seasonal change in a dance of 3-D calligraphy. In another room, ''Proliferating Immense Life, A Whole year per Year'' displays a sequence of rendered flowers that grow huge and fly off as petals, leaving behind a grid of small gold-brown wall squares -- an allusion to the gold leaf applied to the paper surface of a Japanese screen as well as (to my mind at least) bare winter fields shadowed by clouds. When my hand touched the flowers on the wall, I accelerated their dying -- a caustic comment on humankind's blight, as well as a ravishing rendition of the Japanese aesthetic of the ephemerality of beauty.

In 2018, Inoko convinced Glimcher to break a taboo and charge $20 for admission to a teamLab exhibition at Pace's Palo Alto gallery. Pace represents several other artists whose experiential installations don't lend themselves to conventional gallery sales: Leo Villareal, Random International, DRIFT. Pace was marketing their pieces to developers and governments. ''They would be placed in shopping malls or on bridges,'' Dent-Brocklehurst said.

The Superblue alternative model (which is not restricted to Pace artists) funds production of the work and pays royalties to the artists on ticket sales. A ticket to Superblue Miami costs $36, with a $10 add-on to see an additional teamLab project, ''Massless Clouds Between Sculpture and Life,'' an audience-tickling creation in which clouds of soap bubbles form, hover and dissipate as visitors walk through them.

Inoko told me that the cloud is like a virus, ''at the boundary between what is living and isn't living, and organic and inorganic.'' Because of the coronavirus, Superblue Miami will initially operate at 50 percent capacity. It is better equipped than a conventional museum to meet that restriction. Shantelle Rodriguez, the director of experiential art centers for Superblue, said, ''These artists have a very specific idea of the number of people who should be in a room to have the experience.''

For me, the immersive experience began, not entirely pleasantly, with my trip from New York to Miami, the first time I had been on an airplane in over a year. It continued with the alarmingly insouciant atmosphere in South Beach, where I returned to my hotel one evening to find a party of unmasked college students packed as tight as bedded asparagus by the swimming pool. In my discombobulated mood, the trippy, meditative, gorgeous installations of Superblue washed over me as a respite and solace. My resistance melted. My doubts subsided. Like the kids in my hotel, after a year of privation, I was ready to be seduced.

Superblue Miami

Opens April 22. 1101 NW 23 Street, Miami, Fla. 786-697-3405. Tickets go on sale in early April; to be alerted when they go live, sign up at superblue.com/miami.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/18/arts/design/superblue-miami-immersive-art.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/18/arts/design/superblue-miami-immersive-art.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: TeamLab's ''Proliferating Immense Life, a Whole Year Per Year,'' an interactive digital installation at Superblue in Miami, which begins previews next week. Flowers bud, grow huge and die off, accelerated by a viewer's touch. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFONSO DURAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Clockwise from far left, top, teamLab's cloud room at Superblue

the theatrical designer Es Devlin's immersive environment ''Forest of Us''

soap bubbles at the cloud room

an image at James Turrell's ''AKHU''

Toshiyuki Inoko, a co-founder of teamLab

and Devlin in ''Forest of Us.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALFONSO DURAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JAMES TURRELL

ANDREA MORA) (C8-C9)

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2021

**End of Document**



[***The Future of American Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y3J-1NP1-JBG3-61J5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 30, 2020 Thursday 19:04 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1164 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** After tribal war, the politics of weaving.

**Body**

After tribal war, the politics of weaving.

Men and women are primarily motivated by self-interest. No other partial truth has done as much damage as this one.

If you base your political and social systems on the idea that the autonomous self-interested individual is the basic unit of society, then you will wind up with an individualistic culture that widens the maneuvering room between people but shreds the relationships and community between people.

You will wind up with a capitalism in which superstar performers get concentrated in superstar cities and everybody else gets left behind. In a system based purely on competitive individual self-interest, those who are advantaged get to race out further ahead year by year. The sense of common community and equal dignity is annihilated.

This is the flaw of unrestrained liberalism, what the radicals call “neoliberalism” or “late capitalism.” And they are not entirely wrong.

Populists on the right and the left look at this current reality and they come to a swift conclusion: The game is rigged! Liberalism is a con! Then they come to a different conclusion. The essential logic of society is not actually individuals seeking their self-interest. It’s groups struggling for power. Society is an arena where certain groups crush other groups.

On the Trumpian right it’s the coastal cultural elite trying to crush and delegitimize the white Christian patriots of the heartland. On the cultural left it’s the whole Michel Foucault legacy. Language is a tool the oppressor class uses to permanently marginalize the oppressed. On the economic left it’s the Bernie Sanders class war. The greedy capitalist class rigs the system and immiserates the ***working class***.

The populist narratives differ but all have the same underlying structure. We’re locked in a life-or-death struggle of oppressor vs. oppressed groups. It’s Us versus Them — the good people here and the bad people there. The problems in society didn’t just happen; they were consciously engineered by The Evil Other, who must be broken. Our very existence is at stake!

If the anthropology of unrestrained liberalism is the autonomous individual making his own way, the anthropology of populism is warrior ants in a ruthless tribal war. These are very different views of human nature, but they have something in common: Both narratives make us miserable!

In one, life is isolation, inequality and the feeling of being invisible. In the other, it’s malice, fear and constant war. And that’s because both of these political tendencies are wrong about human nature. They create societies that pulverize who we are and are made to be.

Human beings didn’t evolve into the world’s dominant species because we are more autonomous. We didn’t do it because we’re more vicious in tooth and claw. We thrived as a species because we are better at cooperation.

We evolved complex social networks in our brains to make us better at bonding, teaching and collaborating. We don’t cooperate only to get things we want individually. Often, we collaborate to build shared environments we can enjoy together. Often, we pick a challenge just so we can have the joy of collaborating. Relationships are ends to themselves.

Thus, the best future for American politics is not based on individual competition or group war. It’s based on this narrative: We are an incredibly diverse society that got good at collaboration because we had to. The best future politics puts collaborative pluralism, weaving, at the center.

That means, first, electing leaders who are masters at cooperation. No offense, but if you’re supporting Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders this year, collaboration skills are not high on your list of priorities.

Second, it means infusing cooperative weaver values into all of our organizations. There’s a fantastic community organization in Baltimore called Thread that has a few [*core competencies*](https://www.thread.org/who-we-are/core-competencies/) that shape its culture. We’d be in much better shape if every organization in America lived out these values:

Show all the way up. Be fully present, honest and vulnerable in all interactions. Recognize your own value. Push through discomfort to connect deeply with others.

Learn from all voices. Most of our challenges are complex. It takes every perspective to see an issue whole. Assume people have the best of intentions, and actively focus on the value they bring. Be intentional about being with those different from you.

Treat relationships as wealth. Human bonds are the chief resource of your organization. Recognize the inherent value of each person and meet each person where she or he is.

Fail forward. Life is iterative. Your vision is not always the answer, but rather a step in a creative learning process. Set up feedback mechanisms that support change and personal growth. Dogma won’t get you to the solution. Openness and adjustment will.

The third task of weaver politics is reforming institutions so they encourage collaboration. Some of our institutions, like Congress, have been completely subsumed by tribal warfare. Other institutions, as Yuval Levin writes in his book “[*A Time to Build*](https://www.thread.org/who-we-are/core-competencies/),” are no longer formative places where we learn and serve; they have become platforms individuals use to broadcast their supreme selves.

Still other institutions have become dehumanized. Our schools, hospitals, prisons and welfare systems don’t embed people in thick relationships. They treat them as units to be processed and shoved out the door. Still other institutions cease to exist. Why do we still not have a national service program?

America has an enormous task of institutional reform ahead of it, just as it did in the Progressive era.

The fourth and final task of this kind of politics is transformative policies that directly address our most serious divides. For example, reparations are a way to acknowledge the wrongs inflicted on African-Americans and to begin to heal that breach. Congressman Ro Khanna has a proposal that would show rural America that everyone has a place in the new economy. He would fund research and technology hubs throughout the country — a land grant college system for the 21st century.

The politics of weaving grows out of the acknowledgment that there is no dominant majority in America. There is no moderate center. Your group will never pulverize and eliminate your opposing group. There’s no choice but to set up better collaborative systems across difference. This is not a problem, it’s an adventure.

Yes, human beings are partly selfish and self-interested. But we are also supremely social and collaborative. This is the part we have to work on now.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Polling Problems***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:618W-PR01-DXY4-X1FB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

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**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. It’s another record day for virus cases. Obama’s memoir gets a glowing review. And we look at why the polls were wrong.

Fool us once …

The polls were [*wrong again*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and much of America wants to know why.

Dozens of pre-election polls suggested that Joe Biden would beat President Trump by a wide margin, but the race instead came down to one or two percentage points in a handful of states. Polls also indicated that Democrats would do much better than they did in congressional races.

So what happened? Here are six key points:

1. In the last few years, Republican voters seem to have become [*less willing to respond to polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Maybe that shouldn’t be surprising, given Trump’s attacks on the media, science and other institutions.

2. This phenomenon isn’t simply about ***working-class*** whites. Pollsters were careful to include more of these voters in their samples than four years ago, when the polls also missed, but it didn’t solve the problem. One likely reason: Even within demographic groups — say, independent, older, middle-income white women — people who responded to polls this year leaned more Democratic than people who did not.

3. It’s also not just about Trump. Polls missed in several Senate races even more than in the presidential race, which means they did an especially poor job of finding people who voted for Biden at the top and a Republican lower down the ballot.

4. Most of the easy solutions are probably not real solutions. Since Election Day, some campaign operatives have claimed their private polls were more accurate than the public polls. That seems more false than true. Biden, Trump and both parties campaigned as if their own polls matched the public polls, focusing on some states that were not really competitive and abandoning others that were close.

5. Polls have still been [*more accurate*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) over the last four years than they were for most of the 20th century. As pollsters get more information about this year’s election and what went wrong, they will try to fix the problems, much as they did in the past. A new challenge: In the smartphone age, poll response rates are far lower than they used to be.

6. We journalists can do a better job of conveying the uncertainty in polls. Polls will never be perfect. Capturing the opinions of a large, diverse country is too difficult. And in today’s closely divided U.S., small polling errors can make underdogs look like favorites and vice versa. All of us — journalists, campaign strategists and the many Americans who have become obsessed with politics — shouldn’t forget this. We just got another reminder.

For more: I’ve written a longer Times story [*about this year’s polling errors and the history of the industry*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

And my colleague Nate Cohn, who knows more about this subject than almost anybody, [*points out*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that a significant chunk of the error involved Hispanic voters. Nate has also discussed polling on episodes of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” and “[*The Argument*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” podcasts.

Elsewhere: [*Sarah Isgur*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) of The Dispatch says the problem isn’t about Trump voters who lie about their preference. [*Charles Franklin*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) of Marquette University suggests the pandemic may have affected turnout in surprising ways. [*Kristen Soltis Anderson*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a Republican pollster, notes that polls in many states will still be “incredibly close” to the final result.

THE LATEST NEWS

The Election

* [*Biden narrowly won Arizona*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). The victory brings him to 290 electoral votes.

1. More Republicans and their allies [*have begun acknowledging Biden’s victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), including Gov. Mike DeWine of Ohio, the veteran party operative Karl Rove and the editorial board of The Las Vegas Review-Journal, a newspaper owned by the family of the Republican megadonor Sheldon Adelson.
2. Several more Republican senators — including Chuck Grassley, Lindsey Graham and John Thune — [*said Trump should let Biden receive classified intelligence briefings*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
3. Trump privately pressed advisers about the possibility of Republican state legislatures [*appointing electors to vote for him in the Electoral College*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), bypassing voters’ wishes. But it was not a detailed conversation. “He knows it’s over,” one adviser said.
4. Federal, state and local election officials[*said the election “was the most secure in American history”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) and that there was “no evidence” of any compromised voting systems.
5. China [*congratulated Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) after days of silence, signaling a start to its relations with the incoming administration.

The Virus

* The U.S. recorded [*more than 160,000 new coronavirus cases*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) yesterday, a record.

1. Detroit said its public schools would shift to remote learning until January. New York City is [*considering closing schools*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. Biden’s team is concerned that the lack of a transition will [*hinder its virus response*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Biden’s advisers say they do not have access to the details of Operation Warp Speed, the White House project to create and distribute a vaccine.
3. The Ivy League [*canceled winter sports and postponed spring sports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Obama’s Memoir

* Reviews of [*Barack Obama’s forthcoming presidential memoir*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) have started to come out. The novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, [*writing in The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), says the book is “nearly always pleasurable to read.”

1. In one section, Obama addresses his presidency’s role in Trump’s rise to power: “It was as if my very presence in the White House had triggered a deep-seated panic,” he writes. “For millions of Americans spooked by a Black man in the White House, he promised an elixir for their racial anxiety.” (CNN has published [*several passages*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).)
2. This is the first of two volumes, and it starts early in [*Obama’s life*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), charting his initial political campaigns, and ends with a meeting where he is introduced to the SEAL team involved in the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.
3. Among the details: Despite his attempts to quit smoking, the stress of the job led Obama to smoke 10 cigarettes on some days. And he first thought the “Yes We Can” slogan was too corny for his campaign, until his wife, Michelle, changed his mind.

Other Big Stories

* [*Measles deaths spiked worldwide in 2019*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)to the highest level in decades. Vaccination rates have stagnated in recent years, partly because of unfounded skepticism about their safety.

1. American jets in Alaska have scrambled to intercept 14 Russian aircraft so far this year, in response to [*an escalation of Russian military aggression in the North Pacific*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. At least 74 people died after a rubber raft carrying migrants [*capsized off the coast of Libya*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). At least 900 people have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while trying to reach Europe this year.
3. The Canadian pop star [*The Weeknd will perform*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) at next year’s Super Bowl halftime show, the N.F.L. said.
4. Turkmenistan’s president [*unveiled a 19-foot-tall dog sculpture*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to honor his favorite breed, the Central Asian shepherd.

Morning Reads

Modern Love: [*A man finds himself caught up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in a global romance scam.

The planet’s future: Climate change will be central to Biden’s presidency. Here’s [*what he plans to do about it*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Lives Lived: Lucille Bridges braved abuse from white protesters as she and her 6-year-old daughter, Ruby, walked to an all-white school in New Orleans in 1960, crossing one of the segregated South’s most rigidly defended color lines. [*Bridges died at 86*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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ARTS AND IDEAS

Broadway is closed. It’s also everywhere.

These are difficult times for live theater. The pandemic has shut down Broadway and many local theaters since March, leaving actors, stagehands and others out of work and fans missing the shows. But there is one way that theater is managing to thrive right now: Broadway has [*become a bigger source of televised entertainment.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)

An incomplete list of recent and upcoming releases includes “The Prom,” “The Boys in the Band,” “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” “West Side Story” and “Wicked.” The film version of “Hamilton” was so popular that it contributed to a bump in sign-ups for Disney Plus, [*The Verge reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). And in a Broadway first, a musical focused on the life of Diana, Princess of Wales is set to debut on Netflix before the stage production opens.

Why is this happening now? One reason is streaming services’ “insatiable desire for content, even niche content,” Alexis Soloski writes in The Times. There’s also more mingling across theater, film and television than in the past. The playwright Jeremy O. Harris, who wrote [*“Slave Play,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) signed a deal with HBO this year; Phoebe Waller-Bridge, who originally wrote and performed [*“Fleabag”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) as a one-woman play, signed one with Amazon.

Some critics worry that film versions will cannibalize live ticket sales. But no film can entirely reproduce the experience of a live show. Just look at [*social media’s horrified reaction*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to last year’s movie version of “Cats.”

The Times recommends: [*“What the Constitution Means to Me,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) Heidi Schreck’s affecting play about the document’s impact on our daily lives.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

End the week with something snappy and bright. [*This lemon-garlic kale salad*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) is delightfully simple.

What to Watch

[*“Ammonite,” set in 1840s England,*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) follows the forbidden romance of Kate Winslet’s fossil hunter and Saoirse Ronan’s convalescent.

And to Read

The Times’ pop music editor Caryn Ganz [*recommends BlackMusicLibrary.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). The website catalogs the Black roots of popular music.

Late Night

The late-night hosts [*had a lot to stay about Trump’s refusal to concede*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was wildcat. Today’s puzzle is above — or you can [*play online*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) if you have a Games subscription.

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Raindrop sound (four letters).

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

P.S. Maggie Haberman, who has covered the Trump administration for The Times, is [*writing a book about his presidency*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about Trump’s refusal to concede. On [*a special episode of “Still Processing,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) the difference between election dreams and fantasies.

Lalena Fisher, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: People watching election results in San Francisco. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jim Wilson/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Up to My Eyeballs in Art at Superblue; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:627J-T8P1-DXY4-X27N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 2141 words

**Byline:** Arthur Lubow

**Highlight:** After a year of sensory deprivation, a critic dips a toe into the new, high-powered immersive art center in Miami.

**Body**

After a year of sensory deprivation, a critic dips a toe into the new, high-powered immersive art center in Miami.

Feeling a little like Alice in Wonderland as gigantic digital images of red, white and cream-colored dahlias budded, bloomed and shattered on the wall in front of me, I dithered over what I was witnessing. Is this a forward step in the march of modernism or a debasement of art into theme-park entertainment?

The dazzling floral extravaganza by teamLab, a digital art collective based in Tokyo, is the dynamic centerpiece of an inaugural exhibition at Superblue, a Miami “experiential art center” (or an E.A.C. to initiates) that begins invitational previews next week before opening to the public on April 22. Backed by the juggernaut Pace Gallery and Laurene Powell Jobs’s [*Emerson Collective*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/), Superblue is the blue-chip contestant in the rapidly growing field of immersive art.

The popularity of this genre is driven by contradictory desires, as demonstrated memorably by the line of visitors in 2019 who waited up to six hours for a one-minute stay amid the twinkling lights in [*Yayoi Kusama’s infinity mirror room at the David Zwirner gallery*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/) in Chelsea. Malnourished by their phones and computer screens, people yearn for real-life visceral experiences. And yet they remain stuck in the gravitational pull of virtual reality: The experiences they seek are ones they can record on their phone cameras and post on social media.

The renovated warehouse that Superblue occupies in Miami is across the street from a more traditional contemporary art institution, [*the Rubell Museum*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/), which reopened at the end of 2019 in Allapattah, a commercial and ***working-class*** area west of its former location in the now-gentrified Wynwood district. Mera Rubell told Marc Glimcher, the chief executive of Pace, about the availability of the building when they happened to be seated next to each other at a large dinner. The structure contains 31,000 square feet of exhibition space, with 30-foot ceilings. It will display installations for a year or a year and a half before they are trucked off to other Superblue sites in yet-to-be-announced cities. “That’s something we have to do to make the economics work,” Mollie Dent-Brocklehurst, the London-based co-founder, told me on a Zoom call.

For the inaugural exhibition, Superblue included “AKHU” by James Turrell, the Southern Californian who is an éminence grise of the experiential art world. The installation is what Turrell calls a Ganzfeld, a German word that denotes the loss of spatial perception that occurs in a featureless, uniform visual field, such as a fog whiteout. (As with Schadenfreude, Ganzfeld has no English counterpart.) In “AKHU” (an ancient Egyptian term that roughly translates as “soul”), an oblong of light is projected onto a smooth blank wall and tints the room. The color of the light gradually changes. If you climb the black-carpeted steps toward the threshold of the illuminated wall, your sense of where you are teeters vertiginously.

Turrell’s Ganzfelds are not new to me, but “AKHU” provided a useful yardstick to assess the two other art installations in the show. A Ganzfeld creates a contemplative mood in which time slows and space dematerializes. At the same time, it exposes the structures of visual perception (and misperception) that make the magic.

But why was I resistant to the notion that a simple spectacle might also be art? Artists have never eschewed showmanship. Bernini was a theater artist as well as a sculptor. In one of his plays (a 17th-century predecessor of “Miss Saigon” and “Phantom of the Opera”), a torrent of water rushed toward the gasping audience, diverted by sluices at the last moment. Of course, no one remembers Bernini for his divertissements. We salute “Apollo and Daphne,” marveling at how a sculptor, using the intractable substance of marble, could depict the fluid transformation of a nymph into a tree. Art certainly can be entertaining, but it must also be enlightening or disorienting. When it only titillates, it loses its claim to be art.

The crowd-pleasing touring [*shows*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/) of immersive projections of van Gogh paintings, which have proliferated as vigorously as sunflowers over the last decade, are to art what military music is to music. Another enterprise, [*Meow Wolf*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/) (why do experiential art organizations have such terrible names?), promotes the artistic credentials of its immersive installations more credibly. Formed in Santa Fe, N.M., in 2008, Meow Wolf recently opened Omega Mart in Las Vegas and plans to inaugurate a space in Denver later this year. Omega Mart resembles a supermarket with weird sets and bizarre commodities, all of them crafted by participating artists.

Underlying Omega Mart is a narrative having to do with a sinister corporation, a mystery waiting for the visitor to pry out. When I asked its co-chief executive, Ali Rubinstein, how Meow Wolf differed from Disney — a question she was uniquely qualified to answer, because she had worked at Disney for over two decades — she emphasized that “Disney’s experiences are programmed, and there is an expectation about how a guest will move through a land or an attraction,” while “Meow Wolf is all about giving our visitors the opportunity to design their own experience and choose how deeply they want to dive into the narrative component.”

Tellingly, the fantasy novelist George R.R. Martin, whose books were adapted into the HBO series “Game of Thrones,” is a major investor in Meow Wolf. Omega Mart transposes the Pop Art critique of American consumer culture that was expressed in [*Claes Oldenburg’s “The Store”*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/) — a witty panorama of commercial products, staged in 1961 — to the realm of Minecraft.

Is it art or something else? A better question might be, is it good? Marcel Duchamp’s ready-mades, Tristan Tzara’s Dada performances, Robert Smithson’s land art, Tino Sehgal’s constructed situations — in innumerable ways, modernist artists have crossed and dissolved boundaries.

Immersive art aims to take that mission further.

Es Devlin, whose “Forest of Us” is part of Superblue’s first exhibition, has worked as a theatrical designer for 25 years, creating celebrated sets for “The Lehman Trilogy,” Kanye West tours and “About Time: Fashion and Duration,” the Metropolitan Museum’s Costume Institute show last fall. Attending art school in London, Devlin admired the Young British Artists who preceded her, but, she told me in Miami, “I couldn’t get my head around making and selling an object. My natural world was the theater.” In the last five years, she has progressed from creating designs for other artists to acquiring “the confidence to write a narrative.”

“Forest of Us” begins with a film of almost three minutes, in which Devlin depicts branching — bronchi in the lungs, limbs of trees, rivulets into streams. The voice-over starts, “Every time I reach a fork in the road, I choose both paths,” and ends, “Can you find it? Go and find it!” At which point the screen parts, and the visitor walks through a portal into a maze. With stretched Mylar film on the ceiling, optical-glass mirror on the surrounding walls, and winding paths bordered by polished aluminum dividers, “Forest of Us” is a kind of hedge maze in which the traditional boxwood has been replaced by reflective surfaces.

Staring at my bounced-back image, I was reminded of Kusama’s visionary “Narcissus Garden,” an expanse of mirror balls lying on the ground. (First created in 1966 at the Venice Biennale, “Narcissus Garden” happens to be on view in a later format at the Rubell Museum.) But Devlin’s work envelops you. Eventually you come to a shallow pool, 6 feet wide and 35 feet long, where, standing on marked circles at the edge, you can raise your arms and see your reflection as a dendritic filigree and hear the whooshing intake of breath. Chilled, I felt I was standing by the bank of the river Styx, experiencing not my personal demise but the death of the planet.

At Superblue, the barrier between the viewer and the art work has evaporated, which is the long-stated mission of teamLab. One way to regard the group’s showstopping displays in Miami is that they allow a visitor to pass through a computer screen, just as the characters in Jean Cocteau’s film [*“Orphee”*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/) walk through mirrors. “What makes a boundary is the recognition of one by people,” Toshiyuki Inoko, a co-founder of teamLab, said, speaking through an interpreter as he tweaked the Miami installations shortly before the opening. “On a computer screen, once people recognize the screen it becomes a boundary. We are trying to eliminate or soften the boundary.”

Indeed, the largest of teamLab’s four exhibitions at Superblue Miami is devoted to two separately conceived works that have been interwoven. “Universe of Water Particles, Transcending Boundaries” is a digital waterfall that cascades down two walls and onto the shiny floor; coming into contact with a visitor’s feet, the stream parts. Concurrently, another work, “Flowers and People, Cannot be Controlled but Live Together,” is erupting with huge blossoms that grow and die. The flowers bloom on the ground only in those spaces that have been cleared of the watery image by the visitor’s presence.

The teamLab collaborative embraces its Japanese heritage most directly in a single-channel video, “Life Survives by the Power of Life II,” which transmogrifies the Kanji symbol for “life” into a tree branch passing through seasonal change in a dance of 3-D calligraphy. In another room, “Proliferating Immense Life, A Whole year per Year” displays a sequence of rendered flowers that grow huge and fly off as petals, leaving behind a grid of small gold-brown wall squares — an allusion to the gold leaf applied to the paper surface of a Japanese screen as well as (to my mind at least) bare winter fields shadowed by clouds. When my hand touched the flowers on the wall, I accelerated their dying — a caustic comment on humankind’s blight, as well as a ravishing rendition of the Japanese aesthetic of the ephemerality of beauty.

In 2018, Inoko convinced Glimcher to break a taboo and charge $20 for admission to a teamLab exhibition at Pace’s Palo Alto gallery. Pace represents several other artists whose experiential installations don’t lend themselves to conventional gallery sales: Leo Villareal, Random International, DRIFT. Pace was marketing their pieces to developers and governments. “They would be placed in shopping malls or on bridges,” Dent-Brocklehurst said.

The Superblue alternative model (which is not restricted to Pace artists) funds production of the work and pays royalties to the artists on ticket sales. A ticket to Superblue Miami costs $36, with a $10 add-on to see an additional teamLab project, [*“Massless Clouds Between Sculpture and Life,”*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/) an audience-tickling creation in which clouds of soap bubbles form, hover and dissipate as visitors walk through them.

Inoko told me that the cloud is like a virus, “at the boundary between what is living and isn’t living, and organic and inorganic.” Because of the coronavirus, Superblue Miami will initially operate at 50 percent capacity. It is better equipped than a conventional museum to meet that restriction. Shantelle Rodriguez, the director of experiential art centers for Superblue, said, “These artists have a very specific idea of the number of people who should be in a room to have the experience.”

For me, the immersive experience began, not entirely pleasantly, with my trip from New York to Miami, the first time I had been on an airplane in over a year. It continued with the alarmingly insouciant atmosphere in South Beach, where I returned to my hotel one evening to find a party of unmasked college students packed as tight as bedded asparagus by the swimming pool. In my discombobulated mood, the trippy, meditative, gorgeous installations of Superblue washed over me as a respite and solace. My resistance melted. My doubts subsided. Like the kids in my hotel, after a year of privation, I was ready to be seduced.

Superblue Miami

Opens April 22. 1101 NW 23 Street, Miami, Fla. 786-697-3405. Tickets go on sale in early April; to be alerted when they go live, sign up at [*superblue.com/miami.*](https://www.emersoncollective.com/)

PHOTOS: TeamLab’s “Proliferating Immense Life, a Whole Year Per Year,” an interactive digital installation at Superblue in Miami, which begins previews next week. Flowers bud, grow huge and die off, accelerated by a viewer’s touch. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFONSO DURAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Clockwise from far left, top, teamLab’s cloud room at Superblue; the theatrical designer Es Devlin’s immersive environment “Forest of Us”; soap bubbles at the cloud room; an image at James Turrell’s “AKHU”; Toshiyuki Inoko, a co-founder of teamLab; and Devlin in “Forest of Us.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALFONSO DURAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JAMES TURRELL; ANDREA MORA) (C8-C9)

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**End of Document**



[***The Post-Presidency of a Con Man***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:618W-FSH1-JBG3-629C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Out of office, Trump might seem a lot less formidable.

**Body**

Out of office, Trump might seem a lot less formidable.

It’s hard to tell whether Donald Trump is attempting a coup or throwing a tantrum.

Crying voter fraud, his administration has refused to begin a presidential transition despite his decisive electoral defeat. Some Republicans have [*floated the idea*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) of getting legislatures in states that Joe Biden won to disregard vote totals and instead appoint pro-Trump electors to the Electoral College. The president has decapitated the Pentagon, putting fanatical loyalists in some of its highest ranks. Anthony Tata, who [*called Barack Obama a “terrorist leader”*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) and [*tweeted a lurid fantasy*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) about the execution of the former C.I.A. director John Brennan, is now the Pentagon’s policy chief. This is all supremely alarming.

But there’s cause for comfort, of a sort, in signs that the president is preparing for life outside the White House in exactly the way one would expect — by initiating new grifts. Trump has been sending out frantic fund-raising requests to “defend the election,” but as The New York Times reports, most of the money is actually [*going to a PAC*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html), Save America, that “will be used to underwrite Mr. Trump’s post-presidential activities.” [*Axios reports*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) that Trump is considering starting a digital media company to undermine Fox News, which he now regards as disloyal.

These moves suggest that while Trump may be willing to torch American democracy to salve his wounded ego, at least part of him is getting ready to leave office.

When he finally does, some [*political observers*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) and Republican professionals assume he’ll remain a political kingmaker, and will be a favorite for the party’s nomination in 2024. The Times [*reported*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html), “Allies imagined other Republicans making a pilgrimage to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida seeking his blessing.” Senator Marco Rubio [*told The Daily Beast’s Sam Brodey*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html), “If he runs in 2024, he’ll certainly be the front-runner, and then he’ll probably be the nominee.”

Maybe. There’s no doubt that Trump has a cultlike hold on his millions of worshipers, and a unique ability to command public attention. But there are reasons to think that when he is finally ejected from the White House, he will become a significantly diminished figure.

Once Trump is no longer president, he is likely to be consumed by lawsuits and criminal investigations. Hundreds of millions of dollars in debt will come due. Lobbyists and foreign dignitaries won’t have much of a reason to patronize Mar-a-Lago or his Washington hotel. Fox News owner Rupert Murdoch could complete the transition from Trump’s enabler to his enemy. And, after four years of cartoonish self-abasement, Republicans with presidential aspirations will have an incentive to help take him down.

“His whole life he’s been involved in a bunch of litigation,” said the superstar liberal attorney Roberta Kaplan. But post-presidency, “I have to assume that, given the amount of civil litigation and potential criminal exposure, it’s going to be at a completely new dimension.”

Kaplan is pursuing three high-profile lawsuits against Trump, including the writer E. Jean Carroll’s defamation case. Carroll, you might remember, accused Trump of raping her in a department store dressing room during the 1990s. Trump called her a liar, and she’s suing him for damaging her reputation.

Under Attorney General Bill Barr, the Department of Justice has tried to shut down the suit, arguing that Trump was acting in his official capacity when he said Carroll had made up the story to sell books. In October a judge rejected the department’s theory, but had Trump been re-elected, Kaplan expected an appeal.

Once Biden is president, Kaplan told me, “it’s hard for me to imagine that the D.O.J. won’t change its position.” So the case is likely to proceed. Kaplan expects it to go into discovery shortly after Biden’s inauguration. She anticipates deposing Trump and collecting his D.N.A. to compare with male D.N.A. found on the dress Carroll was wearing at the time of the alleged attack.

If Kaplan and Carroll prevail at trial, it would be a high-profile legal validation of Carroll’s claims. Her suit has not, so far, been a major news story — there’s too much else going on. But a verdict in her favor could be the #MeToo version of the civil judgment against O.J. Simpson — not justice, exactly, but a powerful rejection of impunity.

Carroll’s suit is not the only one that could force Trump to answer for his predatory history with women. The former “Apprentice” contestant Summer Zervos, who says Trump groped and kissed her against her will, is, like Carroll, [*suing for defamation*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) because Trump called her a liar. (Her lawyer is Beth Wilkinson, who defended Brett Kavanaugh when he was accused of sexual assault during his Supreme Court confirmation fight.)

In addition to Carroll, Kaplan is representing Mary Trump, the president’s niece, who is [*suing Trump*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html), his sister and his late brother Robert’s estate for fraud and civil conspiracy, saying they cheated her out of an inheritance. And she’s representing a group of people who are suing Trump and his three oldest children for enticing them to invest in an alleged pyramid scheme, run by a telecommunications company called ACN, which sold clunky videophones.

The plaintiffs are poor and ***working class***, including a hospice caregiver who paid thousands of dollars to ACN because she trusted Trump’s fulsome endorsements, having no idea that ACN was paying Trump millions. As with the other suits, there is obviously no guarantee of success. But Trump’s alleged involvement in a multilevel marketing scheme that traded on a false image of his business acumen will be a minor subplot over the next few years.

It’s too much to expect any sudden exposure of Trump. There will be no cathartic moment when everyone realizes that the emperor was always naked. But the question isn’t whether Trump’s support will evaporate. It’s whether it will erode, especially once he loses the ability to make Republican dreams come true.

Besides, the threats to Trump are not only to his reputation, such as it is. In Bob Woodward’s book “Fear,” he wrote that Trump’s former lawyer John Dowd implored the president not to testify in Robert Mueller’s probe because he believed him to be an inveterate liar. (Dowd has denied this.) Should Trump face depositions in these civil cases, however, he’ll have no choice about submitting to interviews.

Andrew Weissmann, Mueller’s former deputy, told me he expects Trump to pardon himself for any federal crimes he might have committed. That would mean that even if a Biden Department of Justice wanted to take the extraordinary step of prosecuting a former president, it would also have to litigate the constitutionality of self-pardons, a complicated, time-consuming process.

But he might face state charges that he can’t pardon his way out of. The New York State attorney general, Letitia James, has a civil investigation into [*possible financial chicanery*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) by the Trump Organization. Trump is under criminal investigation by Manhattan’s district attorney, Cyrus Vance. While the scope of the inquiry is unknown, his [*office’s filings suggest*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) Vance could be looking at tax fraud, insurance fraud and falsification of business records.

The “Manhattan D.A.’s office is a really good office, and they’ve done a lot of white-collar cases,” said Weissmann. “If they were to prove — this is now hypothetical — but if they were to prove tens of millions of dollars in tax fraud or bank fraud, people go to jail for that.”

Let’s say Trump, ever the escape artist, avoids prison, setting himself up as the warlord of MAGA-world at Mar-a-Lago. His post-presidency still won’t be easy. As The Times has reported, he’s personally on the hook for $421 million in debt, most of it coming due in the next four years. If a long fight with the I.R.S. goes against him, he could owe at least $100 million more.

“Mr. Trump still has assets to sell,” The Times reported. “But doing so could take its own toll, both financial and to Mr. Trump’s desire to always be seen as a winner.”

Trump is already trying to profit off his avid base, and he will surely continue. But it’s an open question whether, without the intoxicating aura of presidential power, he can sustain their devotion. There are several examples of once-formidable right-wing leaders reduced to footnotes after leaving office.

As Republican House majority leader, Tom DeLay was frequently described as the [*most powerful man in Congress*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html). Then, in 2005, he was indicted on a charge of campaign money laundering. Though his 2010 conviction was eventually overturned on appeal, the last time he had any significant public profile was when he appeared on “Dancing With the Stars” in 2009.

Sarah Palin, too, was once a Republican icon; in many ways she presaged Trump. “Win or Lose, Many See Palin as Future of Party,” said a [*New York Times headline*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) just before the 2008 election. It quoted the right-wing activist Brent Bozell: “Conservatives have been looking for leadership, and she has proved that she can electrify the grass roots like few people have in the last 20 years.”

But since resigning as Alaska’s governor in 2009, Palin has lost her luster. Once a likely presidential prospect, she recently made headlines for wearing a pink and purple bear costume on the [*Fox reality show “The Masked Singer*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html).”

Trump is in for years of scandals and humiliations. We will doubtlessly find out more about official misdeeds he tried to keep secret as president. Republicans who hope to succeed him will have reason to start painting him as a loser instead of a savior. He’ll have to devote much of his energy to trying to stay out of prison.

After all that, could he be back in 2024? Of course. Trump is, if nothing else, relentless. But this election was just the latest reminder that he is far from invincible. When he is no longer in office, there will be many more.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.axios.com/trump-electoral-college-biden-68d94e27-ace7-4da8-9e22-af7a62fe5149.html).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR4-SR5)

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[***5 Messages Voters Sent in the 2020 Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:618R-K4F1-JBG3-61TJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Highlight:** Biden may have won, but the “battle for the soul of the nation” will only intensify.

**Body**

Biden may have won, but the “battle for the soul of the nation” will only intensify.

This article is part of the Debatable newsletter. You can [*sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to receive it on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The 2020 presidential election always promised to be a “historic” one, and there’s no question it delivered: More than 66 percent of the voting-eligible population cast a ballot, [*according*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to projections from The Washington Post, the highest level of voter turnout since 1900.

As with the 2016 election, the consensus around what this mass expression of popular will says about the country is likely to be debated for years to come, but here are some lessons that journalists, data analysts and politicians are already taking away.

Support for Trump has become stronger, not weaker

The Democratic Party’s goal for this election was a wholesale repudiation of President Trump and his style of politics. But as the Times columnist Jamelle Bouie [*noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), that repudiation never came. In fact, the president expanded his base in 2020, earning [*nearly 10 million more votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) than he did in 2016 and over [*six million more*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) than Hillary Clinton.

“Even without policy to match the populist persona — the Trump administration has been as generous to the wealthy and connected as it has been stingy with the poor and the ***working class*** — Trumpism appeals to tens of millions of voters, from the large majority of white Americans to many people in traditionally Democratic constituencies,” Mr. Bouie writes. “That, if anything, is the surprise of this election.”

In a political climate as polarized as ours, much of Mr. Trump’s gains can be chalked up to pure “[*negative partisanship*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable).” But for people [*without strong party affiliations*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), Mr. Trump’s handling of the economy, which voters consistently rank [*as their top issue*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), may have played a role: Approval ratings of Mr. Trump’s economic performance [*remained high*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) throughout his presidency, which coincided with the country’s longest economic expansion. And in September, a majority of Americans [*told Gallup*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) they were better off than they were four years ago, which was not the case in 2012 and 2004.

Of course, Mr. Trump also presided over the [*sharpest downturn*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) since the Great Depression. But as Annie Lowrey [*explains*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in The Atlantic, many Americans seemed not to blame Mr. Trump for the pandemic-induced recession, and the election occurred as the economy was already bouncing back. Because of the trillions in stimulus Congress passed in March, many in the middle class are actually faring better financially than they were before. (Those most devastated by the recession were likely to vote Democratic anyway.)

Racial and ethnic polarization seems to be decreasing

White voters, who made up roughly two-thirds of the electorate, continue to be the only racial group from which Mr. Trump commanded [*majority support*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). Exit polls — which, it bears reminding, are preliminary estimates — show that his advantage increased slightly among white women from 2016, but [*he lost support*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) among white men both with and without college degrees.

At the same time, President-elect Joe Biden underperformed Hillary Clinton among other racial and ethnic groups. Mr. Trump [*expanded his appeal*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) among Black voters, for example, though Black support for Democrats remained so high that the increase in turnout cost Mr. Trump dearly in states such as [*Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) and [*Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable).

Most significant were Mr. Trump’s inroads with Latino voters in the battleground states of Florida and Texas, which helped keep them in Republican hands. In Texas, especially, Mr. Trump’s [*handling of the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), combined with the lack of Democratic [*messaging and outreach*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), appeared key to his success.

But the losses in Latino support Mr. Biden suffered in those states were offset by gains made in others, in part because of grass-roots organizing that preceded this election cycle. In Arizona, for example, the nativist tenure of Joe Arpaio, the former Maricopa County sheriff, [*galvanized the children of immigrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) a decade ago to build political power, which contributed to Mr. Biden’s and Senator-elect Mark Kelly’s victories there.

[*[Related: “Democrats Underperformed Among Voters of Color — Except in Arizona. Here’s Why.”]*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable)

If the diversity of the so-called Latino vote has befuddled the political class, it’s because “it doesn’t exist, nor do ‘Latino issues,’” my colleague Isvett Verde [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). “Latinos, like all Americans, are motivated by the issues that affect them directly. Those can vary depending on factors like our religion, where we grew up, whether we are first generation or our ancestors lived in North America long before the United States existed.”

What’s true for Latinos is also true for Asian-Americans, whose support for Democrats is traditionally strong, but appeared [*weaker this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), and has never been uniform. About half of Vietnamese-Americans support Mr. Trump, for example, compared with one-fifth of Chinese-Americans, according to [*one survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable).

To Jay Caspian Kang, a writer at large for The New York Times Magazine, the lesson for both parties, and especially Democrats, is to start treating voters who belong to extremely broad racial and ethnic groups less like electoral tokens and more like political agents whose interests are contingent on their class position, education, ideology, immigration status, specific cultural background, age and location.

As he [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) on the podcast “Time to Say Goodbye”: “You have to stop insulting people by believing that, you know, just by saying ‘We’re less racist’ that they’re going to vote for you.”

The suburbs are trending blue

In 2018, voters in increasingly diverse and highly educated suburbs helped flip the House blue. That support only increased in 2020: On average, Mr. Biden improved on Hillary Clinton’s performance in suburban counties around the country by about 4.6 percentage points, The Times [*reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), which was crucial to Mr. Biden’s win.

The implications of the shift, Neal Rothschild and Stef W. Kight [*write*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) at Axios, are clear: “The suburbs are growing and [*racially and ethnically diverse*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). They’re becoming new [*immigrant hubs*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). The trends could benefit Democrats for the long-term unless Republicans change their playbook.”

The red-blue economic divide is widening

[*According*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to exit polls, Mr. Biden did better than Mr. Trump with voters whose family income falls below $100,000 per year. But relatively well-off metro areas also show [*a stark partisan divide*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable): Regions with higher education levels, fewer manufacturing jobs and brighter long-term economic prospects swung more toward Mr. Biden, while regions with lower job growth and a larger share of jobs at risk of automation swung more toward Mr. Trump.

“Despite some demographic realignments, the economies of red and blue places drifted further apart,” Jed Kelko [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in The Times. “And as these gaps widen, it gets ever more challenging for America to have a shared view of the state of the economy and of the policies most urgently needed.”

Support for progressive policies was all over the map

As Emily Peck [*reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) for HuffPost, voters supported a number of progressive policies last week — and not only in the places one might expect:

* In Florida, a state Mr. Trump won handily, people voted to increase the state’s minimum hourly wage [*to $15 by a margin of about 22 percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable).

1. Arizona passed a 3.5 percent income tax hike on the state’s highest earners, which is estimated to raise [*nearly $940 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) annually for education programs.
2. Colorado [*passed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) a measure guaranteeing 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave.
3. Four states — Arizona, Montana, New Jersey and South Dakota — legalized marijuana for recreational use. Oregon also voted to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of hard drugs, the first state to do so, and fund addiction treatment programs. (The state also legalized psilocybin, the active compound in psychedelic mushrooms, for therapeutic use.) “One of America’s greatest mistakes over the last century was the war on drugs,” the Times columnist Nick Kristof [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), “so it’s thrilling to see voters in red and blue states alike moving to unwind it.”

At the same time, progressive priorities suffered major setbacks, and in Democratic strongholds, no less. In Illinois, voters [*rejected*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) a measure to raise taxes on the rich, the same sort of policy that enjoys [*broad support*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) nationally. And in California, voters passed Prop 22, a ballot measure that overturned legislation that forced companies like Uber and DoorDash to treat their contract workers as employees with guaranteed wages and benefits.

“Prop 22 is great for employers, but it’s a huge loss for workers,” Robert Reich, a University of California, Berkeley, professor of public policy and former U.S. secretary of labor, [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) The Times. “This will encourage other companies to reclassify their work force as independent contractors, and once they do, over a century of labor protections vanishes overnight.”

If there is any electoral lesson to decode from these results, it’s not clear that ideology offers the right interpretive key. “At a time when great masses of voters support obvious contradictions like raising the minimum wage and viciously anti-worker state legislatures,” [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) Alex Pareene in The New Republic, “it’s hard to believe anyone, at least in the short term, has a compelling or even plausible strategy for consistently winning elections.”

Do you have a point of view we missed? Email us at [*debatable@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). Please note your name, age and location in your response, which may be included in the next newsletter.

MORE ON THE VOTE BREAKDOWN

[*“White people, yet again, showed up for Donald Trump”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [Vox]

[*“How Democrats Missed Trump’s Appeal to Latino Voters”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The New York Times]

[*“The Three Progressive Policies Voters Seem to Love”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [Slate]

[*“This Election, a Divided America Stands United on One Topic”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The New York Times]

[*“We’ve Seen a Youthquake”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [Time]

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; photographs by Jim Wilson/The New York Times, Audra Melton and Lauren Justice for The New York Time FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Biden Takes Fresh Aim At President In TV Event***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60VY-9T31-JBG3-644R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1471 words

**Byline:** By Katie Glueck

**Body**

At a town hall event near Scranton, Pa., the Democratic nominee played up his local roots as he sought to connect with voters after many months off the campaign trail during the pandemic.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. faced his first sustained questioning from voters as the Democratic presidential nominee on Thursday, as Pennsylvanians pressed him on issues including health care, racism and policing at a CNN town-hall-style event held less than seven weeks before Election Day.

At a gathering in Moosic, Pa., not far from his childhood home in Scranton, Mr. Biden -- who played up his local, middle-class roots -- sought at every opportunity to turn the focus to President Trump's stewardship of the coronavirus, casting the president as a callous leader who cannot empathize with the concerns of most Americans and who has exacerbated the hardships they face.

''You lost your freedom because he didn't act,'' Mr. Biden declared. ''The freedom to go to that ballgame, the freedom for your kid to go to school, the freedom to see your mom or dad in the hospital. The freedom just to walk around your neighborhood, because of failure to act responsibly.''

The appearance offered a test of his verbal agility less than two weeks before the first presidential debate, after Mr. Biden spent the summer largely off the campaign trail with limited and often controlled interactions with the news media. Headed into the evening, he may have benefited from the low expectations Republicans have set about his ability to communicate clearly, seeking to throw doubt on his mental acuity.

But as the night got underway, while there was the occasional tangent, Mr. Biden delivered a relatively energetic performance defined by withering criticism of Mr. Trump and palpable enthusiasm for connecting with voters after many months without much significant interaction with them, indicating to several that he would be open to follow-up conversations.

The setting reflected the extraordinary nature of campaigning in a pandemic: A stage was constructed in a parking lot at PNC Field, where the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre minor league baseball team plays. Mr. Biden and CNN's Anderson Cooper stood a significant distance from each other, and the Democratic nominee often gestured with his mask in hand. Audience members listened from their cars, as if it were a drive-in movie, according to CNN. And voters stood at a distance from Mr. Biden as they asked him questions.

Mr. Biden seemed keenly focused on the location, making frequent references to his ***working-class*** ties as he sought to connect in a region where Mr. Trump's populist message had significant appeal in 2016. The former vice president has long hoped to cut into Mr. Trump's advantage with white voters without college degrees.

''Maybe it's my Scranton roots, I don't know -- but when you guys started talking on television about, 'Biden, if he wins, would be the first person without an Ivy League degree to be elected president,' I'm thinking, 'Who the hell makes you think I have to have an Ivy League degree to be president?''' Mr. Biden demanded. Numerous presidents have lacked Ivy League degrees, but he earned applause in the crowd.

''We are as good as anybody else,'' Mr. Biden continued. ''Guys like Trump who inherited everything and squandered what they inherited are the people that I've always had a problem with, not the people who are busting their neck.''

A number of Mr. Biden's allies have urged his campaign to talk more about the economy, an area where Mr. Trump has traditionally had an advantage, according to polls. Earlier Thursday, as Mr. Trump's campaign unfurled new ads focused on the economy, Mr. Biden's advisers painted the president as an opponent of ''working people.''

''I really do view this campaign as a campaign between Scranton and Park Avenue,'' Mr. Biden said that evening. ''All he thinks about is the stock market.''

''How many of you all own stock?'' Mr. Biden continued. ''In my neighborhood in Scranton, not a whole hell of a lot of people own stock.''

In a statement, Tim Murtaugh, a Trump campaign spokesman, said that Mr. Biden should have received more scrutiny of his plans and his record on matters including the economy.

''This was classic Joe Biden: untethered to the facts, his own record, or reality,'' he said in a statement.

Mr. Trump made his own campaign appearance on Thursday in Mosinee, Wis., where he spoke outdoors for more than 90 minutes to a crowd on a blustery airport tarmac just feet from a wingtip of Air Force One, which was parked behind him.

In rambling remarks, Mr. Trump warned that the 2020 election was a choice ''between law and order on one side and chaos on the other.''

''On Nov. 3, Wisconsin will decide whether we will quickly return to record prosperity, or whether we will allow Biden and the Democrats to impose a $4 trillion tax hike, ban American energy, confiscate your guns'' and ''shut down the economy,'' Mr. Trump said, in remarks that significantly distorted Mr. Biden's agenda. He also proclaimed Speaker Nancy Pelosi ''crazy as a bedbug'' and said he looked forward to seeing what Vice President Mike Pence ''does to'' Mr. Biden's running mate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, in their debate next month.

Mr. Biden, often seeming to be in a punchy mood, lobbed his own attacks on Mr. Trump's sense of reality.

''He may be really losing it -- he's president,'' Mr. Biden said, as he addressed the civil unrest that has played out in some American cities. ''I am not the president. This is Donald Trump's America. You feel safer in Donald Trump's America?''

Mr. Biden's appearance came as he sought to center the presidential campaign on the response to the coronavirus. On Wednesday, he stepped up his warnings that Mr. Trump was politicizing the rollout of a vaccine, and at the town hall, he discussed the issue at length, stressing his deference to scientists even as he described the staggering uncertainties that would accompany the successful deployment of a vaccine.

The opinion of the federal government's top infectious disease expert would be important, he said. ''I don't trust the president on vaccines,'' he said. ''I trust Dr. Fauci. If Fauci says a vaccine is safe, I'd take the vaccine.''

Throughout the event, Mr. Biden blasted Mr. Trump's handling of the coronavirus crisis -- as he has many other times in recent months -- and pointed to revelations from a new book by the journalist Bob Woodward that the president had knowingly minimized the risks of the coronavirus. He also sought to connect many voters' questions back to that subject.

But the issues that arose were wide-ranging, and Mr. Biden, who visited firefighters after the event, seemed keenly attuned to the politics of Pennsylvania.

''I will win Scranton,'' Mr. Biden later insisted to reporters, according to a pool report. ''Listen to me. I will win Scranton. And we were losing Scranton and Lackawanna County till I got put on the ticket. This is home. I know these people.''

Asked by reporters whether he believed that he was the reason Barack Obama had won the county, he replied: ''I know I helped in this county. I helped in this state. We were losing by seven points in Pennsylvania. I get announced as the candidate. Five days later, we were up by six.''

It was not immediately clear what polls Mr. Biden was referring to -- a RealClearPolitics compilation of polls from the 2008 race, when Mr. Biden was added to the ticket, did not show Mr. Obama losing Pennsylvania in the general election.

In a critical battleground state that Mr. Trump won in 2016, one where hydraulic fracturing is both a contentious issue and a source of jobs, Mr. Biden declared that there was ''no rationale'' for eliminating fracking at the moment.

As Mr. Biden focused on Pennsylvania, Mr. Trump declared his love for the state of Wisconsin, although at times he had a curious way of showing it: He had to ask the crowd how to pronounce Mosinee and then did not repeat it himself.

''I don't know why the hell I like Wisconsin, but for some reason,'' he said, trailing off, as the crowd -- in which many people did not wear masks -- chanted, ''We love you!''

Also Thursday, Mr. Biden embraced a proposed income subsidy that is a focus of growing Democratic support. The plan, an expansion of the child tax credit, would offer $3,000 per child per year ($3,600 for those under age 6) for all but the wealthiest families -- essentially creating a guaranteed income for families with children. Analysts have estimated that the move would cost roughly $100 billion a year, a significant sum but less than half the annual cost of Mr. Trump's tax cuts, which mostly benefit the wealthiest Americans.

Reporting was contributed by Michael Crowley, Sydney Ember, Thomas Kaplan and Jason DeParle.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/17/us/politics/biden-pennsylvania-town-hall.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/17/us/politics/biden-pennsylvania-town-hall.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr. with Anderson Cooper of CNN at a town hall event on Thursday in Moosic, Pa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 18, 2020

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[***The Dance on Camera Festival, When Dance Is Only on Camera; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:609T-TTJ1-JBG3-62GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; dance

**Length:** 1454 words

**Byline:** Brian Seibert

**Highlight:** Many dance films of recent months have been films by necessity, but the ones in this festival are films by design, for better and worse.

**Body**

Many dance films of recent months have been films by necessity, but the ones in this festival are films by design, for better and worse.

“We’re all becoming filmmakers,” Annie-B Parson told me in May. She was speaking for her fellow choreographers, and in the months since, her generalization has proved prophetic. With theaters closed, dance companies and dance makers accustomed to stage performance have been rushing to channel their work into a form you can stream. Live dance is dormant, but filmed dance has been busting out all over.

Many of these new dance films, made in less than ideal circumstances, look like first efforts. But, of course, there is nothing new about dance on camera. The[*Dance on Camera festival*](https://www.dancefilms.org/july-17-20-2020-dance-on-camera-festival/) has been surveying the field since 1971. This year, for the first time, the festival is happening online, July 17 to July 20. (Tickets and a schedule are at [*Danceoncamerafestival.org*](https://www.dancefilms.org/july-17-20-2020-dance-on-camera-festival/).)

“It’s never been about putting cameras on dancers,” Liz Wolff, a curator of the festival, said. “It’s really about films that put dance into a filmic narrative or structure.”

In other words, where many dance films of recent months are films by necessity, the ones in the festival are so by design. Rather than trying to reproduce theatrical experience virtually, they aim to take advantage of the medium. Since most of this year’s selections — abstract and narrative, short and feature-length, documentary, animated — were conceived and created before the pandemic, they serve as reminders of the possibilities of filming dance in a less panicked state. And at a time when dance on camera is almost the only kind of dance, they provide a chance to consider what matters in such a film.

First, as so much footage of people dancing in cramped apartments has lately brought into relief, setting makes a huge difference. Take “Kieli Bi” (“Sacred Dance”), a short in which Dana Mussa returns to her homeland of Kazakhstan to dance like a goddess amid the arid majesty of the steppe. Or David Bolger’s “How to Sink a Paper Boat,” beautifully shot in and around an Irish lighthouse that’s a big clue to the film’s hidden subject — the repressed memory of a World War I maritime disaster. In both, the surroundings tell more than half the story.

In Claire Marshall’s 30-minute “Shift,” it’s the rotation of location that signifies. We see a man and woman whom the credits call a “discordant couple” grappling in a backyard, then suddenly in a pool, a playground, a bar, a tunnel. The artful editing, combined with the obliviousness of peripheral figures, conveys the self-absorption of a sexual unit and their pattern repetition — wherever these two may be, they’re still tussling in bed.

Yet as visually striking as these three films are, the dancing in them isn’t very distinguished or memorable. It’s when filmmaking and choreography are equally expressive that these movies gain full power, as in Susan Misner’s “Bend,” the most potent nine minutes of the festival.

“Bend” is also about a couple. We first see them naked in bed together: Troy Ogilvie, a white woman, and Jeffery Dickerson Duffy, a Black man. Together, they go to see her son play in a night game of high-school football. When the national anthem starts, Mr. Duffy’s character takes a knee. Ms. Ogilvie’s character notices.

That’s when dance comes in. It’s in the tradition of dream ballet: While the action takes place out on the field, among the players, it’s really all happening in her mind. The dance, though, is much rougher than ballet. In its fundamental gesture, she keeps trying to pick him up, tenderly, but he keeps going back down, politically determined or collapsing as if shot.

The dance is intercut with naturalistic flashbacks of their budding relationship, the relationship now under pressure. And that pressure has a sound: police radio, James Baldwin’s voice, protesters chanting “I can’t breathe.” As the tension mounts, she seems, at one point, to pledge allegiance to him and, at the next, to pin him to the ground, police style. The setting and cinematography are crucial here, as are the believable performances, but it’s Ms. Misner’s choreography that brings us inside the woman’s painful reckoning with white guilt.

Also strong, in a different way, is “Welcome to a Bright White Limbo,” directed by Cara Holmes. “Welcome” is apt, because this 10-minute film is essentially an introduction to the remarkable Belfast choreographer Oona Doherty. It situates her in her ***working-class*** habitat of cul-de-sacs and dart boards, samples some of [*her pugnacious solo “Hope Hunt”*](https://www.dancefilms.org/july-17-20-2020-dance-on-camera-festival/) and lets us hear her thoughts in voice-over.

As in “Bend,” the elements are in balance: the honesty of Ms. Doherty’s dancing in harmony with the honesty of the filmmaking and the honesty of her words. A show is a failure, she says, if a viewer’s body doesn’t know what her body means, if her audience doesn’t feel it in the stomach. By that measure, this short dance film is a success.

The feature-length selections of this year’s festival are dominated by documentaries. And these longer films share a fault: Too much talking, not enough letting dance speak for itself.

In a few, the imbalance seems somewhat justified, a deliberate choice of form. Both Peter Vulchev’s “A Monologue in the Intermission” and Edoardo Gabbriellini’s “Kemp: My Best Dance Is Yet to Come” are rage-against-the-dying-of-the-light monologues: the first by Vesa Tonova, a cigarette-smoking, Bulgarian ballerina on the edge of forced retirement; the second by the flamboyant mime Lindsay Kemp, dropping names and making faces at 80. With the primary focus on such personalities, the performance footage becomes acceptably secondary, a photo album flipped through while listening.

But while “Dancing Darkness,” by V. Tony Hauser and Ellen Tolmie, chronicles the creation of a work by the Canadian choreographer Peggy Baker, and illuminates the collaboration among Ms. Baker, the dancers and Sarah Neufeld (the violinist for Arcade Fire), it’s too behind-the-scenes. The film’s reason to exist — Ms. Baker’s dance — is chopped into incoherence and presented as if it were no more than visual accompaniment for all the verbiage.

That’s less of a problem with “Maguy Marin: Time to Act,” about the French experimentalist choreographer. Directed with sophistication and love by her son, David Mambouch, it covers her career, her revolt against conventional beauty, her love of the awkward and grotesque, her political principles and struggles. A maker of grim art turns out to be charming, and if Mr. Mambouch too often lets everyone talk over the archival evidence, at least he gives us large enough chunks of his mother’s work to sense directly what it is.

In not trusting dance, Khadifa Wong’s “Uprooted — The Journey of Jazz Dance” might be the worst offender. As it strives to encompass a vast and neglected subject, tiny fragments of bodies in motion are overrun by an army of talking heads. But in much of the chatter, important issues buzz. Except for “Bend,” no film in the festival is more urgent.

More than halfway through, after the interviewees have established the African-American roots of jazz dance and dwelt on the mid-20th-century achievements of Matt Mattox, Luigi, Gus Giordano, Jack Cole and Bob Fosse, the so-called founding fathers, Melanie George throws a wrench. The most cogent of the commentators, she smilingly suggests that these white men were merely the codifiers of jazz dance — not, as often claimed, the chief inventors. They are more famous because they were white, but also because what is codified is easier to legitimize and explain, easier to talk about in documentaries.

In “Uprooted,” this powerful idea seems to prompt a midcourse correction, a choice that helps give Ms. Wong’s film its air of discovery. I wish she had corrected further, though, asserting a more forceful authorial point of view. Her film does begin to rectify history, mostly by name-checking undersung Black men and women. But I wish she had given us more of their dancing, letting us feel it in the stomach, uncodified and self-explanatory.

It may seem odd for a critic to call for less commentary. But if the products of the pandemic show that merely putting cameras on dancers isn’t sufficient to make a great dance film, this year’s festival reminds us that dance on camera is what makes a dance film great.

In this year’s Dance on Camera festival, online for the first time since its inception in 1971, from top: from “Maguy Marin: Time to Act,” a documentary about Ms. Marin directed by David Mambouch, her son; Jeffery Dickerson Duffy in Susan Misner’s “Bend”; and Khadifa Wong’s documentary “Uprooted — The Journey of Jazz Dance.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIDIER GRAPPE; SUSAN MISNER; DARYL GETMAN)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Biden, Facing Voters in a 2020 Rarity, Attacks Trump From a Battleground State***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60VW-W1W1-JBG3-63MW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** At a town hall event near Scranton, Pa., the Democratic nominee played up his local roots as he sought to connect with voters after many months off the campaign trail during the pandemic.

**Body**

At a town hall event near Scranton, Pa., the Democratic nominee played up his local roots as he sought to connect with voters after many months off the campaign trail during the pandemic.

[*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) faced his first sustained questioning from voters as the Democratic presidential nominee on Thursday, as Pennsylvanians pressed him on issues including health care, racism and policing at a CNN [*town-hall-style*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) event held less than seven weeks before Election Day.

At a gathering in Moosic, Pa., not far from his childhood home in Scranton, Mr. Biden — who played up his local, middle-class roots — sought at every opportunity to turn the focus to [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html)’s stewardship of the coronavirus, casting the president as a callous leader who cannot empathize with the concerns of most Americans and who has exacerbated the hardships they face.

“You lost your freedom because he didn’t act,” Mr. Biden declared. “The freedom to go to that ballgame, the freedom for your kid to go to school, the freedom to see your mom or dad in the hospital. The freedom just to walk around your neighborhood, because of failure to act responsibly.”

The appearance offered a test of his verbal agility less than two weeks before the first presidential debate, after Mr. Biden spent the summer largely off the campaign trail with limited and often controlled interactions with the news media. Headed into the evening, he may have benefited from the low expectations Republicans have set about his ability to communicate clearly, seeking to throw doubt on his mental acuity.

But as the night got underway, while there was the occasional tangent, Mr. Biden delivered a relatively energetic performance defined by withering criticism of Mr. Trump and palpable enthusiasm for connecting with voters after many months without much significant interaction with them, indicating to several that he would be open to follow-up conversations.

The setting reflected the extraordinary nature of campaigning in a pandemic: A stage was constructed in a parking lot at PNC Field, where the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre minor league baseball team plays. Mr. Biden and CNN’s Anderson Cooper stood a significant distance from each other, and the Democratic nominee often gestured with his mask in hand. Audience members listened from their cars, as if it were a drive-in movie, [*according to CNN*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html). And voters stood at a distance from Mr. Biden as they asked him questions.

Mr. Biden seemed keenly focused on the location, making frequent references to his ***working-class*** ties as he sought to connect in a region where Mr. Trump’s populist message had significant appeal in 2016. The former vice president has long hoped to cut into Mr. Trump’s advantage with white voters without college degrees.

“Maybe it’s my Scranton roots, I don’t know — but when you guys started talking on television about, ‘Biden, if he wins, would be the first person without an Ivy League degree to be elected president,’ I’m thinking, ‘Who the hell makes you think I have to have an Ivy League degree to be president?’” [*Mr. Biden demanded*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html). He also described himself as, “guys like me, the first in my family to go to college.” The Trump campaign was [*quick to note*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) that Mr. Biden [*has acknowledged*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) that some members of his family did attend college, though his father, who did not, was especially focused on his son achieving a degree.

Numerous presidents have also lacked Ivy League degrees, but he earned applause in the crowd anyway.

“We are as good as anybody else,” Mr. Biden continued. “Guys like Trump who inherited everything and squandered what they inherited are the people that I’ve always had a problem with, not the people who are busting their neck.”

A number of Mr. Biden’s allies have urged his campaign to talk more about the economy, an area where Mr. Trump has traditionally had an advantage, according to polls. Earlier Thursday, as Mr. Trump’s campaign unfurled new ads focused on the economy, Mr. Biden’s advisers painted the president as an opponent of “working people.”

“I really do view this campaign as a campaign between Scranton and Park Avenue,” Mr. Biden said that evening. “All he thinks about is the stock market.”

“How many of you all own stock?” Mr. Biden continued. “In my neighborhood in Scranton, not a whole hell of a lot of people own stock.”

In a statement, Tim Murtaugh, a Trump campaign spokesman, said that Mr. Biden should have received more scrutiny of his plans and his record on matters including the economy.

“This was classic Joe Biden: untethered to the facts, his own record, or reality,” he said in a statement.

Mr. Trump made his own campaign appearance on Thursday in Mosinee, Wis., where he spoke outdoors for more than 90 minutes to a crowd on a blustery airport tarmac just feet from a wingtip of Air Force One, which was parked behind him.

In rambling remarks, Mr. Trump warned that the 2020 election was a choice “between law and order on one side and chaos on the other.”

“On Nov. 3, Wisconsin will decide whether we will quickly return to record prosperity, or whether we will allow Biden and the Democrats to impose a $4 trillion tax hike, ban American energy, confiscate your guns” and “shut down the economy,” Mr. Trump said, in remarks that significantly distorted Mr. Biden’s agenda. He also proclaimed Speaker Nancy Pelosi “crazy as a bedbug” and said he looked forward to seeing what Vice President Mike Pence “does to” Mr. Biden’s running mate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, in their debate next month.

Mr. Biden, often seeming to be in a punchy mood, lobbed his own attacks on Mr. Trump’s sense of reality.

“He may be really losing it — he’s president,” Mr. Biden said, as he addressed the civil unrest that has played out in some American cities. “I am not the president. This is Donald Trump’s America. You feel safer in Donald Trump’s America?”

Mr. Biden’s appearance came as he sought to center the presidential campaign on the response to the coronavirus. On Wednesday, [*he stepped up his warnings*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) that Mr. Trump was politicizing the rollout of a vaccine, and at the town hall, he discussed the issue at length, stressing his deference to scientists even as he described the staggering uncertainties that would accompany the successful deployment of a vaccine.

The opinion of the federal government’s top infectious disease expert would be important, he said. “I don’t trust the president on vaccines,” he said. “I trust Dr. Fauci. If Fauci says a vaccine is safe, I’d take the vaccine.”

Throughout the event, Mr. Biden blasted Mr. Trump’s handling of the coronavirus crisis — as he has many other times in recent months — and pointed to [*revelations*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) from a new book by the journalist Bob Woodward that the president had knowingly minimized the risks of the coronavirus. He also sought to connect many voters’ questions back to that subject.

But the issues that arose were wide-ranging, and Mr. Biden, who visited firefighters after the event, seemed keenly attuned to the politics of Pennsylvania.

“I will win Scranton,” Mr. Biden later insisted to reporters, according to a pool report. “Listen to me. I will win Scranton. And we were losing Scranton and Lackawanna County till I got put on the ticket. This is home. I know these people.”

Asked by reporters whether he believed that he was the reason Barack Obama had won the county, he replied: “I know I helped in this county. I helped in this state. We were losing by seven points in Pennsylvania. I get announced as the candidate. Five days later, we were up by six.”

It was not immediately clear what polls Mr. Biden was referring to — a [*RealClearPolitics compilation of polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) from the 2008 race, when Mr. Biden was added to the ticket, did not show Mr. Obama losing Pennsylvania in the general election.

In a critical battleground state that Mr. Trump won in 2016, one where hydraulic fracturing is both a contentious issue and a source of jobs, [*Mr. Biden declared*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) that there was “no rationale” for eliminating fracking at the moment.

As Mr. Biden focused on Pennsylvania, Mr. Trump declared his love for the state of Wisconsin, although at times he had a curious way of showing it: He had to ask the crowd how to pronounce Mosinee and then did not repeat it himself.

“I don’t know why the hell I like Wisconsin, but for some reason,” he said, trailing off, as the crowd — in which many people did not wear masks — chanted, “We love you!”

Also Thursday, Mr. Biden embraced a proposed income subsidy that is [*a focus of growing Democratic support*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html). The plan, an expansion of the child tax credit, would offer $3,000 per child per year ($3,600 for those under age 6) for all but the wealthiest families — essentially creating a guaranteed income for families with children. Analysts have estimated that the move would cost roughly $100 billion a year, a significant sum but less than half the annual cost of Mr. Trump’s tax cuts, which mostly benefit the wealthiest Americans.

Reporting was contributed by Michael Crowley, Sydney Ember, Thomas Kaplan and Jason DeParle.

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr. with Anderson Cooper of CNN at a town hall event on Thursday in Moosic, Pa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 15, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Stimulus Signals Shifting Politics Of Poverty Fight***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:626P-B6C1-JBG3-61HC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 14, 2021 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 2090 words

**Byline:** By Jim Tankersley and Jason DeParle

**Body**

The pandemic and a set of other economic and social forces changed the calculation for Democrats when it comes to government aid. The question now is how long the moment will last.

WASHINGTON -- A quarter-century ago, a Democratic president celebrated ''the end of welfare as we know it,'' challenging the poor to exercise ''independence'' and espousing balanced budgets and smaller government.

The Democratic Party capped a march in the opposite direction this week.

Its first major legislative act under President Biden was a deficit-financed, $1.9 trillion ''American Rescue Plan'' filled with programs as broad as expanded aid to nearly every family with children and as targeted as payments to Black farmers. While providing an array of benefits to the middle class, it is also a poverty-fighting initiative of potentially historic proportions, delivering more immediate cash assistance to families at the bottom of the income scale than any federal legislation since at least the New Deal.

Behind that shift is a realignment of economic, political and social forces, some decades in the making and others accelerated by the pandemic, that enabled a rapid advance in progressive priorities.

Rising inequality and stagnant incomes over much of the past two decades left a growing share of Americans -- of all races, in conservative states and liberal ones, in inner cities and small towns -- concerned about making ends meet. New research documented the long-term damage from child poverty.

An energized progressive vanguard pulled the Democrats leftward, not least Mr. Biden, who had campaigned as a moderating force.

Concerns about deficit spending receded under Mr. Biden's Republican predecessor, President Donald J. Trump, while populist strains in both parties led lawmakers to pay more attention to the frustrations of people struggling to get by -- a development intensified by a pandemic recession that overwhelmingly hurt low-income workers and spared higher earners.

A summer of protests against racial injustice, and a coalition led by Black voters that lifted Mr. Biden to the White House and helped give Democrats control of the Senate, put economic equity at the forefront of the new administration's agenda.

Whether the new law is a one-off culmination of those forces, or a down payment on even more ambitious efforts to address the nation's challenges of poverty and opportunity, will be a defining battle for Democrats in the Biden era.

In addition to trying to make permanent some of the temporary provisions in the package, Democrats hope to spend trillions of dollars to upgrade infrastructure, reduce the emissions that drive climate change, reduce the cost of college and child care, expand health coverage and guarantee paid leave and higher wages for workers.

The new Democratic stance is ''a long cry from the days of 'big government is over,''' said Margaret Weir, a political scientist at Brown University.

In the eyes of its backers, the law is not just one of the most far-reaching packages of economic and social policy in a generation. It is also, they say, the beginning of an opportunity for Democrats to unite a new majority in a deeply polarized country, built around a renewed belief in government.

''Next to civil rights, voting rights and open housing in the '60s, and maybe next to the Affordable Care Act -- maybe -- this is the biggest thing Congress has done since the New Deal,'' said Senator Sherrod Brown, Democrat of Ohio and a longtime champion of the antipoverty efforts included in Mr. Biden's plan.

''People more and more realize that government can be on their side,'' he said, ''and now it is.''

Conservatives are hardly giving up the battle over what some call a giant welfare expansion. Democrats face high hurdles to any further ambitious legislation, starting with the Senate filibuster, which requires most legislation to get 60 votes, and the precarious nature of the party's Senate majority. Moderate Democrats are already resisting further growth of the budget deficit.

But emboldened by the crisis, many Democrats see a new opportunity to use government to address big problems.

In addition to the new legislation being broadly popular with voters, an intensified focus on worker struggles on both the left and the right, including Republicans' increasing efforts to define themselves as a party of the ***working class***, has scrambled the politics of economic policy across the ideological spectrum.

Mr. Biden ran as a centrist in a Democratic Party where many activists had embraced progressive candidates like Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. But he will spend the coming weeks traveling the country to promote policies like his expansion of the child tax credit, a one-year, $100-billion benefit that most Democrats hope to turn into what was once a distant progressive dream: guaranteed income for families with children.

Republicans have struggled to attack the full range of policies contained in Mr. Biden's rescue plan, especially those like direct payments of up to $1,400 per person and expanded health care subsidies that benefit many of their constituents. Party leaders are trying to change the subject to issues like immigration.

A Republican National Committee news release this week denounced the rescue plan's expansion of the national debt, its funding for liberal states and cities like San Francisco and $1.7 billion in aid to Amtrak, but made no mention of the expanded child tax credit that will provide most families with monthly payments of up to $300 per child.

Some prominent conservatives have welcomed the antipoverty provisions, applauding them as pro-family even though they violate core tenets of the Republican Party's decades-long position that government aid is a disincentive to work.

Many Republicans from conservative-leaning states have turned increased attention to growing social problems in their own backyards, in the middle of an opioid crisis and economic stagnation that has left rural Americans with higher poverty rates than urban Americans, particularly for children.

An emerging strain of conservatism, often supported by a new generation of economic thinkers, has embraced expanded spending for families with children, to help lower-income workers and, in some cases, to encourage families to have more children. The conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt celebrated the expanded child credit in a series of Twitter posts on Friday, urging parents to use the proceeds to send their children to parochial school, and said he would work to make them permanent.

Still, the law could provoke a Tea Party-style backlash of the sort generated by the Obama administration's efforts to jolt the economy back to health in 2009.

''They snuck it through and voters don't know what they're doing,'' said Robert Rector of the conservative Heritage Foundation, an influential adviser to Capitol Hill Republicans.

''The battle has yet to be joined,'' said Mickey Kaus, a journalist whose criticisms of unconditional cash benefits to the poor helped shape the welfare overhaul under President Bill Clinton.

Democrats say Mr. Biden has laid the groundwork for a durable victory by creating programs that help not just the very poor, but also lower- and middle-class workers.

The package is projected to deliver thousands of dollars in benefits to families of all races, potentially neutralizing a long history of white voters souring on spending they perceive to be targeted to racial minorities.

The rescue plan, which Mr. Biden signed into law on Thursday, features other temporary measures meant to help Americans with no or little income. They include extended and expanded unemployment benefits, increased tax breaks for child care costs and an enlarged earned-income tax credit.

Mr. Biden's antipoverty efforts, which researchers say will lift nearly six million children out of poverty, ''came to be part of the package because families that earn in the bottom third of the income distribution, or at least of the wage distribution, have been disproportionately hurt by the pandemic,'' said Cecilia Rouse, the chairwoman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Democrats and poverty researchers began laying the groundwork for many of those provisions years ago, amid economic changes that exposed holes in the safety net. When a 2015 book by Kathryn J. Edin and H. Luke Shaefer, ''$2.00 a Day,'' argued that rising numbers of families spent months with virtually no cash income, Mr. Brown arranged for all his Democratic Senate colleagues to receive a copy.

At the same time, many scholars shifted their focus from whether government benefits discouraged parents from working to whether the vagaries of a low-wage labor market left parents with adequate money to raise a child.

A growing body of academic research, which Obama administration officials began to herald shortly before leaving office, showed that a large proportion of children spent part of their childhood below the poverty line and that even short episodes of poverty left children less likely to prosper as adults. A landmark report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in 2019 found that aid programs left children better off.

''That allowed us to change the conversation,'' away from the dangers of dependency ''to the good these programs do,'' said Hilary W. Hoynes, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, who served on the committee that wrote the report.

By last summer, it became clear the pandemic's toll was falling most heavily on disadvantaged workers, especially Black and Latino people, and Mr. Trump, who earlier had run up the deficit with a big tax cut, had joined both parties in Congress in adding trillions of dollars in federal debt to send out economic relief.

Racial protests over the summer further increased the pressure for government help. ''Just as the civil rights movement pushed Johnson, this movement is pushing Biden,'' said Sidney M. Milkis, a political scientist at the University of Virginia who studies the relationship between presidents and grass-roots movements.

While the expanded child tax credit would reach 93 percent of children, it would have its greatest effects on people of color. Analysts at Columbia University estimated the child benefit would cut child poverty from prepandemic levels among whites by 39 percent, Latinos by 45 percent and African-Americans by 52 percent.

''Covid exposed the fissures of systemic racism and systemic poverty that already existed,'' said the Rev. William J. Barber II, who helps run the Poor People's Campaign, an effort to get the needy more involved in electoral politics. ''It forced a deeper conversation about poverty and wages in this country.''

White House officials and Democratic leaders in Congress say Mr. Biden's rescue plan has now changed that conversation, creating momentum for permanent expansions of many of its antipoverty efforts. Multiple researchers project the bill will cut child poverty in half this year.

Democrats say they will turn that into an argument against Republicans who might oppose making the benefits permanent. ''You're voting for doubling the child poverty rate -- you're going to do that?'' Mr. Brown said.

In selling the plan, Mr. Biden has blurred the lines between the poor and the middle class, treating them less as distinct groups with separate problems than as overlapping and shifting populations of people who were struggling with economic insecurity even before the pandemic. Last week, he at once talked of ''millions of people out of work through no fault of their own'' and cited the benefits his plan would bring to families with annual incomes of $100,000.

''This is part of why I think it is more transformational,'' said Brian Deese, who heads Mr. Biden's National Economic Council. ''This is not just a targeted antipoverty program.''

In coming months, Democrats will face significant hurdles in making provisions like the child benefit permanent, including pressure from fiscal hawks to offset them by raising taxes or cutting other spending.

But the swift passage of even the temporary provisions has left many antipoverty experts delighted.

''A year ago, I would have said it was a pipe dream,'' said Stacy Taylor, who tracks poverty policy for Fresh EBT by Propel, a phone application used by millions of food stamp recipients. ''I can't believe we're going to have a guaranteed income for families with children.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/13/business/economy/child-poverty-stimulus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/13/business/economy/child-poverty-stimulus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Some Democrats are likening the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan signed last week by President Biden to the New Deal, and Republicans are struggling to attack the broad range of policies in the law. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20-A21)

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Where the Moves Were Always on Film***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60BF-G7S1-JBG3-648P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 7; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1405 words

**Byline:** By Brian Seibert

**Body**

Many dance films of recent months have been films by necessity, but the ones in this festival are films by design, for better and worse.

''We're all becoming filmmakers,'' Annie-B Parson told me in May. She was speaking for her fellow choreographers, and in the months since, her generalization has proved prophetic. With theaters closed, dance companies and dance makers accustomed to stage performance have been rushing to channel their work into a form you can stream. Live dance is dormant, but filmed dance has been busting out all over.

Many of these new dance films, made in less than ideal circumstances, look like first efforts. But, of course, there is nothing new about dance on camera. The Dance on Camera festival has been surveying the field since 1971. This year, for the first time, the festival is happening online, July 17 to July 20. (Tickets and a schedule are at Danceoncamerafestival.org.)

''It's never been about putting cameras on dancers,'' Liz Wolff, a curator of the festival, said. ''It's really about films that put dance into a filmic narrative or structure.''

In other words, where many dance films of recent months are films by necessity, the ones in the festival are so by design. Rather than trying to reproduce theatrical experience virtually, they aim to take advantage of the medium. Since most of this year's selections -- abstract and narrative, short and feature-length, documentary, animated -- were conceived and created before the pandemic, they serve as reminders of the possibilities of filming dance in a less panicked state. And at a time when dance on camera is almost the only kind of dance, they provide a chance to consider what matters in such a film.

First, as so much footage of people dancing in cramped apartments has lately brought into relief, setting makes a huge difference. Take ''Kieli Bi'' (''Sacred Dance''), a short in which Dana Mussa returns to her homeland of Kazakhstan to dance like a goddess amid the arid majesty of the steppe. Or David Bolger's ''How to Sink a Paper Boat,'' beautifully shot in and around an Irish lighthouse that's a big clue to the film's hidden subject -- the repressed memory of a World War I maritime disaster. In both, the surroundings tell more than half the story.

In Claire Marshall's 30-minute ''Shift,'' it's the rotation of location that signifies. We see a man and woman whom the credits call a ''discordant couple'' grappling in a backyard, then suddenly in a pool, a playground, a bar, a tunnel. The artful editing, combined with the obliviousness of peripheral figures, conveys the self-absorption of a sexual unit and their pattern repetition -- wherever these two may be, they're still tussling in bed.

Yet as visually striking as these three films are, the dancing in them isn't very distinguished or memorable. It's when filmmaking and choreography are equally expressive that these movies gain full power, as in Susan Misner's ''Bend,'' the most potent nine minutes of the festival.

''Bend'' is also about a couple. We first see them naked in bed together: Troy Ogilvie, a white woman, and Jeffery Dickerson Duffy, a Black man. Together, they go to see her son play in a night game of high-school football. When the national anthem starts, Mr. Duffy's character takes a knee. Ms. Ogilvie's character notices.

That's when dance comes in. It's in the tradition of dream ballet: While the action takes place out on the field, among the players, it's really all happening in her mind. The dance, though, is much rougher than ballet. In its fundamental gesture, she keeps trying to pick him up, tenderly, but he keeps going back down, politically determined or collapsing as if shot.

The dance is intercut with naturalistic flashbacks of their budding relationship, the relationship now under pressure. And that pressure has a sound: police radio, James Baldwin's voice, protesters chanting ''I can't breathe.'' As the tension mounts, she seems, at one point, to pledge allegiance to him and, at the next, to pin him to the ground, police style. The setting and cinematography are crucial here, as are the believable performances, but it's Ms. Misner's choreography that brings us inside the woman's painful reckoning with white guilt.

Also strong, in a different way, is ''Welcome to a Bright White Limbo,'' directed by Cara Holmes. ''Welcome'' is apt, because this 10-minute film is essentially an introduction to the remarkable Belfast choreographer Oona Doherty. It situates her in her ***working-class*** habitat of cul-de-sacs and dart boards, samples some of her pugnacious solo ''Hope Hunt'' and lets us hear her thoughts in voice-over.

As in ''Bend,'' the elements are in balance: the honesty of Ms. Doherty's dancing in harmony with the honesty of the filmmaking and the honesty of her words. A show is a failure, she says, if a viewer's body doesn't know what her body means, if her audience doesn't feel it in the stomach. By that measure, this short dance film is a success.

The feature-length selections of this year's festival are dominated by documentaries. And these longer films share a fault: Too much talking, not enough letting dance speak for itself.

In a few, the imbalance seems somewhat justified, a deliberate choice of form. Both Peter Vulchev's ''A Monologue in the Intermission'' and Edoardo Gabbriellini's ''Kemp: My Best Dance Is Yet to Come'' are rage-against-the-dying-of-the-light monologues: the first by Vesa Tonova, a cigarette-smoking, Bulgarian ballerina on the edge of forced retirement; the second by the flamboyant mime Lindsay Kemp, dropping names and making faces at 80. With the primary focus on such personalities, the performance footage becomes acceptably secondary, a photo album flipped through while listening.

But while ''Dancing Darkness,'' by V. Tony Hauser and Ellen Tolmie, chronicles the creation of a work by the Canadian choreographer Peggy Baker, and illuminates the collaboration among Ms. Baker, the dancers and Sarah Neufeld (the violinist for Arcade Fire), it's too behind-the-scenes. The film's reason to exist -- Ms. Baker's dance -- is chopped into incoherence and presented as if it were no more than visual accompaniment for all the verbiage.

That's less of a problem with ''Maguy Marin: Time to Act,'' about the French experimentalist choreographer. Directed with sophistication and love by her son, David Mambouch, it covers her career, her revolt against conventional beauty, her love of the awkward and grotesque, her political principles and struggles. A maker of grim art turns out to be charming, and if Mr. Mambouch too often lets everyone talk over the archival evidence, at least he gives us large enough chunks of his mother's work to sense directly what it is.

In not trusting dance, Khadifa Wong's ''Uprooted -- The Journey of Jazz Dance'' might be the worst offender. As it strives to encompass a vast and neglected subject, tiny fragments of bodies in motion are overrun by an army of talking heads. But in much of the chatter, important issues buzz. Except for ''Bend,'' no film in the festival is more urgent.

More than halfway through, after the interviewees have established the African-American roots of jazz dance and dwelt on the mid-20th-century achievements of Matt Mattox, Luigi, Gus Giordano, Jack Cole and Bob Fosse, the so-called founding fathers, Melanie George throws a wrench. The most cogent of the commentators, she smilingly suggests that these white men were merely the codifiers of jazz dance -- not, as often claimed, the chief inventors. They are more famous because they were white, but also because what is codified is easier to legitimize and explain, easier to talk about in documentaries.

In ''Uprooted,'' this powerful idea seems to prompt a midcourse correction, a choice that helps give Ms. Wong's film its air of discovery. I wish she had corrected further, though, asserting a more forceful authorial point of view. Her film does begin to rectify history, mostly by name-checking undersung Black men and women. But I wish she had given us more of their dancing, letting us feel it in the stomach, uncodified and self-explanatory.

It may seem odd for a critic to call for less commentary. But if the products of the pandemic show that merely putting cameras on dancers isn't sufficient to make a great dance film, this year's festival reminds us that dance on camera is what makes a dance film great.

**Graphic**

In this year's Dance on Camera festival, online for the first time since its inception in 1971, from top: from ''Maguy Marin: Time to Act,'' a documentary about Ms. Marin directed by David Mambouch, her son

Jeffery Dickerson Duffy in Susan Misner's ''Bend''

and Khadifa Wong's documentary ''Uprooted -- The Journey of Jazz Dance.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIDIER GRAPPE

SUSAN MISNER

DARYL GETMAN)

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2020

**End of Document**



[***A Japanese Literary Star Joins Her Peers on Western Bookshelves; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YKY-PRF1-JBG3-622C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1281 words

**Byline:** Katie Kitamura

**Highlight:** The novelist Mieko Kawakami belongs to a cadre of young female writers redefining their national literature. “Breasts and Eggs” introduces her to readers of English.

**Body**

BREASTS AND EGGS

By Mieko Kawakami

For decades, Haruki Murakami defined contemporary Japanese literature for the Anglophone reader. In such bona fide masterpieces as “The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle” and “A Wild Sheep Chase,” the author created a surreal world of talking sheep and lost cats, jazz bars and manic pixie dream girls.

But in the decades since the publication of those novels, Murakami’s tropes haven’t always aged well. In particular, his depictions of women have seemed, at least to some of us, troublingly thin. As his oeuvre kept proliferating, it sometimes felt as if the Murakami machine were eating up what limited oxygen there was for Japanese fiction in translation.

Thankfully, of late, a number of female writers have stepped out from the Murakami shadow and into English translation. Long acclaimed in Japan, they arrive here festooned with prizes and critical relevance. We are seeing the emergence of an alternate lineage, an entirely female canon, that reaches back to the postwar period even as it builds in the present.

Recent translations have brought us work from established greats: Yuko Tsushima (“Territory of Light”), Yoko Tawada (“The Emissary”), Yoko Ogawa (“The Memory Police”) and Hiromi Kawakami (“The Ten Loves of Nishino”). Then there’s the current generation of young writers, a fearsomely talented group that includes Sayaka Murata (“Convenience Store Woman”), Yukiko Motoya (“The Lonesome Bodybuilder”), Hiroko Oyamada (“The Factory”) and now Mieko Kawakami, with “Breasts and Eggs,” her first novel to be translated into English.

In Japan, Kawakami (no relation to Hiromi Kawakami) is already a literary sensation. Like Murakami — who has enthusiastically endorsed her work — she too has a loose and colloquial style. But unlike her forebear, Kawakami writes with a bracing lack of sentimentality, particularly when describing the lives of women. One character terms her mother “free labor” with a vagina. The narrator, Natsu, a writer, says sex with her former boyfriend felt “like somebody had slipped a black bag over my head.”

Focusing almost exclusively on female characters and spaces, “Breasts and Eggs” often made me think of Tsushima’s “Territory of Light.” Although tonally distinct, both novels describe single ***working-class*** motherhood and small urban apartments in unflinching detail. Writing 30 years apart, both authors reveal the ways in which those circumstances in turn shape the inner lives of their characters.

“Breasts and Eggs” underlines this connection by placing the female form at its center. Kawakami writes with unsettling precision about the body — its discomforts, its appetites, its smells and secretions. And she is especially good at capturing its longings, those in this novel being at once obsessive and inchoate, and in one way or another about transformation.

In the novel’s first part, Natsu’s sister, Makiko, has traveled to Tokyo from Osaka to consult a doctor about breast augmentation. It’s a subject Makiko has deeply researched, and she expounds at length about surgical procedures, outcomes, concerns: “‘You see the part about the fat injections?’ she asked. ‘The only reason they say they’re safe is because the fat comes from your own body, but they still have to open all these holes in you.’”

That singular focus on cosmetics is questioned not only by Natsu but also by Makiko’s daughter, Midoriko, who is herself going through puberty, its series of bodily changes leaving her both mute and enraged. Natsu starts to see her sister differently, as an object of pity. “It actually made me sad,” she says. “It was the same feeling you get at a train station, or in a hospital, or on the street, when you stop at a safe distance away from someone who can’t seem to help but talk and talk, whether or not anyone is there to listen.”

Cut to the second part of the novel, and it’s Natsu who’s in the grips of her own obsession. Single and desperate to have a child, she enters the labyrinthine bureaucracy of sperm donation. The process thrusts her into psychological isolation from her loved ones (she hesitates to discuss her desire for motherhood with family or acquaintances, lest they react to her the way she did to Makiko’s surgery) and from society at large (she’s a single woman exploring sperm donation in a culture where that is far from the norm).

“Breasts and Eggs” was originally published in Japan as a novella in 2008, before Kawakami expanded it for this current edition. Book 1, which takes place over a handful of days as Makiko and her daughter visit Natsu, has the feel of a stand-alone work. This effect is partially temporal and partially tonal: Here, Natsu possesses some level of certainty, at least about Makiko’s mania and what it says about female identity.

In Book 2 Natsu is far more uncertain, as she turns to her own desires and struggles with whether or not to honor them. It’s here that the novel releases the narrative tightness of its first half and becomes increasingly discursive: “If I tried to delve below the surface, my thoughts dispersed,” she thinks, pouring herself a glass of whiskey as she reads about infertility. “All the books and blogs catered to couples. What about the rest of us, who were alone and planned to stay that way? Who has the right to have a child? Does not having a partner or not wanting to have sex nullify this right?”

Kawakami’s prose is supple and casual, unbothered with the kinds of sentences routinely described as “luminous.” But into these stretches of plain speech she regularly drops phrases that made me giddy with pleasure. Natsu’s fridge is stocked so sparely and haphazardly it “looked like a lost and found for condiments.” Meanwhile, outside, “spring came and went, like someone opening the door to an empty room only to slam it shut again.”

Osaka haunts the novel, in Natsu’s memories of its landscape and cuisine, but above all in Kawakami’s use of its regional dialect, Osaka-ben. I grew up hearing my father speak in dialect whenever he was with a fellow Osakan. In those moments, I heard the incredible elasticity of the Japanese language — maybe of all language — the way its rhythms can suddenly realign, its tones shift. The politesse that I tended to associate with traditional Japanese disappeared into a language that was raucous and full of swagger.

Throughout the skillful translation by Sam Bett and David Boyd, we get indications of this code switching, and at one point Natsu’s novelist friend Rika riffs on the relationship between a narrative and its idiom: “The real thing, the real Osaka dialect, isn’t even about communicating,” she says. “It’s a contest. Somehow, you’re both in the audience and on the stage. … Language is always art, but in order to achieve its highest form, the language itself — intonation, grammar, speed, everything — had to mutate over time.”

“Breasts and Eggs” is about this kind of mutation, this irrepressibility. What exactly is so wrong about Makiko wanting breast implants? For Natsu, it’s the shamelessness of her sister’s fixation that’s so alienating. But that shamelessness is also what gives Makiko’s desire — and eventually Natsu’s as well — its dignity. Its brazenness, its unruliness, its full expression. That’s radical — and not just in Japan.

Katie Kitamura is the author, most recently, of “A Separation.” BREASTS AND EGGS By Mieko Kawakami Translated by Sam Bett and David Boyd 448 pp. Europa Editions. Paper, $15.99.

PHOTO: Mieko Kawakami (PHOTOGRAPH BY WAKABA NODA/TRON)

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**Load-Date:** July 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Two Decades After the ‘End of Welfare,’ Democrats Are Changing Direction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:626H-3XS1-JBG3-60G6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 13, 2021 Saturday 16:22 EST

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**Byline:** Jim Tankersley and Jason DeParle

**Highlight:** The pandemic and a set of other economic and social forces changed the calculation for Democrats when it comes to government aid. The question now is how long the moment will last.

**Body**

The pandemic and a set of other economic and social forces changed the calculation for Democrats when it comes to government aid. The question now is how long the moment will last.

WASHINGTON — A quarter-century ago, [*a Democratic president*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html) celebrated “the end of welfare as we know it,” challenging the poor to exercise “independence” and espousing balanced budgets and smaller government.

The Democratic Party capped a march in the opposite direction this week.

Its first major legislative act under President [*Biden*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html) was a deficit-financed, $1.9 trillion “American Rescue Plan” filled with programs as broad as [*expanded aid to nearly every family with children*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html)and as targeted as payments to Black farmers. While providing an array of [*benefits to the middle class*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html), it is also a poverty-fighting initiative of potentially historic proportions, delivering more immediate cash assistance to families at the bottom of the income scale than any federal legislation since at least the New Deal.

Behind that shift is a realignment of economic, political and social forces, some decades in the making and others accelerated by the pandemic, that enabled a rapid advance in progressive priorities.

Rising inequality and stagnant incomes over much of the past two decades left a growing share of Americans — of all races, in conservative states and liberal ones, in inner cities and small towns — concerned about making ends meet. New research documented the long-term damage from child poverty.

An energized progressive vanguard pulled the Democrats leftward, not least Mr. Biden, who had campaigned as a moderating force.

Concerns about deficit spending receded under Mr. Biden’s Republican predecessor, President Donald J. Trump, while populist strains in both parties led lawmakers to pay more attention to the frustrations of people struggling to get by — a development intensified by a pandemic recession that overwhelmingly hurt low-income workers and spared higher earners.

A summer of protests against racial injustice, and a coalition led by Black voters that lifted Mr. Biden to the White House and helped give Democrats control of the Senate, put [*economic equity at the forefront*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html) of the new administration’s agenda.

Whether the new law is a one-off culmination of those forces, or a down payment on even more ambitious efforts to address the nation’s challenges of poverty and opportunity, will be a defining battle for Democrats in the Biden era.

In addition to trying to make permanent some of the temporary provisions in the package, Democrats hope to spend trillions of dollars to upgrade infrastructure, reduce the emissions that drive climate change, reduce the cost of college and child care, expand health coverage and guarantee paid leave and higher wages for workers.

The new Democratic stance is “a long cry from the days of ‘big government is over,’” said Margaret Weir, a political scientist at Brown University.

In the eyes of its backers, the law is not just one of the most far-reaching packages of economic and social policy in a generation. It is also, they say, the beginning of an opportunity for Democrats to unite a new majority in a deeply polarized country, built around a renewed belief in government.

“Next to civil rights, voting rights and open housing in the ’60s, and maybe next to the Affordable Care Act — maybe — this is the biggest thing Congress has done since the New Deal,” said Senator Sherrod Brown, Democrat of Ohio and a longtime champion of the antipoverty efforts included in Mr. Biden’s plan.

“People more and more realize that government can be on their side,” he said, “and now it is.”

Conservatives are hardly giving up the battle over what some call a giant welfare expansion. Democrats face high hurdles to any further ambitious legislation, starting with the Senate filibuster, which requires most legislation to get 60 votes, and the precarious nature of the party’s Senate majority. Moderate Democrats are already resisting further growth of the budget deficit.

But emboldened by the crisis, many Democrats see a new opportunity to use government to address big problems.

In addition to the new legislation being [*broadly popular with voters*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html), an intensified focus on worker struggles on both the left and the right, including Republicans’ increasing efforts to define themselves as a party of the ***working class***, has scrambled the politics of economic policy across the ideological spectrum.

Mr. Biden ran as a centrist in a Democratic Party where many activists had embraced progressive candidates like Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. But he will spend the coming weeks traveling the country to promote policies like his expansion of the child tax credit, a one-year, $100-billion benefit that most Democrats hope to turn into what was once a distant progressive dream: guaranteed income for families with children.

Republicans have struggled to attack the full range of policies contained in Mr. Biden’s rescue plan, especially those like direct payments of up to $1,400 per person and expanded health care subsidies that benefit many of their constituents. Party leaders are trying to change the subject to issues like immigration.

A Republican National Committee news release this week denounced the rescue plan’s expansion of the national debt, its funding for liberal states and cities like San Francisco and $1.7 billion in aid to Amtrak, but made no mention of the expanded child tax credit that will provide most families with monthly payments of up to $300 per child.

Some [*prominent conservatives*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html) have welcomed the antipoverty provisions, applauding them as pro-family even though they violate core tenets of the Republican Party’s decades-long position that government aid is a disincentive to work.

Many Republicans from conservative-leaning states have turned increased attention to growing social problems in their own backyards, in the middle of an opioid crisis and economic stagnation that has left rural Americans with [*higher poverty rates than urban Americans*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html), particularly for children.

An emerging strain of conservatism, often supported by a new generation of economic thinkers, has embraced expanded spending for families with children, to help lower-income workers and, in some cases, to encourage families to have more children. The conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt celebrated the expanded child credit in a series of Twitter posts on Friday, urging parents to use the proceeds to send their children to parochial school, and said he would [*work to make them permanent*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html).

Still, the law could provoke a Tea Party-style backlash of the sort generated by the Obama administration’s efforts to jolt the economy back to health in 2009.

“They snuck it through and voters don’t know what they’re doing,” said Robert Rector of the conservative Heritage Foundation, an influential adviser to Capitol Hill Republicans.

“The battle has yet to be joined,” said Mickey Kaus, a journalist whose criticisms of unconditional cash benefits to the poor helped shape the welfare overhaul under President Bill Clinton.

Democrats say Mr. Biden has laid the groundwork for a durable victory by creating programs that help not just the very poor, but also lower- and middle-class workers.

The package is projected to deliver thousands of dollars in benefits to families of all races, potentially neutralizing a long history of white voters souring on spending they perceive to be targeted to racial minorities.

The rescue plan, which Mr. Biden signed into law on Thursday, features other temporary measures meant to help Americans with no or little income. They include extended and expanded unemployment benefits, increased tax breaks for child care costs and an enlarged earned-income tax credit.

Mr. Biden’s antipoverty efforts, which researchers say will lift [*nearly six million children out of poverty*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html), “came to be part of the package because families that earn in the bottom third of the income distribution, or at least of the wage distribution, have been disproportionately hurt by the pandemic,” said Cecilia Rouse, the chairwoman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Democrats and poverty researchers began laying the groundwork for many of those provisions years ago, amid economic changes that exposed holes in the safety net. When a 2015 book by Kathryn J. Edin and H. Luke Shaefer, “$2.00 a Day,” argued that rising numbers of families spent months with virtually no cash income, Mr. Brown arranged for all his Democratic Senate colleagues to receive a copy.

At the same time, many scholars shifted their focus from whether government benefits discouraged parents from working to whether the vagaries of a low-wage labor market left parents with adequate money to raise a child.

A growing body of academic research, which Obama administration officials began to herald shortly before leaving office, showed that a large proportion of children spent part of their childhood below the poverty line and that even short episodes of poverty left children less likely to prosper as adults. [*A landmark report*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html) by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in 2019 found that aid programs left children better off.

“That allowed us to change the conversation,” away from the dangers of dependency “to the good these programs do,” said Hilary W. Hoynes, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, who served on the committee that wrote the report.

By last summer, it became clear the pandemic’s toll was falling most heavily on disadvantaged workers, especially Black and Latino people, and Mr. Trump, who earlier had run up the deficit with a big tax cut, had joined both parties in Congress in adding trillions of dollars in federal debt to send out economic relief.

Racial protests over the summer further increased the pressure for government help. “Just as the civil rights movement pushed Johnson, this movement is pushing Biden,” said Sidney M. Milkis, a political scientist at the University of Virginia who studies the relationship between presidents and grass-roots movements.

While the expanded child tax credit would reach 93 percent of children, it would have its greatest effects on people of color. Analysts at Columbia University estimated the child benefit would [*cut child poverty*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html) from prepandemic levels among whites by 39 percent, Latinos by 45 percent and African-Americans by 52 percent.

“Covid exposed the fissures of systemic racism and systemic poverty that already existed,” said the Rev. William J. Barber II, who helps run the Poor People’s Campaign, an effort to get the needy more involved in electoral politics. “It forced a deeper conversation about poverty and wages in this country.”

White House officials and Democratic leaders in Congress say Mr. Biden’s rescue plan has now changed that conversation, creating momentum for permanent expansions of many of its antipoverty efforts. Multiple researchers project the bill [*will cut child poverty in half this year*](https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html).

Democrats say they will turn that into an argument against Republicans who might oppose making the benefits permanent. “You’re voting for doubling the child poverty rate — you’re going to do that?” Mr. Brown said.

In selling the plan, Mr. Biden has blurred the lines between the poor and the middle class, treating them less as distinct groups with separate problems than as overlapping and shifting populations of people who were struggling with economic insecurity even before the pandemic. Last week, he at once talked of “millions of people out of work through no fault of their own” and cited the benefits his plan would bring to families with annual incomes of $100,000.

“This is part of why I think it is more transformational,” said Brian Deese, who heads Mr. Biden’s National Economic Council. “This is not just a targeted antipoverty program.”

In coming months, Democrats will face significant hurdles in making provisions like the child benefit permanent, including pressure from fiscal hawks to offset them by raising taxes or cutting other spending.

But the swift passage of even the temporary provisions has left many antipoverty experts delighted.

“A year ago, I would have said it was a pipe dream,” said Stacy Taylor, who tracks poverty policy for Fresh EBT by Propel, a phone application used by millions of food stamp recipients. “I can’t believe we’re going to have a guaranteed income for families with children.”

PHOTO: Some Democrats are likening the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan signed last week by President Biden to the New Deal, and Republicans are struggling to attack the broad range of policies in the law. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20-A21)

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2021

**End of Document**



[***The Biden Bump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6181-W1V1-JBG3-6505-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2020 Monday 12:24 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1719 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

If Democrats had nominated any candidate other than Joe Biden, President Trump may well have won re-election.

It’s impossible to know for sure, of course. But Biden won the states that decided the election narrowly — by two percentage points or less in Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, current vote counts suggest. And there is good reason to believe other Democrats might have lost these states. Consider:

* Nationwide, Biden is faring about 2.4 percentage points better than the average Democratic nominee for House seats, according to [*an estimate by Sean Trende of RealClearPolitics*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
* In several swing states — including Georgia, Michigan and North Carolina — Biden also did better than the Democratic nominees for Senate. (Arizona is an exception.)
* In Nebraska’s Second Congressional District, the Democrats nominated a Bernie Sanders-style candidate — Kara Eastman, who backs “Medicare for all” and was endorsed by progressive groups like the Justice Democrats — for a House seat. She lost her race by almost five percentage points, while Biden won [*the district*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) by almost seven points.
* These election results are consistent with [*polls from over the past year*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that showed Biden faring better against Trump than other Democrats in hypothetical matchups.

Why does this matter? For the past four years, Trump has dominated American politics. At times, he has seemed to possess magical political powers, winning the presidency despite rejecting the usual rules of politics and maintaining a roughly steady approval rating even as he was impeached and presided over a terrible pandemic.

In the end, though, Trump didn’t have magical powers. He instead became only the fourth elected president in the past century [*to lose re-election*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), after Herbert Hoover, Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush. That’s the good news for Democrats.

But there is also a large dose of bad news for Democrats. Despite Trump’s defeat, the Republican Party has retained its popularity in much of the country. A small but crucial segment of Americans chose to vote for both Mr. Biden and Republican congressional candidates.

This combination means that neither party has an obvious path forward. Democrats are almost certainly fooling themselves if they conclude that America has turned into a left-leaning country that’s ready to [*get rid of private health insurance*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), [*defund the police*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), [*abolish immigration enforcement*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) and vote out Republicans because they are filling the courts with anti-abortion judges. Many ***working-class*** voters — white, Hispanic, Black and Asian-American — [*disagree*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) with progressive activists on several of those issues.

But the notion that Democrats should simply move to the center on every issue also seems wrong. A big increase in the minimum wage [*passed in Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) last week with 61 percent of the vote. Several drug-decriminalization measures also passed. Expansions of Medicaid, a health-insurance program mostly for low-income people, have also passed in red states.

Republicans have a different set of problems. They have lost the popular vote in seven of the last eight presidential elections. They now appear headed toward a messy struggle over who their new national leaders will be — or whether Trump himself will continue to dominate the party.

For more: Congressional Democrats are arguing over the party’s next steps, [*Michael Shear and Maggie Astor of The Times report*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). And [*Ross Douthat*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), an Op-Ed columnist, looks at how Republicans can become a majority party after Trump.

THE LATEST NEWS

The Transition

* Biden has said he will undo [*several Trump administration policies*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — on climate change, the pandemic, labor unions and more — on his first day in office.

1. European diplomats expressed [*relief*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that the next U.S. president would treat them as allies instead of rivals, while Vladimir Putin of Russia seemed to be preparing for a [*more acrimonious relationship*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. One White House tradition will return: the presidential pet. The Bidens have [*two German shepherds, Champ and Major*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

The Election

* Trump has still not conceded, and several [*prominent Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) have urged him to continue challenging the results. “The media can project an election winner, but they don’t get to decide if claims of broken election laws &amp; irregularities are true,” Senator Marco Rubio [*tweeted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). “That’s decided by the courts, and on the basis of clear evidence and the law.” (There has been no evidence of meaningful voter fraud.)

1. Only two Republican senators — Mitt Romney of Utah and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska — have acknowledged Biden’s win. “At some point, truth, freedom and democracy have to ascend,” Romney said, “and you step aside.”
2. Former President George W. Bush [*congratulated Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), writing: “Though we have political differences, I know Joe Biden to be a good man who has won his opportunity to lead and unify our country.”
3. Biden’s supporters were dancing in the streets this weekend. But [*only half the country was celebrating*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and the nation’s divisions remain.

The Virus

* The number of Americans hospitalized with Covid-19 [*has nearly doubled*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) since mid-September.

1. Biden is planning to name his [*virus task force today*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), with three co-chairs: Dr. Vivek Murthy, a former surgeon general; Dr. David Kessler, a former F.D.A. commissioner; and Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, a Yale professor.

Other Big Stories

* Tropical Storm Eta [*made landfall on the central part of the Florida Keys*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) yesterday, bringing strong winds and heavy rains.

1. The Supreme Court will hear arguments tomorrow in a case that seeks to [*eliminate the Affordable Care Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). If the law is struck down, millions of people would lose health insurance and people with pre-existing conditions would struggle to buy insurance.
2. [*Fighting continued between Azerbaijan and Armenia*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)over the weekend in the disputed border region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan — wanting to reclaim the region that is controlled by Armenian forces and mostly populated by Armenians — said its military captured a key town, which Armenian officials denied.

Morning Reads

The Media Equation: For the past four years, The Times’s Maggie Haberman has been the source of much of what we know about Trump’s White House. The end of his presidency [*means the end of her wild ride*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), Ben Smith writes.

Lives Lived: Marguerite Littman, a honey-voiced Louisianian and literary muse, taught Hollywood to speak Southern. But her most enduring legacy was as an early force in the fight against AIDS. [*She died at 90*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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ARTS AND IDEAS

A ‘Jeopardy!’ icon

Alex Trebek began hosting “Jeopardy!” in 1984, sporting a thick mustache and a pale pink pocket square on his first episode. He got the job partly because Lucille Ball, of “I Love Lucy” fame, had encouraged the show’s producer to hire him. He went on to host more than 8,000 episodes, breaking a record set by Bob Barker of “The Price is Right” for hosting the most episodes of a single game show.

On Sunday, [*Trebek died at 80*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), more than a year after announcing he had Stage 4 pancreatic cancer. His death led to an outpouring of tributes from fans who saw him as a steady — and witty — presence in their homes.

In living rooms across the country, five nights a week, viewers could count on “an honest, no-frills test of knowledge” guided by Trebek, [*as a 2002 Times article put it*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). “We’re comfortable, like an old pair of shoes,” Trebek said. “We don’t come on with a splash.” Pre-pandemic, Trebek would host five episodes a day, two days a week, from July to April. He would go over the 305 clues for that day’s shows at 7:30 a.m., making notes. If a clue seemed too difficult, he would tell the writers to remove it.

Part of his appeal was his honesty, which extended to his fight with cancer. He spoke about it publicly, [*saying*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) his pain would sometimes shoot “from a three to an 11” during tapings.

“With his cerebral bearing and aura of quiet, impartial authority, he embodies ideals that feel endangered: the pursuit of knowledge, and the inherent value of facts,” Alexandra Alter [*wrote in a profile this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). And his honesty included flashes of restrained disappointment when contestants missed an easy question. His tone, [*he once told New York magazine*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), tried to convey: “How can you not get this? This is not rocket science.”

Still, many contestants adored him. Some were moved to tears upon meeting him. In one episode that aired last week, a contestant — an Indian immigrant named Burt Thakur — said that [*he had learned to speak English*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) by watching Trebek as a child, sitting on his grandfather’s lap.

Episodes of the show hosted by Trebek will air through Dec. 25.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, LISTEN

What to Cook

This [*gratin is a fresh way*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to use roasted cauliflower. Tossed with tomato sauce, sautéed red onions and goat cheese, it’s delicious.

Go Sightseeing

Every year, millions of pilgrims descend on the central Iraqi city of Karbala to commemorate the religious holiday of Arbaeen. Take [*a tour of the festivities last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

And to Watch

This week: [*“Derry Girls,” a vibrant, hilarious portrayal*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) of teenagers coming of age during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Late night: Dave Chappelle [*hosted “Saturday Night Live,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) hours after Biden was declared the winner, and urged Americans to “find a way to forgive each other.”

Now Time to Play

The pangram from Friday’s Spelling Bee was conditioning. Today’s puzzle is above — or you can [*play online*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) if you have a Games subscription.

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Browser window (three letters).

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

P.S. [*From The Onion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing): “Media Condemns Biden For Baseless Claim That Nation Will Come Together Once Election Over.”

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about Americans’ reaction to the election. On [*the latest Book Review podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), Ernest Freeberg discusses the birth of the animal rights movement.

Lalena Fisher, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Erin Schaff/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***50 Years Ago, They Did Something Rare in Gospel: Tied Music to Protest***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60TW-RB71-DXY4-X0KV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Robert M. Marovich

**Highlight:** The Voices of East Harlem went from community stages to the Isle of Wight Festival, blending the soul-cleansing power of Christian songs with R&amp;B, funk and rock on “Right On Be Free.”

**Body**

The Voices of East Harlem went from community stages to the Isle of Wight Festival, blending the soul-cleansing power of Christian songs with R&amp;B, funk and rock on “Right On Be Free.”

The graphic video montage of violence against people of color that accompanies Isaac Cates &amp; Ordained’s sobering neo-spiritual [*“Hold On”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) brought the hosts of the 2020 online music festival Vox Virtual nearly to tears. Lydia Salett Dudley commissioned a clip with similarly vivid imagery for [*“Whatcha Gonna Say?,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) a funky song released this summer that commands listeners to speak out about inequality or face the consequences of inaction today and in the afterlife.

These recent developments in gospel music are striking: Although singing spirituals and hymns has energized generations of protesters to stand up against oppression, few of the genre’s songs recorded over the past 30 years have explicitly condemned injustice. This gap is due in part to a trend toward praise and worship songs that celebrate God and give thanks for personal blessings. And like the anonymous composers of the spirituals, Black gospel singers learned early that survival sometimes meant veiling their anger in biblical imagery that only those in the know could decode.

However, the deaths of [*George Floyd*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM), [*Breonna Taylor*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) and [*Ahmaud Arbery*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) and the protests they sparked have prompted gospel singers to begin lifting the veil and making their outrage more public. The roots for this moment can be traced back to an album celebrating its 50th anniversary — “Right On Be Free,” the debut by an African-American youth choir called the Voices of East Harlem. Released by Elektra in late 1970, the record tied protest messages to an appealingly groovy soundtrack that mixed the soul-cleansing power of gospel with R&amp;B, funk and rock. It was as if Sly and the Family Stone and gospel’s Edwin Hawkins Singers had linked arms in solidarity.

The Voices of East Harlem came out of the East Harlem Federation Youth Association (E.H.F.Y.A.), a nonprofit community center founded in 1968 by the activist Chuck Griffin to give youth — his own children included — a sanctuary from the neighborhood’s heroin-infested streets. Griffin’s wife, Anna Griffin, and her friend Bernice Cole were veteran gospel singers and recording artists.

“When the Voices of East Harlem first started, there were like 32 of us, because it was basically an all-souls call,” said Gerri Griffin Watlington, one of the couple’s two daughters, who replaced Ronnie Dyson on Broadway in “Hair” in 1969. “Anybody interested in singing in a choir, come.”

The choir sang only gospel songs and spirituals at first, and while its initial appearances were at churches, at some point Chuck Griffin began transporting the troupe to perform for local colleges, where he would preach the social value of integration to the mostly white audience. It was the late ’60s and “a time when people were becoming socially aware of color,” said Kevin Griffin, another of Chuck Griffin’s children.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM)]

The Voices’ big break occurred at a youth association fund-raiser at Electric Circus, a New York club owned by the music entrepreneur Jerry Brandt. Moved by the Voices of East Harlem’s unbridled spirit, “he approached my parents and Bernice and basically pitched them,” Gerri Watlington recalled. “He said, ‘I see something here and I’d like to manage these kids.’”

Brandt loved the group’s sound but hated the preppy orange blazers, and directed the kids to come to rehearsal in street clothes. They returned wearing what became their signature “freedom suits,” what the screenwriter Denis Watlington, a youth association participant, later described as “***working-class*** jeans and dungaree jackets with red, black and green fists” painted on their backs.

The Voices of East Harlem also modified their repertory, adding protest music and songs of social significance, including Nina Simone’s [*“To Be Young, Gifted, and Black”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) and Bobby Darin’s antiwar ode [*“Simple Song of Freedom.”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM)

“That was the time we were in,” Gerri Watlington said. “It was about folk songs, protest songs.”

The group’s performances featured dancing — sometimes choreographed but more often free-form — that evoked freedom and Black Pride, and Brandt worked to secure it a national platform where audiences could take in the whole package. The Voices appeared on Dick Cavett and Ed Sullivan’s shows. They opened for the Kinks at the Fillmore East. Their performance at the January 1970 Winter Festival for Peace, alongside Richie Havens and Blood, Sweat &amp; Tears, moved a [*Billboard journalist*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) to gush, “The least known group on the bill earned the first, most unanimous, and most immediate standing ovation of the evening.”

With positive reviews pouring in, Brandt felt it was time to take the Voices into the studio. Produced by Brandt, “Right On Be Free” was among the first albums recorded at Electric Lady Studios in Manhattan’s West Village. Eddie Kramer was the recording engineer, and session veterans including the bassist Chuck Rainey and the guitarist Cornell Dupree joined the Voices’ musicians.

“In those days, if you didn’t have Rainey and Dupree on your album, you didn’t have an album,” the Voices member Monica Burruss Pege, the lead soloist on the group’s 1973 hit [*“Giving Love,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) said in a phone interview.

“Right On Be Free” spotlights fiery turns by female vocalists, reinforcing the traditional role of African-American women as community spokespeople. Gerri Watlington leads the Buffalo Springfield protest anthem “For What It’s Worth,” and Cynthia Sessions Vaughn sings “Simple Song of Freedom.” In a nod to earlier generations, Anna Griffin and Cole render gospel songs. The album ends with a six-minute psychedelic cover of Richie Havens’s “Run, Shaker Life” built on the relentless vocal power of Kevin Griffin, one of two featured male leads. The critic [*Robert Christgau compared*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) his effusive energy to Michael Jackson.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM)]

Gospel didn’t often crack through to the mainstream, though the Edwin Hawkins Singers had a crossover smash with [*“Oh Happy Day”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM) in 1968. Elektra, already in discussions with Brandt about another of his artists — Carly Simon — picked up “Right On Be Free” and released it as summer turned to fall in 1970.

By October, it had charted on the Billboard 200, after the Voices carried their freedom message to the Isle of Wight Festival in England, where they received several standing ovations. Returning to the States, the choir dazzled audiences at the Apollo and appeared alongside Harry Belafonte at the Westbury Music Fair. The Voices rang in the New Year by opening for Jimi Hendrix at the Fillmore East.

On March 6, 1971, the Voices joined Santana, Ike and Tina Turner, Wilson Pickett, the Staple Singers and the saxophonist Wayne Shorter at the Soul to Soul festival in Accra, Ghana, which was filmed for [*a documentary by Denis Sanders*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM). As captured on film, they are a kaleidoscope of sound and motion. What the Voices were singing was significant but supplemental to how they were singing it. The music of the African Diaspora had come full circle.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM)]

The group went on to record two singles in 1972 for Elektra produced by [*Donny Hathaway*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJBrvBHvpM), and made two more albums for the indie label Just Sunshine, which were reissued in 2017 by the United Kingdom-based Soul Brother Records. After the 1974 album “Can You Feel It,” Just Sunshine and the Voices of East Harlem parted ways. “I don’t think the record company knew what to do with us,” Kevin Griffin said. “We represented a very balanced message of unsettling times and they didn’t know how to market it.”

Besides a baffled music business, an acrimonious separation between Chuck and Anna Griffin and the fact that group members were facing the realities of adulthood contributed to the Voices’ demise in 1975. “It wasn’t like an official ending,” Pege said. “We just weren’t getting gigs anymore, and we were having to find other things to do that paid.”

Pege became part of Lady Flash, Barry Manilow’s backup trio. Gerri Watlington attended college while appearing on Broadway and singing in local clubs. Vaughn became a community mental health psychotherapist. Kevin Griffin entered the religious ministry.

Looking back, Vaughn and Kevin Griffin still believe the group was not only ahead of its time, but a necessary voice then and now. “The E.H.F.Y.A. and the Voices were the crown jewels of East Harlem,” Kevin Griffin said. “We became the voice of the entire social movement.”

Vaughn added: “It’s really sad that we are experiencing the very same things this many years later.”

PHOTOS: The Voices of East Harlem, above, started out at a nonprofit community center in Manhattan. Their 1970 album “Right On Be Free” was a landmark release for gospel music. Left, the group performing for a television show in London that year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS, VIA GETTY IMAGES; MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES) (C5)

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[***What Does Biden Owe to Black Voters and Their Communities?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61KV-BVT1-DXY4-X135-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

In his victory speech, the president-elect said of Black voters: ''You've always had my back, and I'll have yours.'' Many of those voters are watching to see what he does in office.

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. -- Joseph R. Biden Jr. went to the Royal Missionary Baptist Church in South Carolina in late February, before the state's presidential primary, and listened as the Rev. Isaac J. Holt Jr. delivered a message of encouragement.

''You're going to win,'' Mr. Holt said he told Mr. Biden privately, a political prophecy that was fulfilled in the coming days.

Now Mr. Holt, the pastor of one of Charleston's largest Black congregations, has another message for Mr. Biden as he plans for his incoming administration: ''Biden owes us. And we have not forgotten.''

Black voters have a political marriage of convenience with the Democratic Party. They are at once the party's most solid voting demographic and deeply frustrated by the lack of systemic change its politicians have delivered for them.

In South Carolina, the state that helped propel Mr. Biden to the Democratic nomination and where about half of the Democratic electorate is Black, voters complain of receiving campaign promises from politicians while they are running but not being prioritized once they are elected.

There are similar grievances among voters in cities like Milwaukee, Detroit and Philadelphia, hubs of general-election campaigning in key swing states, who have grown used to the silence that follows presidential election years.

In their telling, attention quickly shifts to midterm races in gerrymandered, Republican-leaning congressional districts, and the Black voters who helped Democrats ascend to the White House are sometimes discarded. Their issues are too divisive. Their needs are too great.

Mr. Biden has insisted that this time will be different, and people like Mr. Holt are taking him at his word. Last month, in his victory speech after becoming president-elect, Mr. Biden cited Black voters specifically, alluding to those who rallied around him in South Carolina after his primary campaign flopped in other early-voting states.

''Especially at those moments when this campaign was at its lowest ebb, the African-American community stood up again for me,'' Mr. Biden said. ''You've always had my back, and I'll have yours.''

But who defines political priorities for Black voters, and what does it mean to have their back?

Leading Black politicians, civil rights leaders, activists and many of the same South Carolina church leaders Mr. Biden leaned on to turn his campaign around all said in interviews that it was important to address the coronavirus pandemic. But they also raised issues that ran the gamut of liberal policy initiatives, from investing in small businesses and historically Black colleges and universities to tackling student debt and climate change.

Many also pushed back against the singular focus on racial representation that has dominated debates over Mr. Biden's transition team and cabinet picks. Having a cabinet that reflects the racial diversity of America is good, they said. But they added that Mr. Biden's legacy on race would be judged on his willingness to pursue policy changes that address systemic racism -- a standard he has set for himself.

''What he's got to do, in my opinion, is to depart from the tradition,'' said Representative James E. Clyburn, the powerful South Carolina Democrat who is the highest ranking Black member of the House. ''What is getting us in trouble in the past is when people get into office, they abandon the platform they ran on'' in favor of appeasing Republicans, he said.

The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign, cited a commitment Mr. Biden had made during a public forum to prioritize eliminating poverty and addressing the concerns of poor people.

Live up to that, he said, and a cross-racial section of marginalized Americans, including Black people, will have their lives transformed.

''We certainly want to see a cabinet that looks like America. But more important, we want to see a cabinet that works for America,'' Dr. Barber said. ''And not just the middle class. And not just the so-called ***working class***. But from the bottom up.''

In effect, they are asking President Biden to take a cue from candidate Biden. During the primary and general election, and under pressure from activists who cast Mr. Biden as an artifact of the political past, his team embraced a plan for Black Americans called ''Lift Every Voice,'' which would seek to close the Black-white income gap, expand educational opportunities, invest $70 billion in H.B.C.U.s and reimagine the criminal justice system and policing.

Mr. Biden's selection of Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, the first Black woman on a major party ticket, was -- with the campaign's encouragement -- taken as a symbolic affirmation of these commitments. Former President Barack Obama, the country's first Black president, had to assure white America he would be a president for all races. But Mr. Biden repeatedly asserted that Black communities would get special attention in his administration.

Black political leaders believe that the biggest barrier to Mr. Biden's commitment to address systemic racism is his own instinct for compromise, bipartisanship and deference to the idea of Washington civility. Mr. Biden has consistently restated his belief that congressional Republicans will work with his administration in due time, though some of them continue to cast doubt on the legitimacy of his victory and President Trump shows no signs of loosening his grip on the party's base.

''Bipartisanship is how the president-elect and vice president-elect plan to get things done from Day 1,'' said Ramzey Smith, a spokesman for Mr. Biden's transition team. ''They've made it abundantly clear that in order to combat the systemic inequities that Black Americans have faced for generations, it is imperative to work across the aisle and engage with all groups to reach a consensus that doesn't compromise our principles or priorities.''

Some Black leaders who have met with Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris during the transition have been frustrated by this sentiment, according to several people familiar with the discussions. Mr. Biden, the leader of the Democratic Party, is one of the few Democrats left who believes that the Republicans who reflexively opposed Mr. Obama's every action and have been slow to acknowledge Mr. Biden's legitimacy are simply an aberration.

Leaders are asking him to consider unilateral action like executive orders to enact his agenda, claiming that Washington horse-trading has rarely prioritized the needs of Black communities. Mr. Biden has been steadfast: Republicans will come around.

''We will see if he's right, and we'll see very shortly,'' said Sherrilyn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc., who has met with the Biden transition team. ''If he's not, we'll also see it very shortly.''

She added: ''It's perfectly fine to be hopeful. But certainly you should be fully prepared to pivot and to be effective.''

Even vocal allies of Mr. Biden say his ability to rise to the standards he set for himself, particularly when it comes to racial equity and a Black agenda, may rely on his willingness to see Republicans as obstructionists to be overcome, not negotiators to be met at a midpoint.

Mr. Clyburn, whose well-timed endorsement of Mr. Biden in South Carolina helped ensure his dominance in the state, said Mr. Biden must learn from the mistakes made by previous Democratic leaders, including Mr. Obama.

He cited Mr. Obama's Supreme Court nomination of Judge Merrick B. Garland, whom Republicans refused to even grant a hearing, as an example.

Republicans ''lied to him and told him that if he put up a moderate, they will approve him for the Supreme Court,'' Mr. Clyburn said. ''They never did it and they never planned to do it.''

''I told them at the time that you will be better off putting up an African-American woman for the Supreme Court,'' he added. ''If you put up a Black woman, she would have an immediate constituency. Make them turn her down. He would have redefined politics in this country, and frankly I think Hillary Clinton would have been elected president.''

The Rev. Joseph A. Darby Jr., the senior pastor at Nichols Chapel A.M.E. Church in Charleston and a former leader of the local N.A.A.C.P., said he had been heartened by Mr. Biden's cabinet choices, including that of retired Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, who would be the first Black man to lead the Defense Department.

''Just having new folks at the table is helpful,'' Mr. Darby said. ''But it's that plus the substance.''

The stakes could not be higher. Black people sit at the intersection of the year's biggest policy priorities: access to health care, criminal justice and the climate change crisis. Black Americans have been ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic, dying, being hospitalized and facing economic devastation at disproportionate rates.

In Mr. Darby's congregation, a mother and her child both died from the virus. Mr. Holt's congregation hasn't been able to convene since March, just weeks after Mr. Biden spoke from the pulpit as a candidate.

Last week, in an interview at his church, Mr. Holt made another of his patented political predictions: If Mr. Biden does not follow through on his promises to Black people -- does not make eroding systemic racism a priority in deed, not just words -- Republicans will make gains with Black voters.

He cited the modest shift toward Mr. Trump in November's election among some Black voters and the increasingly nonpartisan nature of younger Black people. Those are warning signs, he said.

''The party system is not something that fits the Black community as a whole,'' Mr. Holt said. ''We're tired of Democrats and we're tired of the two-party system.''

Some of Mr. Holt's congregants, at a socially distant gathering in the sanctuary they hadn't visited in months, echoed their pastor's urgency. Though they expressed confidence in Mr. Biden and said they all voted for him in the primary and general elections, they framed their choice as a call for action rather than a blank check of trust.

''He can't get stuck on healing hearts,'' said Shakeima Chatman, 46, a real estate agent. ''But he can institute policies and regulation.''

What gave them hope: that Mr. Biden was comfortable among Black voters on the campaign trail and the loyalty he showed to Mr. Obama as his vice president.

What worried them: that he favorably invoked segregationists in the name of bipartisanship, that he said Black people who did not support him ''ain't Black,'' and that he told wealthy donors at a fund-raiser that ''nothing would fundamentally change'' if he was elected.

For Black communities, it must.

''Policies created these disparities,'' said Cleo Scott Brown, who is 66. ''Policy has to fix it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/24/us/politics/biden-black-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/24/us/politics/biden-black-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr. at Royal Missionary Baptist Church in North Charleston, S.C., in February. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 25, 2020

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[***68% Have Antibodies in This Clinic. Can a Neighborhood Beat a Next Wave?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:609T-0TH1-JBG3-628Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 9, 2020 Thursday 09:56 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1508 words

**Byline:** Joseph Goldstein

**Highlight:** Data from those tested at a storefront medical office in Queens is leading to a deeper understanding of the outbreak’s scope in New York.

**Body**

Data from those tested at a storefront medical office in Queens is leading to a deeper understanding of the outbreak’s scope in New York.

At a clinic in Corona, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in Queens, more than 68 percent of people tested positive for [*antibodies to the new coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html). At another clinic in Jackson Heights, Queens, that number was 56 percent. But at a clinic in Cobble Hill, a mostly white and wealthy neighborhood in Brooklyn, only 13 percent of people tested positive for antibodies.

As it has swept through [*New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html), the [*coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) has exposed stark inequalities in nearly every aspect of city life, from who has been most affected to [*how the health care system cared*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) for those patients. Many lower-income neighborhoods, where Black and Latino residents make up a large part of the population, were hard hit, while many wealthy neighborhoods suffered much less.

But now, as the city braces for a possible second wave of the virus, some of those vulnerabilities may flip, with the affluent neighborhoods becoming most at risk of a surge. According to antibody test results from CityMD that were shared with The New York Times, some neighborhoods were so exposed to the virus during the peak of the epidemic in March and April that they might have some protection during a second wave.

“Some communities might have herd immunity,” said Dr. Daniel Frogel, a senior vice president for operations at CityMD, which plays a key role in the city’s testing program.

The CityMD statistics — which Dr. Frogel provided during an interview and which reflect tests done between late April and late June — appear to present the starkest picture yet of how infection rates have diverged across neighborhoods in the city.

As of June 26, CityMD had administered about 314,000 [*antibody tests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) in New York City. Citywide, 26 percent of the tests came back positive.

But Dr. Frogel said the testing results in Jackson Heights and Corona seemed to “jump off the map.”

While stopping short of predicting that those neighborhoods would be protected against a major new outbreak of the virus — a [*phenomenon known as herd immunity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) — several epidemiologists said that the different levels of antibody prevalence across the city are likely to play a role in what happens next, assuming that antibodies do in fact offer significant protection against future infection.

“In the future, the infection rate should really be lower in minority communities,” said Kitaw Demissie, an epidemiologist and the dean of the School of Public Health at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn.

Dr. Ted Long, the executive director of the city’s contact-tracing program, said that while much remained unknown about the strength and duration of the protection that antibodies offer, he was hopeful that hard-hit communities like Corona would have some degree of protection because of their high rate of positive tests. “We hope that that will confer greater herd immunity,” he said.

Neighborhoods that had relatively low infection rates — and where few residents have antibodies — are especially vulnerable going forward. There could be some degree of “catch up” among neighborhoods, said Prof. Denis Nash, an epidemiology professor at the CUNY School of Public Health.

But he added that even if infection rate were to climb in wealthier neighborhoods, “there are advantages to being in the neighborhoods that are hit later.” For one, doctors have become somewhat more adept at treating severe cases.

Some epidemiologists and virologists cautioned that not enough data exists to conclude that any areas have herd immunity. For starters, the fact that 68.4 percent of tests taken at an urgent care center in Corona came back positive does not mean that 68.4 percent of residents had been infected.

“For sure, the persons who are seeking antibody testing probably have a higher likelihood of being positive than the general population,” said Professor Nash. “If you went out in Corona and tested a representative sample, it wouldn’t be 68 percent.”

So far, the federal government has released relatively little data from antibody testing — making the CityMD data all the more striking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for instance, [*has published*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) limited data that suggested that 6.93 percent of residents in New York City and part of Long Island had antibodies. But that survey was based on samples collected mainly in March, before many infected New Yorkers might have developed antibodies.

New York State conducted a more comprehensive survey on antibody rates, which involved testing some 28,419 people across the state. That survey suggested that roughly 21.6 percent of New York City residents had antibodies. But it also revealed a much higher rate in some neighborhoods. While the state has released [*little data from Queens*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html), its numbers showed that in Flatbush, Brooklyn, for example, about 45 percent of those tested had antibodies.

The CityMD data provides similar conclusions. At a location in Bushwick, a Brooklyn neighborhood which has a large Hispanic population and where the median household income is below the citywide average, some 35 percent of antibody tests were positive, according to Dr. Frogel.

Dr. Frogel said that across the Bronx, which has had the city’s [*highest death rate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) from Covid-19, about 37 percent of antibody tests were turning up positive.

The CityMD in Corona, on Junction Boulevard, serves a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood whose residents include many construction workers and restaurant employees. Many had to work throughout the pandemic, raising their risk of infection.

Angela Rasmussen, a virologist at Columbia University, called the high positive rate in Corona “a stunning finding.” Epidemiologists said the rate showed the limits of New York’s strategy in curtailing the virus: While public health measures may have slowed the spread in some neighborhoods, they did far less for others.

There are reasons parts of Queens [*were hit so hard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html). Homes in Elmhurst and parts of Corona are [*especially crowded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) — the [*highest rate of household crowding*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) in the city, according to census bureau data from 2014. Given that [*transmission among family members*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) is a leading driver of the disease’s spread, it is unsurprising that [*crowded households*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) have been associated [*with higher risk of infection*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html).

For residents of Corona, the main sources of employment are jobs in hospitality, including restaurants, as well as construction and manufacturing, [*according to a 2019*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html) report by the Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York. Many construction workers and restaurant employees showed up to work throughout the pandemic, elevating their risk of infection.

“Our plan did not really accommodate essential workers as it did people privileged enough — for lack of a better word — to socially distance themselves,” Professor Nash said. He said that one lesson of the past few months was that the city needed to better protect essential workers — everyone from grocery store employees to pharmacy cashiers — and make sure they had sufficient protective equipment.

Epidemiologists have estimated that at least 60 percent of a population — and perhaps as much as 80 percent — would need immunity [*before “herd immunity” is reached*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibody-testing.html), and the virus can no longer spread widely in that community.

But scientists say it would be a mistake to base public health decisions off antibody rates across a population.

“Just looking at seroprevalence alone can’t really be used to make actionable public health decisions,” Dr. Rasmussen, the virologist at Columbia, said.

One reason is that the accuracy of the antibody tests is not fully known, nor is the extent of immunity conferred by antibodies or how long that immunity lasts. Dr. Rasmussen noted that the “magical number of 60 percent for herd immunity” assumes that everyone infected has complete protection from a second infection. “But what about people with partial protection?” she asked. “They may not get sick, but they can get infected and pass it along.”

“It is premature to discuss herd immunity, since we are still learning what the presence of Covid-19 antibodies means to an individual and whether, or for how long, that conveys immunity; and we don’t know how the level of immunity in a single community translates into herd immunity,” said Jonah Bruno, a spokesman for the state Department of Health.

He said he was unsurprised by the high rate in Corona, and senior officials with the city’s contact-tracing program and public hospital system agree. “We know this area was disproportionately affected,” said Dr. Andrew Wallach, a senior official in the city’s public hospital system, “so this just confirms what we’ve seen clinically.”

PHOTOS: Elmhurst, Queens, a neighborhood with one of the highest rates of household crowding in New York City. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTAINY NEWMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Jackson Heights, Queens, where a clinic reported a 56 percent positive rate in antibody testing, a much higher rate than in the city as a whole. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUAN ARREDONDO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2020

**End of Document**



[***In Old Cairo, a Subdued Ramadan Looms as Virus Shutters the City***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YPT-CH91-DXY4-X2P1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** WORLD; middleeast

**Length:** 1284 words

**Byline:** Declan Walsh

**Highlight:** The holiest month in the Islamic calendar promises this year to be the strangest ever for the world’s 1.8 billion Muslims. In Cairo, known as the city of a thousand minarets, the coronavirus has cast a long shadow.

**Body**

The holiest month in the Islamic calendar promises this year to be the strangest ever for the world’s 1.8 billion Muslims. In Cairo, known as the city of a thousand minarets, the coronavirus has cast a long shadow.

CAIRO — For over a thousand years, Cairo’s oldest mosques kept their doors open — through the Black Death of the 14th century, the devastating cholera epidemics of the 19th century and the Spanish flu in the winter of 1918 that claimed 140,000 Egyptian lives.

Then the coronavirus hit.

On the first day of the lockdown at Al Azhar, a famed center of scholarship that opened in A.D. 972, tears flowed down the cheeks of the muezzin, Sheikh Mohamed Rashad Zaghloul, as he made the call to prayer in an empty hall.

“It was hard on my heart,” he said after midday prayers one day last week at the mosque, where a stray cat meandered between the ancient pillars. “When I call people, nobody can come. It feels like God is refusing us.”

The shuttered ancient mosques are a harbinger of another event that will be jarringly altered by the pandemic. [*Ramadan, the holy month of fasting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/world/asia/pakistan-coronavirus-ramadan.html), begins at the end of this week and promises this year to be the strangest experienced by any Cairene, not to mention 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide.

A sacred period that is rooted in gathering — at mosques, homes and on the streets — will be replaced with a month of solitary prayer, stifled celebrations and gnawing anxiety over the silent march of a virus that has closed a city that never, ordinarily, sleeps.

“It’s not going to be easy,” said Dr. Islam Hussein, an Egyptian virologist based in the United States who runs [*a YouTube channel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/world/asia/pakistan-coronavirus-ramadan.html) that educates Egyptians about Covid-19. “People are attached to the rituals. It’s going to hurt.”

Traditionally, Ramadan imposes a gentler rhythm on the usual hurly-burly of Cairo, a loud and boisterous megalopolis. At night, sidewalk cafes and high-end hotels teem with patrons who socialize into the wee hours. Then comes suhoor, the predawn meal before another day of fasting.

Families visit one another, or seriously ill relatives. Even lax Muslims observe the fast, and many abstain from alcohol.

This year, residents will be locked down at home under a nightly curfew that starts at 8 o’clock. Some wealthier Cairenes have fled to beach resorts. The great ancient sites, like the pyramids, are closed, and police officers roam scenic sites, like the bridges on the Nile, to discourage people from lingering.

“This Ramadan is going to be flavorless,” said Abdul Rehman, 19, at the deserted lantern store he tends in Khan el Khalili, the city’s most famous bazaar.

First the tourists vanished, after the closing of the Cairo airport. Now Ramadan had been canceled, at least commercially speaking.

“I just sit here and wait,” Mr. Rehman said glumly, as two women, veiled and wearing face masks, skirted past him down an empty alleyway.

At the nearby Zuwayla Gate, where criminals were once hanged, traders sold the giant colorful lanterns that are a mark of Ramadan in Cairo. Business had halved, several sellers reported. Like most of his customers, Ahmad Saeed, a shop owner, refused to wear a mask. “If God wants us to die, so it will be,” he said.

So far, the virus has taken a relatively modest toll on Egypt, with 3,333 confirmed cases and 250 reported deaths in a country of 100 million people. Turkey, which has 82 million inhabitants, has 91,000 cases. But the curve is accelerating, raising fears that the worst is yet to come.

The outbreak is adding to Egypt’s economic despair.

About one-third of Egyptians live in poverty, according to government figures, including five million casual laborers who lost their income to the virus. A $31 monthly payment offered by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is unlikely to plug the gap.

And now, adding to their woes, giant charity meals that are traditionally offered to the poor throughout Ramadan — known as Banquets of the Merciful — have been canceled.

In the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Ard el Lewa, Ali Abdelatif, a cafe owner, stood amid the stacked chairs and dust-smeared floor of his deserted business. The virus forced him to lay off his 10 employees, he said, and to call off the nightly charity meals he usually offers, with other local businessmen, on a dusty side street.

Still, he counted his blessings: A mile away, the authorities had quarantined an entire neighborhood to stem the spread of the virus. And Mr. Abdelatif had come up with an alternative plan to feed the poor: boxes of rice, vegetables and meat that he intends to deliver directly to homes.

Down the centuries, Egyptians tried to survive plagues by flocking to mosques rather than shunning them.

The magnificent Sultan Hassan mosque was built at the height of the Black Death in the 14th century. During later plagues, worshipers gathered to pray for deliverance, said Amina Elbendary, a professor of Arab and Islamic civilizations at the American University in Cairo. Such prayers stopped only after the majority of congregants had died.

Still, the restrictions on worship today cut deep.

At the gates of Syeda Zainab, a glittering shrine in the east of the city, Mohsen Hussein offered his prayers at a police barricade, facing a shuttered door. “As long as I stand here, I feel close to the Syeda,” said Mr. Hussein, a carpenter, referring to the shrine’s saint. “It’s very painful to have a barrier with someone you love.”

One consolation in this gloomy Ramadan season in Egypt is TV. Despite the nightly curfew, production has accelerated in recent weeks of the Ramadan television serials that Egypt is famous for — soap operas, thrillers, rustic dramas and even science fiction shows that air every night during the holy month.

At least 25 shows are expected to air this year, providing some relief to families confined to their homes after iftar, the meal that breaks the daily fast. Some TV companies, however, faced criticism in recent weeks for filming at night while mosques and churches were closed.

Mr. el-Sisi’s willingness to make an exception stemmed not only from his desire to keep people entertained in the long Ramadan nights. In recent years his intelligence forces have [*aggressively vetted, and even funded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/world/asia/pakistan-coronavirus-ramadan.html), many of the biggest shows, to ensure they follow “pro-Egypt” plotlines.

History teaches that sensitive handling of disease outbreaks is wise. A bungled response to the Spanish flu outbreak contributed to a wave of popular unrest that led to Egyptians rebelling against their British colonial rulers a year later, said Christopher S. Rose, a scholar at the University of Texas, Austin.

Mr. el-Sisi has displayed a typically heavy-handed touch in his fight against the coronavirus, with arrests of Egyptians accused of spreading rumors and the detention of a doctor who complained about a lack of protective equipment at his hospital.

The lockdown itself seems like just an extension of Mr. el-Sisi’s well-established suspicion of public gatherings. To Egypt’s president, even a small public protest is an unacceptable affront to his authority. In the coming weeks, through an unusual Ramadan, he will want to ensure that the coronavirus doesn’t change that.

Nada Rashwan contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: A lantern shop on Sunday in Cairo. Shops like it would traditionally be busy as the holy month of Ramadan approaches, but business has been cut in half, sellers say, because of the virus restrictions.; A muezzin’s call for prayer went largely unanswered on Saturday at Al Azhar, a Cairo mosque that opened in A.D. 972.; Ali Abdelatif, above left, a cafe owner, laid off 10 employees as business waned. Above right, advertisements for TV shows that will air nightly during Ramadan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIMA DIAB FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***A Queens Clinic Had a 68% Antibody Rate. How Would That Affect a Second Wave?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B0-YBM1-JBG3-6468-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 10, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 1465 words

**Byline:** By Joseph Goldstein

**Body**

Data from those tested at a storefront medical office in Queens is leading to a deeper understanding of the outbreak's scope in New York.

At a clinic in Corona, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in Queens, more than 68 percent of people tested positive for antibodies to the new coronavirus. At another clinic in Jackson Heights, Queens, that number was 56 percent. But at a clinic in Cobble Hill, a mostly white and wealthy neighborhood in Brooklyn, only 13 percent of people tested positive for antibodies.

As it has swept through New York, the coronavirus has exposed stark inequalities in nearly every aspect of city life, from who has been most affected to how the health care system cared for those patients. Many lower-income neighborhoods, where Black and Latino residents make up a large part of the population, were hard hit, while many wealthy neighborhoods suffered much less.

But now, as the city braces for a possible second wave of the virus, some of those vulnerabilities may flip, with the affluent neighborhoods becoming most at risk of a surge. According to antibody test results from CityMD that were shared with The New York Times, some neighborhoods were so exposed to the virus during the peak of the epidemic in March and April that they might have some protection during a second wave.

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As of June 26, CityMD had administered about 314,000 antibody tests in New York City. Citywide, 26 percent of the tests came back positive.

But Dr. Frogel said the testing results in Jackson Heights and Corona seemed to ''jump off the map.''

While stopping short of predicting that those neighborhoods would be protected against a major new outbreak of the virus -- a phenomenon known as herd immunity -- several epidemiologists said that the different levels of antibody prevalence across the city are likely to play a role in what happens next, assuming that antibodies do in fact offer significant protection against future infection.

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Some epidemiologists and virologists cautioned that not enough data exists to conclude that any areas have herd immunity. For starters, the fact that 68.4 percent of tests taken at an urgent care center in Corona came back positive does not mean that 68.4 percent of residents had been infected.

''For sure, the persons who are seeking antibody testing probably have a higher likelihood of being positive than the general population,'' said Professor Nash. ''If you went out in Corona and tested a representative sample, it wouldn't be 68 percent.''

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There are reasons parts of Queens were hit so hard. Homes in Elmhurst and parts of Corona are especially crowded -- the highest rate of household crowding in the city, according to census bureau data from 2014. Given that transmission among family members is a leading driver of the disease's spread, it is unsurprising that crowded households have been associated with higher risk of infection.

For residents of Corona, the main sources of employment are jobs in hospitality, including restaurants, as well as construction and manufacturing, according to a 2019 report by the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York. Many construction workers and restaurant employees showed up to work throughout the pandemic, elevating their risk of infection.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/09/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibodies.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/09/nyregion/nyc-coronavirus-antibodies.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Elmhurst, Queens, a neighborhood with one of the highest rates of household crowding in New York City. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTAINY NEWMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Jackson Heights, Queens, where a clinic reported a 56 percent positive rate in antibody testing, a much higher rate than in the city as a whole. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUAN ARREDONDO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 10, 2020

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[***Solitary Prayers, Stifled Festivals: An Unusual Ramadan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YPX-YVY1-DXY4-X3V8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2020 Tuesday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1209 words

**Byline:** By Declan Walsh

**Body**

The holiest month in the Islamic calendar promises this year to be the strangest ever for the world's 1.8 billion Muslims. In Cairo, known as the city of a thousand minarets, the coronavirus has cast a long shadow.

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And now, adding to their woes, giant charity meals that are traditionally offered to the poor throughout Ramadan -- known as Banquets of the Merciful -- have been canceled.

In the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Ard el Lewa, Ali Abdelatif, a cafe owner, stood amid the stacked chairs and dust-smeared floor of his deserted business. The virus forced him to lay off his 10 employees, he said, and to call off the nightly charity meals he usually offers, with other local businessmen, on a dusty side street.

Still, he counted his blessings: A mile away, the authorities had quarantined an entire neighborhood to stem the spread of the virus. And Mr. Abdelatif had come up with an alternative plan to feed the poor: boxes of rice, vegetables and meat that he intends to deliver directly to homes.

Down the centuries, Egyptians tried to survive plagues by flocking to mosques rather than shunning them.

The magnificent Sultan Hassan mosque was built at the height of the Black Death in the 14th century. During later plagues, worshipers gathered to pray for deliverance, said Amina Elbendary, a professor of Arab and Islamic civilizations at the American University in Cairo. Such prayers stopped only after the majority of congregants had died.

Still, the restrictions on worship today cut deep.

At the gates of Syeda Zainab, a glittering shrine in the east of the city, Mohsen Hussein offered his prayers at a police barricade, facing a shuttered door. ''As long as I stand here, I feel close to the Syeda,'' said Mr. Hussein, a carpenter, referring to the shrine's saint. ''It's very painful to have a barrier with someone you love.''

One consolation in this gloomy Ramadan season in Egypt is TV. Despite the nightly curfew, production has accelerated in recent weeks of the Ramadan television serials that Egypt is famous for -- soap operas, thrillers, rustic dramas and even science fiction shows that air every night during the holy month.

At least 25 shows are expected to air this year, providing some relief to families confined to their homes after iftar, the meal that breaks the daily fast. Some TV companies, however, faced criticism in recent weeks for filming at night while mosques and churches were closed.

Mr. el-Sisi's willingness to make an exception stemmed not only from his desire to keep people entertained in the long Ramadan nights. In recent years his intelligence forces have aggressively vetted, and even funded, many of the biggest shows, to ensure they follow ''pro-Egypt'' plotlines.

History teaches that sensitive handling of disease outbreaks is wise. A bungled response to the Spanish flu outbreak contributed to a wave of popular unrest that led to Egyptians rebelling against their British colonial rulers a year later, said Christopher S. Rose, a scholar at the University of Texas, Austin.

Mr. el-Sisi has displayed a typically heavy-handed touch in his fight against the coronavirus, with arrests of Egyptians accused of spreading rumors and the detention of a doctor who complained about a lack of protective equipment at his hospital.

The lockdown itself seems like just an extension of Mr. el-Sisi's well-established suspicion of public gatherings. To Egypt's president, even a small public protest is an unacceptable affront to his authority. In the coming weeks, through an unusual Ramadan, he will want to ensure that the coronavirus doesn't change that.

Nada Rashwan contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-ramadan-egypt.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-ramadan-egypt.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A lantern shop on Sunday in Cairo. Shops like it would traditionally be busy as the holy month of Ramadan approaches, but business has been cut in half, sellers say, because of the virus restrictions.

A muezzin's call for prayer went largely unanswered on Saturday at Al Azhar, a Cairo mosque that opened in A.D. 972.

Ali Abdelatif, above left, a cafe owner, laid off 10 employees as business waned. Above right, advertisements for TV shows that will air nightly during Ramadan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIMA DIAB FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Black Voters Want President Biden to Take a Cue From Candidate Biden; News Analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61KN-NB21-JBG3-63M3-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** In his victory speech, the president-elect said of Black voters: “You’ve always had my back, and I’ll have yours.” Many of those voters are watching to see what he does in office.

**Body**

In his victory speech, the president-elect said of Black voters: “You’ve always had my back, and I’ll have yours.” Many of those voters are watching to see what he does in office.

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. — [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) went to the Royal Missionary Baptist Church in South Carolina in late February, before the state’s presidential primary, and listened as the Rev. Isaac J. Holt Jr. delivered a message of encouragement.

“You’re going to win,” Mr. Holt said he told Mr. Biden privately, a political prophecy that was fulfilled in the coming days.

Now Mr. Holt, the pastor of one of Charleston’s largest Black congregations, has another message for Mr. Biden as he plans for his incoming administration: “Biden owes us. And we have not forgotten.”

Black voters have a political marriage of convenience with the Democratic Party. They are at once the party’s most solid voting demographic and deeply frustrated by the lack of systemic change its politicians have delivered for them.

In South Carolina, the state that helped propel Mr. Biden to the Democratic nomination and where about half of the Democratic electorate is Black, voters complain of receiving campaign promises from politicians while they are running but not being prioritized once they are elected.

There are similar grievances among voters in cities like Milwaukee, Detroit and Philadelphia, hubs of general-election campaigning in key swing states, who have grown used to the silence that follows presidential election years.

In their telling, attention quickly shifts to midterm races in gerrymandered, Republican-leaning congressional districts, and the Black voters who helped Democrats ascend to the White House are sometimes discarded. Their issues are too divisive. Their needs are too great.

Mr. Biden has insisted that this time will be different, and people like Mr. Holt are taking him at his word. Last month, in his victory speech after becoming president-elect, Mr. Biden cited Black voters specifically, alluding to those who rallied around him in South Carolina after his primary campaign flopped in other early-voting states.

“Especially at those moments when this campaign was at its lowest ebb, the African-American community stood up again for me,” Mr. Biden said. “You’ve always had my back, and I’ll have yours.”

But who defines political priorities for Black voters, and what does it mean to have their back?

Leading Black politicians, civil rights leaders, activists and many of the same South Carolina church leaders Mr. Biden leaned on to turn his campaign around all said in interviews that it was important to address the coronavirus pandemic. But they also raised issues that ran the gamut of liberal policy initiatives, from investing in small businesses and historically Black colleges and universities to tackling student debt and climate change.

Many also pushed back against the singular focus on racial representation that has dominated debates over Mr. Biden’s transition team and cabinet picks. Having a cabinet that reflects the racial diversity of America is good, they said. But they added that Mr. Biden’s legacy on race would be judged on his willingness to pursue policy changes that address systemic racism — a standard he has set for himself.

“What he’s got to do, in my opinion, is to depart from the tradition,” said Representative James E. Clyburn, the powerful South Carolina Democrat who is the highest ranking Black member of the House. “What is getting us in trouble in the past is when people get into office, they abandon the platform they ran on” in favor of appeasing Republicans, he said.

The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign, cited a commitment Mr. Biden had made during [*a public forum*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) to prioritize eliminating poverty and addressing the concerns of poor people.

Live up to that, he said, and a cross-racial section of marginalized Americans, including Black people, will have their lives transformed.

“We certainly want to see a cabinet that looks like America. But more important, we want to see a cabinet that works for America,” Dr. Barber said. “And not just the middle class. And not just the so-called ***working class***. But from the bottom up.”

In effect, they are asking President Biden to take a cue from candidate Biden. During the primary and general election, and under pressure from activists who cast Mr. Biden as an artifact of the political past, his team embraced a plan for Black Americans called [*“Lift Every Voice,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) which would seek to close the Black-white income gap, expand educational opportunities, invest $70 billion in H.B.C.U.s and reimagine the criminal justice system and policing.

Mr. Biden’s selection of Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, the first Black woman on a major party ticket, was — with the campaign’s encouragement — taken as a symbolic affirmation of these commitments. Former President Barack Obama, the country’s first Black president, had to assure white America he would be a president for all races. But Mr. Biden repeatedly asserted that Black communities would get special attention in his administration.

Black political leaders believe that the biggest barrier to Mr. Biden’s commitment to address systemic racism is his own instinct for compromise, bipartisanship and deference to the idea of Washington civility. Mr. Biden has consistently restated his belief that congressional Republicans will work with his administration in due time, though some of them continue to cast doubt on the legitimacy of his victory and President Trump shows no signs of loosening his grip on the party’s base.

“Bipartisanship is how the president-elect and vice president-elect plan to get things done from Day 1,” said Ramzey Smith, a spokesman for Mr. Biden’s transition team. “They’ve made it abundantly clear that in order to combat the systemic inequities that Black Americans have faced for generations, it is imperative to work across the aisle and engage with all groups to reach a consensus that doesn’t compromise our principles or priorities.”

Some Black leaders who have met with Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris during the transition have been frustrated by this sentiment, according to several people familiar with the discussions. Mr. Biden, the leader of the Democratic Party, is one of the few Democrats left who believes that the Republicans who reflexively opposed Mr. Obama’s every action and have been slow to acknowledge Mr. Biden’s legitimacy are simply an aberration.

Leaders are asking him to consider unilateral action like executive orders to enact his agenda, claiming that Washington horse-trading has rarely prioritized the needs of Black communities. Mr. Biden has been steadfast: Republicans will come around.

“We will see if he’s right, and we’ll see very shortly,” said Sherrilyn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc., who has met with the Biden transition team. “If he’s not, we’ll also see it very shortly.”

She added: “It’s perfectly fine to be hopeful. But certainly you should be fully prepared to pivot and to be effective.”

Even vocal allies of Mr. Biden say his ability to rise to the standards he set for himself, particularly when it comes to racial equity and a Black agenda, may rely on his willingness to see Republicans as obstructionists to be overcome, not negotiators to be met at a midpoint.

Mr. Clyburn, whose well-timed endorsement of Mr. Biden in South Carolina helped ensure his dominance in the state, said Mr. Biden must learn from the mistakes made by previous Democratic leaders, including Mr. Obama.

He cited Mr. Obama’s Supreme Court nomination of Judge Merrick B. Garland, whom Republicans refused to even grant a hearing, as an example.

Republicans “lied to him and told him that if he put up a moderate, they will approve him for the Supreme Court,” Mr. Clyburn said. “They never did it and they never planned to do it.”

“I told them at the time that you will be better off putting up an African-American woman for the Supreme Court,” he added. “If you put up a Black woman, she would have an immediate constituency. Make them turn her down. He would have redefined politics in this country, and frankly I think Hillary Clinton would have been elected president.”

The Rev. Joseph A. Darby Jr., the senior pastor at Nichols Chapel A.M.E. Church in Charleston and a former leader of the local N.A.A.C.P., said he had been heartened by Mr. Biden’s cabinet choices, including that of [*retired Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden), who would be the first Black man to lead the Defense Department.

“Just having new folks at the table is helpful,” Mr. Darby said. “But it’s that plus the substance.”

The stakes could not be higher. Black people sit at the intersection of the year’s biggest policy priorities: access to health care, criminal justice and the climate change crisis. Black Americans have been ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic, dying, being hospitalized and facing economic devastation at disproportionate rates.

In Mr. Darby’s congregation, a mother and her child both died from the virus. Mr. Holt’s congregation hasn’t been able to convene since March, just weeks after Mr. Biden spoke from the pulpit as a candidate.

Last week, in an interview at his church, Mr. Holt made another of his patented political predictions: If Mr. Biden does not follow through on his promises to Black people — does not make eroding systemic racism a priority in deed, not just words — Republicans will make gains with Black voters.

He cited the modest shift toward Mr. Trump in November’s election [*among some Black voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) and the increasingly nonpartisan nature of younger Black people. Those are warning signs, he said.

“The party system is not something that fits the Black community as a whole,” Mr. Holt said. “We’re tired of Democrats and we’re tired of the two-party system.”

Some of Mr. Holt’s congregants, at a socially distant gathering in the sanctuary they hadn’t visited in months, echoed their pastor’s urgency. Though they expressed confidence in Mr. Biden and said they all voted for him in the primary and general elections, they framed their choice as a call for action rather than a blank check of trust.

“He can’t get stuck on healing hearts,” said Shakeima Chatman, 46, a real estate agent. “But he can institute policies and regulation.”

What gave them hope: that Mr. Biden was comfortable among Black voters on the campaign trail and the loyalty he showed to Mr. Obama as his vice president.

What worried them: that he [*favorably invoked segregationists*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) in the name of bipartisanship, that he said Black people who did not support him [*“ain’t Black,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) and that he told wealthy donors at a fund-raiser that [*“nothing would fundamentally change”*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) if he was elected.

For Black communities, it must.

“Policies created these disparities,” said Cleo Scott Brown, who is 66. “Policy has to fix it.”

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr. at Royal Missionary Baptist Church in North Charleston, S.C., in February. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Blue California Votes to Rein In Liberal Agenda***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617C-T571-JBG3-63KK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1802 words

**Byline:** By Thomas Fuller, Shawn Hubler, Tim Arango and Conor Dougherty

**Body**

Joe Biden received one of the highest margins in the nation in California, but a look at how the state's ballot measures were decided shows a more complex picture of the electorate.

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The message that California voters sent in the presidential election was unequivocal: With almost two-thirds of ballots counted so far going for Joseph R. Biden Jr., the nation's most populous state put up mammoth numbers for the Democrats. But dig a little deeper into the results and a more complex picture of the Golden State voter emerges, of strong libertarian impulses and resistance to some quintessentially liberal ideas.

In a series of referendums, voters in California rejected affirmative action, decisively shot down an expansion of rent control and eviscerated a law that gives greater labor protections for ride-share and delivery drivers, a measure that had the strong backing of labor unions. A measure that would have raised taxes on commercial landlords to raise billions for a state that sorely needs revenue also seemed on track for defeat.

The full force of the election results provided something of a gut check for liberals in a state that plays a big role in the Democratic Party and often offers insights into where the rest of the nation might be headed.

''The results in California show the Democrats that you can go too far,'' said Bob Shrum, a former Democratic strategist and the director of the Dornsife Center for the Political Future at the University of Southern California. ''California is a very liberal state that is now resistant to higher taxes and welcoming to the new gig economy, which is where the industry was created.''

That is not to say California is lurching rightward. The state is unwaveringly Democratic up and down the ranks of its government. Democrats have a supermajority in the Legislature, and the governor and lieutenant governor are Democrats. Even the state's chief justice, Tani Cantil-Sakauye, quit the Republican Party two years ago and became an independent.

Pockets of unambiguous liberalism stayed strong on Tuesday with San Francisco voters saying yes to liberal priorities including affordable housing, police oversight and new taxes on companies whose highest-paid manager makes more than 100 times the level paid to its local workers.

And on many ballot measures, California voters validated the state's liberal reputation. They rejected an expansion of penalties for some crimes and restored voting rights for felons who are on parole, securing the state's position as a national leader in reducing mass incarceration and reforming its criminal justice system.

This year's mixed results, however, were not an anomaly. California has always had competing impulses. The state that is home to Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the House of Representatives, also produced icons of conservatism including Ronald Reagan. Some of the most prominent conservative voices during the Trump presidency hail from California, including Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader; Devin Nunes, the outspoken congressman and staunch Trump ally; and Stephen Miller, the hard-line anti-immigration White House adviser.

This has put California on the front lines of many political battles. The affirmative action measure on the ballot this year, for example, dated to 1996. That year, 55 percent of the state's electorate voted to ban the use of race, ethnicity, national origin or gender in public hiring, contracting and university admissions.

The proposition that California voted on this time would have repealed the ban and was supported by a who's who of the Democratic Party in the state, including Kamala Harris, the senator and vice-presidential candidate. But it was defeated by almost the same margin with which it had passed originally.

Analysts saw a reflection of the state's demographic complexity in the vote.

''It's always difficult to do proposition campaigns in a state of 40 million people,'' said Anthony Rendon, a Democrat and the speaker of the California Assembly. ''But our racial and ethnic groups are more complicated and divided than they used to be, in a bunch of different ways.''

Since 2014, no one racial or ethnic group has constituted a majority of California's population. Thirty-nine percent of California residents are Latino, 37 percent are white, 15 percent are Asian-American, 6 percent are Black and fewer than 1 percent are Native American or Pacific Islander, according to the 2018 American Community Survey.

Against that backdrop, Mr. Rendon said, affirmative action is difficult to define, with different meanings to different generations, ethnic groups and income brackets. In most of the state's ***working-class***, inland counties, Californians voted to keep it banned. Only wealthier, left-leaning urban areas such as Los Angeles and the Bay Area supported bringing racial and ethnic preferences back into the public sector.

And in statewide polls, Latino voters expressed ambivalence -- one survey done shortly before the election showed that only 40 percent of the state's Latinos supported the proposition. Many white and Asian-American Californians opposed the measure, fearing that higher admissions for underrepresented minorities might mean less room for their own children in the University of California system. Some young voters did not even understand the concept, Mr. Rendon said.

That complexity extends to the state's Democratic majority, Mr. Rendon added. ''When the left is united in California,'' he said, ''we win.'' But on issues from bail reform to rent control, he said, the party's factions -- progressive, moderate, coastal, inland -- ''were not all on the same page'' this election year.

The way voters approached taxes was also nuanced. Local ballot initiatives were set to generate at least $15 billion in new bond authorizations, according to the California Local Government Finance Almanac. But the biggest tax question of the election -- whether to raise property taxes on corporations and other large landowners -- looked headed for defeat.

For all their liberal leanings on issues like the environment, California voters have long been less welcoming to new taxes than their reputation would suggest. For 40 years the pillar of local finance has been Proposition 13, the 1978 measure that limited local property taxes and has been considered politically untouchable ever since.

Expecting a Democratic wave, a coalition of public employees' unions and progressive groups targeted 2020 as a moment to peel back part of the law. Their measure, Proposition 15, would have removed the Proposition 13 tax limits on commercial properties like office buildings and industrial parks, continuing to shield homeowners while raising an estimated $6.5 billion to $11.5 billion a year for public schools and local governments. The measure was trailing on Thursday, suggesting that, even if it wins, close to half of voters remain fiercely protective of Proposition 13.

California is unique in its reliance on direct democracy to decide some of the most crucial issues of the day. Ballots bulge with so many initiatives they might be better described as booklets. And it is not just ideology or the zeitgeist that can determine the outcome. Corporate interests, wealthy donors and advocacy organizations spend what amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars on initiatives every election.

The proposition that repealed the labor protections for ride-share and delivery drivers saw more than $200 million in campaign spending, breaking national records for a ballot initiative.

More than $100 million was also spent on another hot-button measure, rent control. Polls showed that the housing crisis was the No. 1 concern for state voters, and Gov. Gavin Newsom dedicated the bulk of his State of the State speech to the state's worst-in-the-nation homeless problem. And yet voters up and down the state resoundingly rejected efforts to expand tenants' rights and rent control.

The most prominent example was the failure of Proposition 21, a ballot initiative that would have given local governments more leeway to cap rental rates but was decisively defeated, according to The Associated Press. That marked the second time in two years California voters have rejected rent control by wide margins, and for the most part local attempts have not fared any better: On Tuesday, voters in Sacramento and Burbank also rejected rent control proposals.

''I keep thinking of this house I saw in a pretty affluent neighborhood that had a 'Biden Harris' sign and 'No on 21' sign,'' said Tony Roshan Samara, program director of land use and housing at Urban Habitat, a Bay Area policy and advocacy organization. ''That captures it. People will vote Democratic but when it comes to these issues of land and property, they vote in the interest of landowners.''

Californians are sometimes described as moderate on fiscal matters but liberal on social ones. That seemed mainly consistent with the passage of a number of criminal justice measures, perhaps most importantly the rejection of an initiative that would have made it harder for people convicted of certain felonies to be considered for early release from prison.

Jerry Brown, the state's former governor, called the vote a ''decisive repudiation'' of punitive sentences and a ''milestone'' in California's evolution from the 1980s and 1990s, when the state, amid crime waves and the crack epidemic, led the way on mass incarceration.

''There's a lot of work to be done in this field, but California is showing the way in a very positive and I think creative way,'' Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Brown spent $1 million left over from his campaign funds to defeat the measure, which was supported by police unions and get-tough-on-crime politicians and would have reimposed restrictions on early releases and toughen sentences for certain crimes.

What do voters think about voting for Democrats and at the same time not supporting Democratic-led initiatives? José Legaspi, a Los Angeles resident who runs shopping centers in Latino communities across the country, said he hardly saw a contradiction. He voted for Mr. Biden and did not think twice about opposing the measure that would raise taxes on commercial properties.

''I truly believe in paying taxes,'' he said. ''However there is a point at which one should limit how much more in taxes one should personally pay.''

Thomas Fuller and Conor Dougherty reported from Oakland, Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, and Tim Arango from Los Angeles. Jill Cowan and Miriam Jordan contributed reporting from Los Angeles.Thomas Fuller and Conor Dougherty reported from Oakland, Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, and Tim Arango from Los Angeles. Jill Cowan and Miriam Jordan contributed reporting from Los Angeles.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/05/us/california-election-results.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/05/us/california-election-results.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Watching vote tallies at a San Francisco street party on Tuesday night. ''The results in California show the Democrats that you can go too far,'' one analyst said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P6)

**Load-Date:** November 6, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Maintenance Fees for Some Co-ops Rise to Cover Lost Commercial Rent***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617C-NFS1-DXY4-X3YV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** REALESTATE

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**Byline:** C. J. Hughes

**Highlight:** As the pandemic has wrought havoc on the economy, many New York stores have been unable to pay the rent, forcing co-ops to pick up the slack.

**Body**

As the pandemic has wrought havoc on the economy, many New York stores have been unable to pay the rent, forcing co-ops to pick up the slack.

As the coronavirus devastates New York’s retail economy, making it hard for stores to pay rent, co-op buildings with ground-floor stores are losing a vital source of income. Already stressed co-op shareholders have had to pick up the slack, in some cases with maintenance charges increasing by as much as 40 percent.

“It’s a huge problem,” said Michael Wolfe, the president of Midboro Management, who added that residents are grumbling about the extra costs, as they also struggle with reduced work, furloughs and layoffs.

But Mr. Wolfe said that most residents realize that “anything is better than a vacancy,” adding that co-ops would face long odds at finding replacement tenants during the pandemic.

Also driving the decision to accommodate stores rather than evict them is a desire to preserve the convenience of having on-site shops, board members say. Other co-ops want to preserve jobs of employees who have become like family members after years of operating businesses under the same roof, like at 230 West 105th Street, a 14-story co-op at Broadway in the Manhattan Valley neighborhood.

Its board has hiked maintenance fees 15 percent, which for a one-bedroom means a jump to about $1,400 from $1,200 a month, to make up for rent breaks and discounts offered to the four stores that ring the prewar building’s base. That aid, which is benefiting a clothing store, coffee shop, deli and cobbler, is the equivalent of as much as a 50-percent rent cut, according to the board.

“One shareholder called the move unconscionable,” said Robert Chasen, the treasurer of the 70-unit doorman building, which because of the pandemic postponed its annual meeting from its usual time in May to November. According to Mr. Chasen, about half of the apartments in the building are occupied by people on fixed incomes or who are ***working-class***.

“But most neighbors say they are supportive,” he said. “These stores contribute to our neighborhood.”

The co-op’s largess, however, may only be postponing the inevitable. “Our business has been severely, severely, severely impacted and may still have to close,” said Carolina Conigliaro, whose father, Fernando Andrade, owns the cobbler shop, named Andrade Shoe Repair.

Speaking on behalf of her father, an Ecuadorean immigrant who speaks limited English, Ms. Conigliaro said that a drop in commuters has led to a decline in requests for repairs of heels, holes and zippers. Revenue is now often as little as $40 per day, she added, down from highs of as much as $1,400 per day before the coronavirus slammed New York.

“We have never seen anything so heartbreaking,” added Ms. Conigliaro about the shop, which has leased space in the co-op for four years, and which was located a block away for 32 years before that.

Rents cuts are only one consideration. A punishing retail climate, in which workers and tourists are staying home and not shopping, is occurring at the same time as a major shift in store ownership for many co-ops that were created in the 1980s.

Because of the complicated methods by which co-ops are created, third-party landlords often control buildings’ storefronts under long-term master leases. Co-op apartments upstairs usually receive some of the retail rent money. But the amount is usually just a trickle compared with what the landlords rake in, lawyers say.

Many of the master leases date to the 1980s when many of the buildings converted from rentals to co-ops, and after exhausting all of their renewal options, the firms that own those master leases are preparing to relinquish them — allowing many co-ops to finally take over their retail square footage.

The timing is less than ideal, said Jeffrey Reich, a real estate attorney with Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas, a New York firm, and a co-op adviser. “These buildings wanted their retail back for years and now no one wants it,” Mr. Reich said. “It really is ironic.”

The retail economy had been deteriorating even before the pandemic because of steeps rents and competition from online shopping. In the third quarter, which ended in September, asking rents in Manhattan’s main shopping areas fell to $659 a square foot, the lowest rate in nine years, according to the real estate firm CBRE. And the number of available ground-floor storefronts in Manhattan increased to 254 in the third quarter from 235 in the second quarter, representing a new record, CBRE said.

Only about a quarter of the hundreds of co-ops in Manhattan are anchored by storefronts, and managing agents estimate that even with recent turnovers, co-op boards still control only about half of the shop-lined buildings.

For boards that have long been salivating about the thought of recapturing their retail spaces and getting a boost in revenue, the dismal market statistics can be daunting.

“Frustrating is how I would put it,” said Charles Sullivan, the president of the board at 201 West 16th Street, a 110-unit co-op at Seventh Avenue in Chelsea that will reclaim its storefront on Jan. 1, 2021, after four lease extensions.

The handover has been a long time coming.

In 1980, five years before the buff-brick 20-story building went co-op, an entity affiliated with the department store Barneys New York (once based across the street) snapped up No. 201’s retail berth, leasing it from the original owner of the building, according to Ed Lewis, the board’s treasurer. The lease has changed hands a couple times since then.

In recent years, No. 201’s corner-wrapping 4,300-square-foot space has been familiar as the home to an outpost of Williams-Sonoma, the home-furnishings chain, which declined to pursue a new lease with the co-op.

And it’s not like other tenants are beating down the door. There haven’t been any takers since the space hit the market last March, just before the Covid crisis, said Mr. Sullivan, who said the board may hedge its bets and renovate the space to make two stores out of the large space.

The board declined to share the asking rent. But “it is much, much less than it was in 2015, 2017 and January 2020, ”said Mr. Lewis, who added, “we won’t be stupid about the pricing, but we will be flexible.” Banks, pharmacies and doctors offices are under consideration.

If shareholders won’t see an immediate upside, co-ops like No. 201 are still well-positioned, they say. Collecting all the rent, instead of just a portion of it, will make them better off.

And tax laws are more favorable than before. [*Rules that once limited retail revenue in a co-op to 20 percent of a co-op’s total revenues were relaxed in 2007*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/20/realestate/20cov.html).

But there’s still that nagging issue of attracting and retaining tenants, a concern that has gripped 140 Nassau Street, a wine-red landmark at Beekman Street in the Financial District. The 42-unit co-op, which has four retail spaces, including an eyebrow-threading shop, a hair salon, a dry cleaners and a bank branch, has decided to lower rents and raise maintenance fees as an act of good will. A committee is studying the exact amounts now.

“We have chosen to consider this a catastrophe of global proportions,” said Dr. Raphael Santore, the dentist who serves as board president. “We are going to take the compassionate road even if it will cost us.”

Even co-ops that have had relatively good luck enlisting retail tenants are being cautious. Consider 260 West End Avenue, a 74-unit building at West 72nd Street that went co-op in 1979 and, a year later, signed over its five retail units to the building’s sponsor, which appears to have controlled the storefronts until this year. In recent years, the co-op had been receiving about $50,000 a year in retail rents.

Before the master lease for those shops expired last month, the co-op secured commitments from four of the five existing tenants, which include a diner, dry cleaners, salon, deli and shoe repair shop.

Out of sensitivity for an ongoing process, Liz Osur-Marcal, the co-op’s treasurer, declined to say which tenant was leaving despite an offer of a “beyond generous” rent. Those staying inked shorter-than-usual five-year leases, added Ms. Osur-Marcal, who will tuck the rents into a reserve fund at her “very conservative” building. (The rents are lower than the co-op originally sought a year ago when negotiations began.)

“Some shareholders were contentious. They wanted maintence to go down right away,” she said. But the save-now strategy is in part to protect against the soon-to-be-empty space. And of course, leases are no guarantee of future rents.

Still, the co-op is grateful for some occupancy. “I’m not the kind of woman who uses the word,” Ms. Osur-Marcal said, “but I am blessed.”

For weekly email updates on residential real estate news, [*sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/20/realestate/20cov.html). Follow us on Twitter: [*@nytrealestate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/20/realestate/20cov.html).

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: The co-op at 230 West 105th Street has said it is willing to increase shareholder maintenance fees to help retain the occupants of its four stores; Charles Sullivan, president of a co-op board that is trying to lease its empty storefront; Carolina Conigliaro with her father, Fernando Andrade, inside Andrade Shoe Repair, a struggling business; and Robert Chasen, the treasurer of the co-op board at 230 West 105th Street, which is trying to support four stores. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHERINE MARKS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (RE13)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Spreading Joy With Tamales***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61KD-8S81-DXY4-X3BD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 23, 2020 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1689 words

**Byline:** By Tejal Rao

**Body**

Big tamaladas are canceled this year, but many of the city's tamaleras press on because tamales, along with the cultures and microeconomies they sustain, are essential.

To understand how deeply tamal culture runs through California, you have to know why Enrique Zaragoza and his cellmates collected bags of Chili Cheese Fritos from the Centinela State Prison commissary.

Crushed into a soft, umami-rich powder, then hydrated to form a grainy mash, the chips stood in for masa. Using a piece of plastic, the men pressed and rolled it around a snack pack of Cheddar and Chata-brand chilorio, building makeshift, contraband pork tamales to mark holidays in their cells.

''It was something to look forward to,'' said Mr. Zaragoza, who is no longer incarcerated, and recently ground corn by hand to make tamales at home. ''It was the food that made us come back to ourselves.''

The Mesoamerican dumpling, made with nixtamalized corn dough and a variety of fillings, has been around for thousands of years. Called tamalli in Nahuatl, a language spoken by Indigenous peoples in southern Mexico and Central America, it's still referred to in its singular as a tamal, or tamale.

It can be a source of deliciousness, comfort, cultural connection or income, but the tamal is not a monolith, and there's no single, correct way to make it.

This is most tangible around the holidays, when cooks take orders for their specialties on Instagram, restaurants post handwritten signs for limited runs, and women lug coolers through the streets, parking by grocery store counters, outside church stoops and next to bus stops.

The full splendor of tamal season involves all kinds of irrefutable, family-specific traditions, one-of-a-kind experiments and regional variations, from Mexico and Guatemala to Venezuela and Puerto Rico, where a brilliant range of tamal-like parcels go by other names -- pasteles, hallacas, humitas.

At the end of a difficult year, both the microeconomies and joys that these tamales provide have become especially vital. So the city's tamaleras press on.

''We take it for granted in Los Angeles, but to have access to all these different kinds of handmade tamales, it's everything,'' said Claudia Serrato, a teacher and cook. She usually hosts tamaladas throughout December at her home in Montebello, inviting everyone to take turns on the creaky, metal grinder, milling nixtamal into a fresh, intensely sweet-smelling flour called masa harina.

Many cooks buy the flour, then season and knead it to make their dough. Others buy the ready, seasoned dough -- masa preparada -- at grocery stores and shops, or from their favorite tamaleras, who often sell their own carefully calibrated mixes by the pound.

But Ms. Serrato likes to make it all herself. She soaks whole kernels with slaked lime, known as cal, overnight. The next day, she grinds the swollen kernels and kneads the flour with stock and whipped, shiny vegetable shortening to make a dough. The masa is a large, heavy mass, and preparing it requires time and muscle.

''I know some people see it as a tedious task,'' said Ms. Serrato, who's interested in native ingredients and the Indigenous foodways that predate colonization of the Americas. ''But for me, this is about family and cultura. It's what brings us together.''

At one of Ms. Serrato's tamaladas, you might catch up with more than a dozen friends and family over drinks, all the while learning how to feel for when the raw masa is hydrated so it's exactly the right kind of sticky, to spread it evenly across the wrapper and to leave a certain amount of space on the corn husk, so the tamal folds neatly and evenly.

You might learn more about who your auntie is dating, but also how to check if a tamal is cooked through, to note how the perfectly cooked masa peels away from the husk, bearing the imprint of its fine ridges.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Knowledge is preserved and passed on in this vital intergenerational space -- grandmothers teaching grandsons, cousins correcting each other, friends sharing their own families' tips and tricks.

The cancellation of so many large, annual tamaladas this year has been necessary, but grim, in part because the tamal itself is an act of preservation, and the spirit of making and eating tamales is communal and cooperative.

For Ms. Serrato, it is even devotional. The slow process of making tamales, which begins with buying the corn, traces a line back to her Purépecha and Huastec ancestors in Mexico, who likely made plant- and insect-based fillings for their corn parcels, decorating them with seeds, leaves and flowers, and serving them at pre-Columbian feasts.

''Their trade routes went all the way up to Minnesota,'' Ms. Serrato said, explaining why she works with a variety of native North American ingredients. ''So ingredients like wild amaranth and bison would have also met the tamal.''

To make a small batch of her blue corn and bison tamales this year, Ms. Serrato bought meat from a local rancher, and braised it until it pulled apart with the gentle nudge of a fork.

She dressed the meat in a dark, smoky salsa of puréed red chiles, onion and garlic, and wrapped the tamales with her sister and sister-in-law, sitting at a table in her outdoor kitchen. It was a smaller scene than in years before, but the women still lit sage, drank tequila and danced.

Right out of the pot, Ms. Serrato's tamales were the color of wet stone, porous, tender and springy. Inside, the threads of meat were pleasingly wild and gamy, bright with chile rojo. The tamal, rushing with a perfumed steam, tasted almost alive.

''This is it,'' said Andrea Serrato, her sister, scraping every bit of masa from the corn husk. ''This is the best, best, best you've ever made!'' They argued briefly over the amount of salt in the masa, and planned to meet the following weekend to make more tamales to sell locally via Instagram, as they do every year.

Karla Vasquez didn't grow up making tamales at home, but her family always bought tamales de pollo at Christmastime from women in the Salvadoran community who ran small, seasonal businesses in Los Angeles.

''Tamal culture is so prevalent in Latin American countries,'' said Ms. Vasquez, who is currently working on a Salvadoran cookbook. ''And so many ***working-class*** women in my family have relied on those food sales at different times in their lives.''

This year, after thousands of the city's restaurant workers lost their jobs, many turned to wrapping tamales at home with their families, selling them in the mornings alongside corn-based drinks -- unsweetened, porridgelike atole, and sweeter, chocolate-colored champurrado.

Israel Ricardo Luis, a restaurant cook from Oaxaca who was furloughed, now sells the extra-long, banana-wrapped tamales that he and his family make together on the corner of Normandie and West Third Street, and supplements that income working for a delivery service.

Their tamales de mole are smoky and tangy, rich with the fruit of dried chiles. The masa is moist and tender and thoroughly seasoned -- worth the mess you make if you can't wait to get home and start eating them right out of the plastic bag over the steering wheel of your car.

Though the work of making tamales has historically belonged to women, and been passed down through generations of women, men do study and practice the craft.

Alfonso Martinez, who runs the pop-up Poncho's Tlayudas, makes Oaxacan-style tamales de frijol for special occasions, such as saints' days and festivals, serving them with a soup made from dried beef ribs, as it would be by Zapotec communities in the Sierra Norte.

The tamal seems simple -- a filling of black beans, puréed with onion and garlic -- but the wrapping process is intricate.

[Watch Alfonso Martinez prepare Oaxacan tamales de frijol.]

Mr. Martinez presses a ball of masa as if he were making a tortilla, then covers it with bean purée. As he folds the circle, he spreads more beans on the newly exposed masa, spreading and folding, spreading and folding, until he's left with a small, pudgy parcel full of hidden layers.

Sandwiched with fresh avocado leaves, and wrapped in a softened banana leaf, the tamal takes on all of the delicate, herbaceous flavors around it. Though this tamal is vegan, many kinds, across cultures, are bound with animal fats -- often lard -- girdling meat and cheese.

Chayanne Sarabia, who was born in East Los Angeles and runs Shane's Tamales, started making vegan tamales for friends and family in 2009, looking to recreate his childhood memories of red pork and green chicken tamales.

He and his mother, Micaela Sarabia, now work together, making about 1,000 tamales in a busy week during the holidays, fulfilling the nonstop orders that come in through Instagram, text messages and over the phone, and delivering them throughout the city with salsas and sides.

Mr. Sarabia cooks mushrooms instead of pork. He replaces chicken with a shredded wheat-and-soy mixture which he marinates, dehydrates and simmers in his mother's green chile for a gently bouncy texture, infused with the tang of tomatillos and garlic.

When he plates a tamal, he unwraps it most of the way, so its chubby shape is revealed, then serves it open-faced, scattered with thinly sliced, pink pickled onions, a dribble of salsa, seasonal flowers and herbs.

It's beautiful, and a reminder that the tamal is a special, celebratory, valuable food that has never stopped evolving.

''Yes, you can buy a tamal on the street for two bucks, but it's not street food,'' said Ms. Serrato. ''It's a portal, it's a storyteller, it's a carrier of ancestral memory, and it's gone through a lot of hands.''

Recipes: Tamales de Frijol (Oaxacan Black Bean Tamales) | Tamales de Chile Rojo (Red Chile Tamales With Meat) | Carne con Chile Rojo (Chuck Braised in Chile) | Tamales de Pollo (Chipotle Chicken Tamales) | Tinga de Pollo (Chicken with Chipotle and Onions)

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/22/dining/tamales-los-angeles.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/22/dining/tamales-los-angeles.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Tamales de pollo (chipotle chicken tamales). The methodical process of making tamales can be traced back for generations in many families. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MALOSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS. PROP STYLIST: PAIGE HICKS.) (D1)

Top, Claudia Serrato and her family making tamales with blue corn and braised bison in Montebello, Calif. Center row, from left: dried corn kernels, soaked with slaked lime, then ground up to make the masa preparada for tamales

amal de chile rojo, the blue corn tamal filled with bison braised in red chiles and tomato, wrapped in a dried corn husk

and tamales in a pot. Left, Ms. Serrato and her family tasting the fruits of their labor. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA PONS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

DAVID MALOSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS. PROP STYLIST: PAIGE HICKS) (D6)

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2020

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[***In ‘Knife’s Edge’ Pennsylvania, Trump’s Fortunes Rely on His Rural Base***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616T-R111-JBG3-62RH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Trip Gabriel and Shane Goldmacher

**Highlight:** If President Trump is able to outperform the polls in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, it will be because he re-energized white, blue-collar voters in places like Butler County.

**Body**

If President Trump is able to outperform the polls in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, it will be because he re-energized white, blue-collar voters in places like Butler County.

[[*President-elect Joe Biden’s victory prompts spontaneous celebrations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/election-biden-reaction.html).]

BUTLER, Pa. — “Here he comes!” cried Jeannie Cook over the chomp of rotor blades as a fleet of helicopters flew out of the setting sun, blinding thousands of eyes turned toward the arrival of President Trump in the heart of red America.

No president had ever visited Butler County, according to that day’s Butler Eagle. “It almost feels like Christmas Eve,” the newspaper editorialized.

But rather than Santa Claus, it was Mr. Trump dropping in for the third of four rallies in [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/election-biden-reaction.html) in one day, mostly in places where he had trounced Hillary Clinton in 2016. If Mr. Trump is able to outrun the polls in Pennsylvania and other battlegrounds that show him trailing Joseph R. Biden Jr., it will be because he re-energized the white blue-collar voters in places like Butler County, home to a steel mill that employs 9,000.

Supporters like Ms. Cook, 62, viewed the president in heroic terms and had no doubt that he would be re-elected. “Because he’s the greatest president,” she said.

As voters cast ballots on Tuesday, [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/election-biden-reaction.html) loomed large as the potential tipping point for the presidency, and perhaps Mr. Trump’s best hope to maintain his hold on one of the so-called blue wall states, along with Michigan and Wisconsin, that he narrowly won four years ago to secure the White House. His advisers believe the state is on a “knife’s edge,” the closest contest on the map.

Mr. Biden spent all or part of the final three days in Pennsylvania, the surest sign of its significance, visiting his childhood home in Scranton on Tuesday.

“From this house to the White House with the grace of God,” he scrawled on the wall.

Vote counting is expected to take longer in the state than in many other key battlegrounds, and legal fights are already underway. But if Mr. Trump defies the polls, his frenetic schedule of rallies in the homestretch may deserve much of the credit, reminding his base why they voted for him in droves four years ago, when he promised to protect their jobs from foreign competition and from immigrants.

As the sun set on Saturday in Butler County, which is just north of Pittsburgh, Mr. Trump marveled at his supporters packed shoulder-to-shoulder and largely not wearing masks, despite daily records of coronavirus infections. “You can’t even see the end of people,” he beamed. “There’s a lot of people here.”

Pictures from that giant rally shook some prominent Pennsylvania Democrats. “That’s not photoshop,” John Fetterman, the state’s lieutenant governor, a Democrat, wrote in a string of Twitter warnings. “Can’t fake a crowd like that.”

Phillip Keil, who came to hear Mr. Trump, was optimistic. “I think it’s going to be a landslide," said Mr. Keil, 65, who owns a power-washing business in Gibsonia, Pa. Like the president, he put more faith in crowd sizes, yard signs and other omens than polling, which has the president [*behind an average of 5 points in Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/election-biden-reaction.html). Driving to the rally in a pickup festooned with Trump signs and flags, Mr. Keil said, “I had one finger given to me and five beeps and hurrahs.”

To fervent Trump supporters, many of them sealed under a dome of misinformation from the president and his media supporters, he is a champion. He has done the best that any president could have managing the coronavirus scourge, supporters say. He lowered taxes and triggered a roaring economy. He alone stands between a free Republic and an all-out assault on liberty if Democrats win control in Washington.

Watching the president’s arrival on Saturday in Butler from her porch just beyond the airport, Nadine Schoor, 63, compared his leadership of the country to that of a stern but all-knowing father.

“I look at President Trump and we’re the family — the country’s the family," said Ms. Schoor, who works for the county government. “And he’s the parent. He’s got a lot of tough love, and he doesn’t care what anyone thinks to get something done that he knows is right.”

All of Pennsylvania does not look like Butler County. On Election Day there were lines of people stretching out of sight in the Democratic strongholds of Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Rich Fitzgerald, the county executive of Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh, boldly predicted, “I fully expect Joe Biden to carry Allegheny County by 150,000 votes this time.” Mrs. Clinton’s margin in the county four years ago was 108,000 votes.

Mr. Trump faced a particularly uphill battle in suburban Pennsylvania, where his support among women has eroded over the last four years.

Bucks County, just outside Philadelphia, went for Mrs. Clinton by less than a percentage point in 2016. By the 2018 midterms, it went for the Democratic Senate candidate by 14 points. This year, Mr. Biden hopes to run up his margins in places like Bucks, where disaffected Republicans were not hard to find.

“I feel that Trump is just an embarrassment to the country,” said Andy Innocenti, a 62-year-old retail manager. He is a Republican but this year he voted for Mr. Biden and “Democratic right down the line” to send a message to his own party.

The Biden campaign expressed confidence that it had run up a cushion of support in early voting, [*after Democrats returned 1,641,000 mail-in ballots by Tuesday morning,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/election-biden-reaction.html) compared to 586,000 that were returned by Republicans.

Republicans were expected to vote disproportionately in person on Tuesday, and Mr. Trump’s campaign had made a far larger investment in ground operations.

Both [*polling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/election-biden-reaction.html) and [*analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/election-biden-reaction.html)of the more than 100 million votes cast before Tuesday nationwide suggests that Mr. Trump has lost ground with college-educated voters compared to four years ago. To compensate, he must drive up his advantage with white ***working-class*** voters even higher than in 2016.

In Armstrong County, where Mr. Trump won 74 percent of the vote four years ago, Pat Fabian, a Democrat on the county commission, predicted that Mr. Biden would “shave that by 10 or 15 percent” — an improvement that if repeated across Pennsylvania would likely doom Mr. Trump.

The Trump campaign in Pennsylvania has pointed to its months of in-person canvassing and outreach to low-frequency voters, which in some counties resulted in a surge of newly registered Republicans. The state includes 2.2 million non-college-educated white voters who didn’t vote in 2016, more than in either of the other blue wall states of Michigan and Wisconsin, which had gone steadily Democratic for years until 2016.

In Bucks County on Tuesday, Wendy Hummel, a 72-year-old Republican, was waiting to cast her vote for Mr. Trump because he was “for life and not death,” referring to abortion. She was willing to overlook Mr. Trump’s own less-than-pious personal history. “He is in his walk with the Lord,” she said, “and he’s learning like the rest of us.”

Across the hallway, in a middle school where the line to vote zigzagged throughout the school and where so many cars had piled into the lot that many were parking on the grass, Jessica Voutsinas had been clutching her vote-by-mail ballot for more than two and half hours. She was concerned with Republican efforts to disqualify such ballots, and planned to surrender it and vote in person instead.

Ms. Voutsinas, 24, called herself a climate change voter and was unsure how Bucks, a swing county in a swing state, would vote.

“It seems aggressively moderate to me,” she said.

Outside the Trump rally in Butler, a supporter named Jeff, who declined to give his last name because he distrusts the media, acknowledged that “it looks bad” for Mr. Trump winning a second term. He blamed the media for not reporting the president’s successes and “the criminal activities the Biden family has been involved in.’’

Among the president’s triumphs, he named “rescuing a lot of women and children who were abducted” for sex trafficking, part of the baseless QAnon conspiracy theory.

Mr. Trump has fanned myriad conspiracy theories. For months he has raged that he will only lose if the election is “rigged’’ and he has insisted that mail-in votes counted after Nov. 3, which are expected to favor Mr. Biden, would be fraudulent — a groundless charge.

In such an atmosphere, with Mr. Trump’s base unprepared to accept a loss as legitimate, Mr. Biden’s task of bringing together the country, should he become president, would be immeasurably more difficult.

On the final pre-election weekend, Emily Skopov, a Democrat running for the State Legislature, canvassed in an affluent suburb of brick homes north of Pittsburgh, where almost every resident was a registered Republican. Almost no one was willing to speak with her.

One couple who did listen to Ms. Skopov’s pitch (“I’m not a communist or a socialist!’’ she quickly said) was Brian and Patty O’Connor, whose opinions mirrored the gender gap that has imperiled Mr. Trump.

Mr. O’Connor, a lawyer, denounced Mr. Trump’s personality but said he would vote for his re-election. Ms. O’Connor said she was “embarrassed” to have voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 yet she remained undecided days before the election. “We have five kids, we put them through schools; taxes are a big issue to us,’’ she said. “We are practicing Catholics. Abortion’s a big issue — sometimes. Personally, I don’t like Donald Trump.’’

“I don’t know, I really tell you, I’m undecided,’’ she added.

PHOTOS: Pennsylvania has a Democratic stronghold in Philadelphia, above, which had long lines of voters, and Republican areas like Butler County, left, where President Trump held a rally last week. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRISTON JAE BETHEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2020

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[***‘Mind Boggling’ and ‘Deadly.’ This Is the Trump V.A.’s Racist Legacy.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61X0-SF01-DXY4-X4KJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jasper Craven

**Highlight:** “It needs to be cleaned up right away,” one employee said. Will Denis McDonough, Biden’s pick for V.A. secretary, help repair what’s broken?

**Body**

“It needs to be cleaned up right away,” one employee said. Will Denis McDonough, Biden’s pick for V.A. secretary, help repair what’s broken?

In May 2014, when retired U.S. Army Medical Service Corps Officer Nuwanna Franklin moved on from the Department of Defense to an administrative position at the Veterans Affairs hospital in Dublin, Ga., she envisioned a few years of rewarding work, and then retirement.

In her new role, Ms. Franklin received formal V.A. plaudits, thank-you notes from patients and other signs of gratitude from employees she advocated for as part of her role in the union. Yet she says the workplace was plagued by a pernicious and oppressive culture of prejudice — an environment in which she felt “you can’t speak up if you’re Black.”

A recent nationwide[*survey*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) taken by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) National VA Council, the union that represents 265,000 V.A. employees, found that 76 percent of respondents said they’d “experienced racially charged actions” on the job at the V.A.

National V.A. firing and promotion figures, obtained by AFGE through a recent public records request, suggests a disproportionate number of firings among staff members of color. This data also indicates that white workers are almost twice as likely as their Black counterparts to be chosen for management positions.

“It used to be that if you survived DOD you could survive anywhere,” Ms. Franklin said, speaking of a Black person’s ability to navigate the Defense Department’s bureaucracy. “But the institutionalized and overt racism here is mind boggling.”

Ms. Franklin, a retired nursing education administrator named Angela Crew-Dothard, and one other former veteran colleague of color, who requested anonymity for fear of retaliation, detailed a litany of grievances they all shared regarding the V.A.’s treatment of Black people. They say, for one, that they have frequently witnessed white employees privately malign Black patients, accusing them of lying about their medical conditions to secure better benefits.

The anonymous employee, himself a Black combat veteran, says he was repeatedly denied a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder diagnosis after he returned home from combat.

“You’ll have a white guy who has not even completed basic training who gets a 100 percent PTSD disability rating and a Black guy who saw combat and served 20 years, and his body is broken down, and he’ll get nothing,” he told me, a reflection of a long,[*well-documented*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) [*trend*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0).

These current and former Dublin V.A. employees further contended that qualified staff of color are denied promotions, then penalized for raising the issue. After Ms. Franklin was repeatedly passed over for promotions to a higher role, she decided to retire in 2019.

Meanwhile, according to internal agency documents and an AFGE official, an employee at the Dublin hospital faced a suspension after she was discovered co-hosting a podcast that propagates racist tropes and that has hosted white nationalist leaders including[*David Duke*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0), a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. (Local and national V.A. representatives did not respond to my written questions about the incidents.)

Similar complaints have emerged from veterans and employees of color across the V.A. system, from Massachusetts to Missouri.

Marcellus Shields, a former V.A. employee and the president of AFGE Local 342 in Wilmington, Del., compared the agency’s culture of intolerance to mold, calling it “unseen but everywhere.”

“It causes a lot of damage,” he said. “It’s deadly. And it needs to be cleaned up right away.”

In a written statement, a V.A. spokeswoman Christina Noel, who has recently left the agency, contended that the department is committed to “fair and equal treatment of all employees.” Ms. Noel turned back the criticism on AFGE. “Unlike AFGE, V.A. does not tolerate harassment or discrimination in any form,” she said after referencing accusations of sexual misconduct and other egregious behavior, including the use of racial slurs, by AFGE’s former president, J. David Cox. (Mr. Cox has [*previously denied*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) the allegations.)

Putting aside his own misconduct, former President Donald Trump — who attempted to brand himself as one of the most pro-veteran presidents in American history and the best president for Black Americans since Lincoln — also allowed racism within the V.A. to fester.

Mr. Trump’s V.A. secretary, Robert Wilkie, appointed in 2018, was a former member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and once called Jefferson Davis a “[*martyr to ‘The Lost Cause.*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0)’” (While the Defense Department now plans to rename bases whose names honor Confederate leaders, Mr. Wilkie [*declined to take similar action at V.A. facilities*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0), which commemorate controversial figures like Hunter Holmes McGuire, a Confederate doctor who advocated the forced sterilization of Black men.)

In addition to Mr. Wilkie — who served as an aide to the late segregationist Senator Jesse Helms — Mr. Trump’s V.A. leadership also included David Thomas, who, in 2018, had[*a portrait of*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) the first grand wizard of the Klan hanging in his office. There was also John Ullyot, the former chief communications official who, according to a [*Washington Post*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) report in 2018, had “sought to silence the agency’s chief diversity officer, who — in the aftermath of last year’s racially charged violence in Charlottesville — pushed for a forceful condemnation that was at odds with President Trump’s response.”

Trump’s V.A. also directed resources away from its Equal Opportunity Office under the premise of cost-cutting, even as it spent millions of dollars for guardianship of Confederate graves. The Trump administration[*cracked down on*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) diversity and inclusion trainings inside V.A. and oversaw a significant decrease in staff for affirmative action programs.

One of Mr. Trump’s signature veterans laws, the V.A. Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act, promised to hold agency leaders accountable, but[*the AFGE says*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) the law has been used to punish and fire hundreds of employees in positions largely staffed by ***working class*** veterans of color, like[*housekeepers*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0), even though 40 percent of all V.A. hospitals have recently suffered from severe shortages of housekeepers and custodians.

The V.A. scheduled an event focused on antiracism that was set to take place last fall, after concerns about racial equity mounted during the spring and summer across our nation. But it was then canceled for what[*management said were*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) “reasons beyond our control.”

The irony in all this is that America’s system of veterans’ benefits has long been envisioned as a potent tool to forge equality. This idea dates to the Civil War, where some 180,000 Black soldiers fought with the Union Army. Initially barred from serving, Black people enlisted immediately once Lincoln opened the door in 1862, as the war intensified and white recruitment slowed. A key to their high enlistment was Frederick Douglass’s stated belief that it would be impossible for America to deny rights, respect, and full citizenship to any Black man who’d had “an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder.”

Douglass was partially right. The government did, however unevenly, show some appreciation to veterans of color. Black people who had served became eligible for pensions and were allowed into veterans’ homes, which offered health care, food, and other forms of support. But many Black Civil War veterans still became[*targets of racial terrorism.*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0)

Black veterans since have found themselves disproportionately frozen out of the V.A.’s ancillary benefits — for[*home*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) [*loans*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0),[*unemployment*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) benefits, and[*the G.I. Bill*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0). Longstanding[*gaps*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) in health outcomes in numerous clinical areas also plague Black veterans, compared to their white counterparts. Minority veterans are almost twice as likely to live in poverty as their white counterparts, and roughly[*45 percent*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) of all homeless veterans are Black or Hispanic, despite these groups making up less than 15 percent of the veteran population.

Trump’s racially insensitive statements and actions have coincided with a series of[*ugly incidents*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) across[*the*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) [*country*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) toward Black veterans. In a particularly horrific 2017 incident in Bedford,[*Mass*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0)., a Black U.S. Army veteran and V.A. employee found a teddy bear on his desk with a noose around its neck and a sign reading “GO HOME OR DIE.”

In Kansas City, [*Mo*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0)., Black staff members at the Kansas City V.A. Medical Center say they were asked to participate in a [*“living museum”*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) of Black Americans like Harriet Tubman and Martin Luther King for a Juneteenth event. Richard Page-Bey, a Black Vietnam veteran working at the Kansas City V.A., recently said that after filing a complaint he found a grenade at his workstation with the words “Richard please pull pin” written on it.

“I couldn’t believe it,” Mr. Page-Bey told [*a local news station*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0). “I already went through war and I fought for this country, and then I see this. I have to go through war again.”

Gayle Griffin, a retired V.A. nursing assistant who worked for the V.A. for almost 12 years, says she has faced little but aggressions from management since 2017, when she became vice president of her AFGE Local 3. Less than a year later, she says the harassment worsened when she became the first Black president of AFGE Local 3, which represents V.A. employees in one of the most segregated cities in America: Milwaukee, Wis.

In union meetings, according to Ms. Griffin and one of her colleagues, V.A. officials belittled the intelligence of Black union leaders and refused to work in good faith. They say this behavior was especially pronounced by a human resources specialist, who, Ms. Griffin says, callously compared her work recruiting stewards of color to “going to the kitchen and gathering up the help.”

After repeated email requests and phone calls about this person’s alleged behavior, a spokesperson for the Milwaukee V.A. simply responded that he was no longer an employee.

Facing inaction from the White House, Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Brian Schatz of Hawaii recently pushed the Government Accountability Office to[*launch an investigation*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) into systemic racism at the V.A.

President Biden, whose transition team did not respond to questions about how the V.A. would handle these systemic issues moving forward, faces a litany of urgent economic, health, and political crises. But the V.A. is one of the largest departments in government, and he must prioritize remaking it into a welcoming place for the [*increasingly diverse veteran population*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0). This work should include symbolic acts — like striking the names of known segregationists from V.A. hospitals — as well as concrete new polices to help root out and punish discrimination.

In these efforts he could seek advice from veteran activists of color inside groups, like[*Minority Veterans of America*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) or the Black Veterans Project, which is run by former Army combat medic[*Richard Brookshire*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0). Mr. Brookshire told me in an interview that the V.A. offered little help for his mental anguish after he returned home from Afghanistan.

He attempted suicide in September 2018, a sign of crisis the department could not ignore. Mr. Brookshire now says he’s receiving better treatment, but remains focused on obtaining more comprehensive data concerning social disparities across the V.A.’s many programs.

“We need to address the abuses of veterans past and present,” he said. “We need to make good on what this country promised.”

Jasper Craven is an investigative reporter covering the military and veterans’ issues.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fct.symplicity.com%2Ft%2Fwrn%2F9bf1a747b02667911cded0c1ef913ca1%2F825670264%2Frealurl%3Dhttps%3A%2Fwww.afge.org%2Fpublication%2F78-percent-of-union-veterans-affairs-employees-surveyed-say-racism-is-a-problem-at-the-va%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CMPARK@afge.org%7C031bd7e8dd6f493a435708d84ea61161%7C527c0fbbcd144643a3b4d84bb5954133%7C1%7C1%7C637345822492452241&amp;sdata=mN2CiDwMRrNg527bZ9EtdHcMg7FP%2FiYhxAonPK7FJfU%3D&amp;reserved=0).

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PHOTO: Secretary of Veterans Affairs nominee Denis McDonough. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Pool photo by Sarah Silbiger FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***After Shock of 2016, Democrats Refocused Efforts on Rebuilding***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616Y-WCD1-JBG3-63RX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Hillary Clinton's narrow loss refocused the party's efforts to reclaim support and power after years of Republican statehouse dominance.

MADISON, Wis. -- If there is a symbol of the Wisconsin Democratic comeback following the shock of President Trump's 2016 victory and nearly a decade of being beaten into submission by the Republican state legislature, it is Jill Karofsky.

Ms. Karofsky stunned most of Wisconsin, and herself, when in April she won an 11-point victory in a race for a State Supreme Court seat, during an election the state's Republicans blocked its Democratic governor from delaying because of the coronavirus pandemic.

''I did not see a path for us to win,'' Justice Karofsky said during a six-mile run on Monday. But when the polls opened April 7, she said, ''I went for a run and I came home and I looked at my phone and I saw all those brave people voting in Milwaukee. And that's when I started to have a glimmer of hope.''

For Wisconsin Democrats, hope has been something in short supply since 2010, when Republicans won control of the state's government and began to systematically dismantle a progressive political infrastructure built up over generations.

While Justice Karofsky's race was officially nonpartisan, her allies made the battle lines clear -- the contest was a referendum on Mr. Trump and Republican governance in the state. And her victory, with its surprise margin, provided an important psychological boost to a party beaten down by the state's dominant Republicans and still spooked by 2016, when Hillary Clinton, who never visited the state, lost Wisconsin by just 22,748 votes -- a margin seared into the memory of the state's top Democrats.

Only in the final hours of the 2020 campaign, when more than half the state's voters had cast pre-Election Day ballots, did Wisconsin Democrats allow themselves to say out loud that they believed former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. would carry the state by a healthy margin when counting was expected to be completed on Wednesday.

It is a bullishness borne of the combination of high turnout in Madison and Milwaukee, signs they had won back some rural Democrats who voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, and the feeling that, since 2016, they have finally won more than they've lost. Democrats also believe that a recent statewide surge in coronavirus cases has helped refocus voters on the president's handling of the pandemic.

After Mrs. Clinton's loss in Wisconsin, Democrats here began organizing from the ground up. The Democratic National Committee and other liberal organizations began in 2017 to make investments in the state that the party neglected during the Obama years. In 2019, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin elected as its chairman Ben Wikler, a veteran Moveon.org organizer who in the last 18 months has raised record sums for the party, bringing in more than twice the funds as his Republican counterparts.

All this took place in the ashes of the devastating 2016 contest, when Democrats were certain of a victory, but disinclined to do much to make one happen.

During that campaign, Mandela Barnes, who would be elected lieutenant governor two years later, asked people to pose with him in photographs for Mrs. Clinton's Instagram page. ''People were like, 'Ehhh, I don't really know about that.''' Mr. Barnes said. ''I was like, 'We're friends!' But also, damn.''

But despite the new optimism, after so many searing defeats, there is a sense among voters that nothing is to be taken for granted.

''For the past 10 years it's been like living with a boot on our necks,'' said Andy Olsen, a policy advocate for an environmental organization who spent Tuesday morning reminding voters at Madison's Monona Terrace to text three friends to remind them to vote, too. ''We kept getting knocked down and trying to get back up again. People are cautious about getting their hopes up too much.''

Even before the April court election, there were already signs that the state's fragile Trump coalition was crumbling. Republican margins in the Milwaukee suburbs dropped precipitously during the 2018 midterm elections, while Democrats clawed back some of the voters Mr. Trump won in 2016, especially in the Fox Valley, a key battleground region of the state.

Without Mrs. Clinton as a foil, many of these voters began to judge Mr. Trump on his own and didn't like the results.

''I voted for Trump four years ago out of default,'' said Ted Schartner, a plasterer from Green Bay who voted for Mr. Biden last Wednesday. ''I regretted it almost right away. I didn't like the way things were heading.''

While voters were coming to terms with a Trump presidency, Wisconsin Democrats found themselves digging out of their collective nadir. Not only was it the first time since 1984 that a Republican had carried the state's electoral votes, but Democrats were locked out of state government, gerrymandered into a deep minority in the state legislature and facing a State Supreme Court controlled by conservative justices.

By the time Mr. Trump won the White House, Wisconsinites had already gotten used to the constant partisan warfare that would define his administration.

''You go to a gathering of friends and it turns into politics right away,'' said Roben Haggart, who has served as Minocqua's town clerk for 22 years. ''It always turns into an argument.''

Mr. Trump's victory here led to talk that Wisconsin, with its large population of white ***working-class*** voters, had become a fixture of the Republican Electoral College map, out of reach for Democratic candidates.

The state's Democratic infrastructure was in shambles, but little by little voters began to turn against Mr. Trump. In January 2018, a Democrat won a special election to a rural State Senate district Mr. Trump had carried by 17 points. That fall, Democrats rode anger against Mr. Trump to a sweep of the statewide elections, ousting Scott Walker, a two-term governor who had crippled the state's public-sector labor unions.

In June 2019, Wisconsin Democrats elected as their state chairman Mr. Wikler, who had moved his family into his childhood home in Madison. Mr. Wikler brought an organizing and fund-raising heft the state had never seen. The Democratic Party of Wisconsin has raised $58.7 million in the last two years, more than twice the haul for the state's Republicans.

''Trump's win, in a lot of ways, accelerated and pushed forward necessary change within our party,'' said Alex Lasry, a senior official for Milwaukee's pro basketball franchise who is weighing a run for the seat of Ron Johnson, a Republican senator, in 2022. ''Democrats realized we can't just sit on the sidelines in these off-year elections.''

Representative Mark Pocan, a Madison Democrat, said Mr. Biden's campaign and Mr. Wikler's leadership created a dramatically different political landscape than four years ago.

''The Biden campaign is 180 degrees different than what we had four years ago,'' Mr. Pocan said. One important difference: Mr. Biden has visited Wisconsin three times since the primary. ''The candidate never came post-primary four years ago, we had no resources specifically for Wisconsin -- or very little resources.''

The 2016 contest was marked by a drop in turnout among Black voters in Milwaukee, who are now a key part of Mr. Biden's hopes for a Wisconsin victory.

The Rev. Greg Lewis, the executive director of the Milwaukee Souls to the Polls effort, said the Black electorate in the city had changed, thanks in part to Mr. Trump's presidency. Since 2012, Mr. Lewis said, the money that was absent in 2016 is now flowing to community leaders for get-out-the-vote efforts, just as Black Milwaukeeans have become more engaged in removing Mr. Trump.

''These groups weren't active four years ago, because we didn't have funding or resources to do any of the things we're doing right now,'' Mr. Lewis said. ''I just think the Democratic Party didn't come into the community enough to energize and make sure that people were willing to do what needs to be done.''

By October, Wisconsin's coronavirus spike was among the worst in the country -- and by far the worst of any presidential battleground state. The president's approval rating on the pandemic in Wisconsin had fallen from 51 percent in March to just 40 percent, according to a Marquette Law School poll.

''We've got people that are supposed to be leading the country that have just thrown up their hands and said, there's nothing we can do about this pandemic -- which is just demonstrably not true,'' said Kate Walton, an emergency room nurse in Madison who said she voted for Mr. Biden.

One after another, Biden voters across the state in the last week said their votes were motivated primarily by a desire to oust Mr. Trump.

''I wouldn't vote for Trump for nothing, even if you paid me all the money he says he's worth,'' said Terri Konkol, a 58-year-old Milwaukeean who on Saturday voted for Mr. Biden from her wheelchair. She blamed the president for the virus's spread in the state. ''In our whole lifetimes have we ever had to wear masks?''

Rose Goeb, 62, a Milwaukee preschool teacher, voted early for Mr. Biden on one of the first days she could.

Of Mr. Trump, she said, ''I made up my mind a long time ago that this man does not have the character or discipline to be president.''

And on Tuesday in Madison, among a line of voters waiting to cast ballots when the polls opened at 7 a.m. was Helen Hawley, an artist who was inspired by Senator Bernie Sanders and a fierce desire to remove Mr. Trump.

''It's hard to be hopeful about anything right now,'' said Ms. Hawley, 40. ''But it's better to have hope than to not. Hope is just something I hold onto because it's a good idea.''

Reid J. Epstein reported from Madison, Wis., and Astead W. Herndon from Milwaukee.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/us/politics/wisconsin-elections-trump-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/us/politics/wisconsin-elections-trump-biden.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From top, election workers in Milwaukee tabulating mail-in and absentee ballots on Tuesday

voting in Madison

Justice Jill Karofsky of the Wisconsin Supreme Court in Madison on Monday. Her surprise victory in an election in April was a sign of lagging Republican support in the state. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2020

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[***In 'Knife's Edge' Pennsylvania, Trump's Fate Hangs on Rural Base***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616Y-WCD1-JBG3-63RP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel and Shane Goldmacher

**Body**

If President Trump is able to outperform the polls in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, it will be because he re-energized white, blue-collar voters in places like Butler County.

BUTLER, Pa. -- ''Here he comes!'' cried Jeannie Cook over the chomp of rotor blades as a fleet of helicopters flew out of the setting sun, blinding thousands of eyes turned toward the arrival of President Trump in the heart of red America.

No president had ever visited Butler County, according to that day's Butler Eagle. ''It almost feels like Christmas Eve,'' the newspaper editorialized.

But rather than Santa Claus, it was Mr. Trump dropping in for the third of four rallies in Pennsylvania in one day, mostly in places where he had trounced Hillary Clinton in 2016. If Mr. Trump is able to outrun the polls in Pennsylvania and other battlegrounds that show him trailing Joseph R. Biden Jr., it will be because he re-energized the white blue-collar voters in places like Butler County, home to a steel mill that employs 9,000.

Supporters like Ms. Cook, 62, viewed the president in heroic terms and had no doubt that he would be re-elected. ''Because he's the greatest president,'' she said.

As voters cast ballots on Tuesday, Pennsylvania loomed large as the potential tipping point for the presidency, and perhaps Mr. Trump's best hope to maintain his hold on one of the so-called blue wall states, along with Michigan and Wisconsin, that he narrowly won four years ago to secure the White House. His advisers believe the state is on a ''knife's edge,'' the closest contest on the map.

Mr. Biden spent all or part of the final three days in Pennsylvania, the surest sign of its significance, visiting his childhood home in Scranton on Tuesday.

''From this house to the White House with the grace of God,'' he scrawled on the wall.

Vote counting is expected to take longer in the state than in many other key battlegrounds, and legal fights are already underway. But if Mr. Trump defies the polls, his frenetic schedule of rallies in the homestretch may deserve much of the credit, reminding his base why they voted for him in droves four years ago, when he promised to protect their jobs from foreign competition and from immigrants.

As the sun set on Saturday in Butler County, which is just north of Pittsburgh, Mr. Trump marveled at his supporters packed shoulder-to-shoulder and largely not wearing masks, despite daily records of coronavirus infections. ''You can't even see the end of people,'' he beamed. ''There's a lot of people here.''

Pictures from that giant rally shook some prominent Pennsylvania Democrats. ''That's not photoshop,'' John Fetterman, the state's lieutenant governor, a Democrat, wrote in a string of Twitter warnings. ''Can't fake a crowd like that.''

Phillip Keil, who came to hear Mr. Trump, was optimistic. ''I think it's going to be a landslide," said Mr. Keil, 65, who owns a power-washing business in Gibsonia, Pa. Like the president, he put more faith in crowd sizes, yard signs and other omens than polling, which has the president behind an average of 5 points in Pennsylvania. Driving to the rally in a pickup festooned with Trump signs and flags, Mr. Keil said, ''I had one finger given to me and five beeps and hurrahs.''

To fervent Trump supporters, many of them sealed under a dome of misinformation from the president and his media supporters, he is a champion. He has done the best that any president could have managing the coronavirus scourge, supporters say. He lowered taxes and triggered a roaring economy. He alone stands between a free Republic and an all-out assault on liberty if Democrats win control in Washington.

Watching the president's arrival on Saturday in Butler from her porch just beyond the airport, Nadine Schoor, 63, compared his leadership of the country to that of a stern but all-knowing father.

''I look at President Trump and we're the family -- the country's the family," said Ms. Schoor, who works for the county government. ''And he's the parent. He's got a lot of tough love, and he doesn't care what anyone thinks to get something done that he knows is right.''

All of Pennsylvania does not look like Butler County. On Election Day there were lines of people stretching out of sight in the Democratic strongholds of Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Rich Fitzgerald, the county executive of Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh, boldly predicted, ''I fully expect Joe Biden to carry Allegheny County by 150,000 votes this time.'' Mrs. Clinton's margin in the county four years ago was 108,000 votes.

Mr. Trump faced a particularly uphill battle in suburban Pennsylvania, where his support among women has eroded over the last four years.

Bucks County, just outside Philadelphia, went for Mrs. Clinton by less than a percentage point in 2016. By the 2018 midterms, it went for the Democratic Senate candidate by 14 points. This year, Mr. Biden hopes to run up his margins in places like Bucks, where disaffected Republicans were not hard to find.

''I feel that Trump is just an embarrassment to the country,'' said Andy Innocenti, a 62-year-old retail manager. He is a Republican but this year he voted for Mr. Biden and ''Democratic right down the line'' to send a message to his own party.

The Biden campaign expressed confidence that it had run up a cushion of support in early voting, after Democrats returned 1,641,000 mail-in ballots by Tuesday morning, compared to 586,000 that were returned by Republicans.

Republicans were expected to vote disproportionately in person on Tuesday, and Mr. Trump's campaign had made a far larger investment in ground operations.

Both polling and analysis of the more than 100 million votes cast before Tuesday nationwide suggests that Mr. Trump has lost ground with college-educated voters compared to four years ago. To compensate, he must drive up his advantage with white ***working-class*** voters even higher than in 2016.

In Armstrong County, where Mr. Trump won 74 percent of the vote four years ago, Pat Fabian, a Democrat on the county commission, predicted that Mr. Biden would ''shave that by 10 or 15 percent'' -- an improvement that if repeated across Pennsylvania would likely doom Mr. Trump.

The Trump campaign in Pennsylvania has pointed to its months of in-person canvassing and outreach to low-frequency voters, which in some counties resulted in a surge of newly registered Republicans. The state includes 2.2 million non-college-educated white voters who didn't vote in 2016, more than in either of the other blue wall states of Michigan and Wisconsin, which had gone steadily Democratic for years until 2016.

In Bucks County on Tuesday, Wendy Hummel, a 72-year-old Republican, was waiting to cast her vote for Mr. Trump because he was ''for life and not death,'' referring to abortion. She was willing to overlook Mr. Trump's own less-than-pious personal history. ''He is in his walk with the Lord,'' she said, ''and he's learning like the rest of us.''

Across the hallway, in a middle school where the line to vote zigzagged throughout the school and where so many cars had piled into the lot that many were parking on the grass, Jessica Voutsinas had been clutching her vote-by-mail ballot for more than two and half hours. She was concerned with Republican efforts to disqualify such ballots, and planned to surrender it and vote in person instead.

Ms. Voutsinas, 24, called herself a climate change voter and was unsure how Bucks, a swing county in a swing state, would vote.

''It seems aggressively moderate to me,'' she said.

Outside the Trump rally in Butler, a supporter named Jeff, who declined to give his last name because he distrusts the media, acknowledged that ''it looks bad'' for Mr. Trump winning a second term. He blamed the media for not reporting the president's successes and ''the criminal activities the Biden family has been involved in.''

Among the president's triumphs, he named ''rescuing a lot of women and children who were abducted'' for sex trafficking, part of the baseless QAnon conspiracy theory.

Mr. Trump has fanned myriad conspiracy theories. For months he has raged that he will only lose if the election is ''rigged'' and he has insisted that mail-in votes counted after Nov. 3, which are expected to favor Mr. Biden, would be fraudulent -- a groundless charge.

In such an atmosphere, with Mr. Trump's base unprepared to accept a loss as legitimate, Mr. Biden's task of bringing together the country, should he become president, would be immeasurably more difficult.

On the final pre-election weekend, Emily Skopov, a Democrat running for the State Legislature, canvassed in an affluent suburb of brick homes north of Pittsburgh, where almost every resident was a registered Republican. Almost no one was willing to speak with her.

One couple who did listen to Ms. Skopov's pitch (''I'm not a communist or a socialist!'' she quickly said) was Brian and Patty O'Connor, whose opinions mirrored the gender gap that has imperiled Mr. Trump.

Mr. O'Connor, a lawyer, denounced Mr. Trump's personality but said he would vote for his re-election. Ms. O'Connor said she was ''embarrassed'' to have voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 yet she remained undecided days before the election. ''We have five kids, we put them through schools; taxes are a big issue to us,'' she said. ''We are practicing Catholics. Abortion's a big issue -- sometimes. Personally, I don't like Donald Trump.''

''I don't know, I really tell you, I'm undecided,'' she added.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/us/politics/pennsylvania-results-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/us/politics/pennsylvania-results-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Pennsylvania has a Democratic stronghold in Philadelphia, above, which had long lines of voters, and Republican areas like Butler County, left, where President Trump held a rally last week. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRISTON JAE BETHEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***It’s Peak Season for Tamales in Los Angeles***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61K7-F2B1-DXY4-X1JR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** DINING

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**Byline:** Tejal Rao

**Highlight:** Big tamaladas are canceled this year, but many of the city’s tamaleras press on because tamales, along with the cultures and microeconomies they sustain, are essential.

**Body**

Big tamaladas are canceled this year, but many of the city’s tamaleras press on because tamales, along with the cultures and microeconomies they sustain, are essential.

To understand how deeply tamal culture runs through California, you have to know why Enrique Zaragoza and his cellmates collected bags of Chili Cheese Fritos from the Centinela State Prison commissary.

Crushed into a soft, umami-rich powder, then hydrated to form a grainy mash, the chips stood in for masa. Using a piece of plastic, the men pressed and rolled it around a snack pack of Cheddar and Chata-brand chilorio, building makeshift, contraband pork tamales to mark holidays in their cells.

“It was something to look forward to,” said Mr. Zaragoza, who is no longer incarcerated, and recently ground corn by hand to make tamales at home. “It was the food that made us come back to ourselves.”

The Mesoamerican dumpling, made with nixtamalized corn dough and a variety of fillings, has been around for thousands of years. Called tamalli in Nahuatl, a language spoken by Indigenous peoples in Mexico and Central America, it’s still referred to in its singular as a tamal, or tamale.

It can be a source of deliciousness, comfort, cultural connection or income, but the tamal is not a monolith, and there’s no single, correct way to make it.

This is most tangible around the holidays, when cooks take orders for their specialties on Instagram, restaurants post handwritten signs for limited runs, and women lug coolers through the streets, parking by grocery store counters, outside church stoops and next to bus stops.

The full splendor of tamal season involves all kinds of irrefutable, family-specific traditions, one-of-a-kind experiments and regional variations, from Mexico and Guatemala to Venezuela and Puerto Rico, where a brilliant range of tamal-like parcels go by other names — pasteles, hallacas, humitas.

At the end of a difficult year, both the microeconomies and joys that these tamales provide have become especially vital. So the city’s tamaleras press on.

“We take it for granted in Los Angeles, but to have access to all these different kinds of handmade tamales, it’s everything,” said [*Claudia Serrato*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en), a teacher and cook. She usually hosts tamaladas throughout December at her home in Montebello, inviting everyone to take turns on the creaky, metal grinder, milling nixtamal into a fresh, intensely sweet-smelling flour called masa harina.

Many cooks buy the flour, then season and knead it to make their dough. Others buy the ready, seasoned dough — masa preparada — at grocery stores and shops, or from their favorite tamaleras, who often sell their own carefully calibrated mixes by the pound.

But Ms. Serrato likes to make it all herself. She soaks whole kernels with slaked lime, known as cal, overnight. The next day, she grinds the swollen kernels and kneads the flour with stock and whipped, shiny vegetable shortening to make a dough. The masa is a large, heavy mass, and preparing it requires time and muscle.

“I know some people see it as a tedious task,” said Ms. Serrato, who’s interested in native ingredients and the Indigenous foodways that predate colonization of the Americas. “But for me, this is about family and cultura. It’s what brings us together.”

At one of Ms. Serrato’s tamaladas, you might catch up with more than a dozen friends and family over drinks, all the while learning how to feel for when the raw masa is hydrated so it’s exactly the right kind of sticky, to spread it evenly across the wrapper and to leave a certain amount of space on the corn husk, so the tamal folds neatly and evenly.

You might learn more about who your auntie is dating, but also how to check if a tamal is cooked through, to note how the perfectly cooked masa peels away from the husk, bearing the imprint of its fine ridges.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en)]

Knowledge is preserved and passed on in this vital intergenerational space — grandmothers teaching grandsons, cousins correcting each other, friends sharing their own families’ tips and tricks.

The cancellation of so many large, annual tamaladas this year has been necessary, but grim, in part because the tamal itself is an act of preservation, and the spirit of making and eating tamales is communal and cooperative.

For Ms. Serrato, it is even devotional. The slow process of making tamales, which begins with buying the corn, traces a line back to her Purépecha and Huastec ancestors in Mexico, who likely made plant- and insect-based fillings for their corn parcels, decorating them with seeds, leaves and flowers, and serving them at pre-Columbian feasts.

“Their trade routes went all the way up to Minnesota,” Ms. Serrato said, explaining why she works with a variety of native North American ingredients. “So ingredients like wild amaranth and bison would have also met the tamal.”

To make a small batch of her blue corn and bison tamales this year, Ms. Serrato bought meat from a local rancher, and braised it until it pulled apart with the gentle nudge of a fork.

She dressed the meat in a dark, smoky salsa of puréed red chiles, onion and garlic, and wrapped the tamales with her sister and sister-in-law, sitting at a table in her outdoor kitchen. It was a smaller scene than in years before, but the women still lit sage, drank tequila and danced.

Right out of the pot, Ms. Serrato’s tamales were the color of wet stone, porous, tender and springy. Inside, the threads of meat were pleasingly wild and gamy, bright with chile rojo. The tamal, rushing with a perfumed steam, tasted almost alive.

“This is it,” said Andrea Serrato, her sister, scraping every bit of masa from the corn husk. “This is the best, best, best you’ve ever made!” They argued briefly over the amount of salt in the masa, and planned to meet the following weekend to make more tamales to sell locally via Instagram, as they do every year.

[*Karla Vasquez*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en) didn’t grow up making tamales at home, but her family always bought tamales de pollo at Christmastime from women in the Salvadoran community who ran small, seasonal businesses in Los Angeles.

“Tamal culture is so prevalent in Latin American countries,” said Ms. Vasquez, who is currently working on a Salvadoran cookbook. “And so many ***working-class*** women in my family have relied on those food sales at different times in their lives.”

This year, after thousands of the city’s restaurant workers lost their jobs, many turned to wrapping tamales at home with their families, selling them in the mornings alongside corn-based drinks — unsweetened, porridgelike atole, and sweeter, chocolate-colored champurrado.

Israel Ricardo Luis, a restaurant cook from Oaxaca who was furloughed, now sells the extra-long, banana-wrapped tamales that he and his family make together on the corner of Normandie and West Third Street, and supplements that income working for a delivery service.

Their tamales de mole are smoky and tangy, rich with the fruit of dried chiles. The masa is moist and tender and thoroughly seasoned — worth the mess you make if you can’t wait to get home and start eating them right out of the plastic bag over the steering wheel of your car.

Though the work of making tamales has historically belonged to women, and been passed down through generations of women, men do study and practice the craft.

Alfonso Martinez, who runs the pop-up [*Poncho’s Tlayudas*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en), makes Oaxacan-style tamales de frijol for special occasions, such as saints’ days and festivals, serving them with a soup made from dried beef ribs, as it would be by Zapotec communities in the Sierra Norte.

The tamal seems simple — a filling of black beans, puréed with onion and garlic — but the wrapping process is intricate.

Mr. Martinez presses a ball of masa as if he were making a tortilla, then covers it with bean purée. As he folds the circle, he spreads more beans on the newly exposed masa, spreading and folding, spreading and folding, until he’s left with a small, pudgy parcel full of hidden layers.

[[*Watch Alfonso Martinez prepare Oaxacan tamales de frijol*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en).]

Sandwiched with fresh avocado leaves, and wrapped in a softened banana leaf, the tamal takes on all of the delicate, herbaceous flavors around it. Though this tamal is vegan, many kinds, across cultures, are bound with animal fats — often lard — girdling meat and cheese.

Chayanne Sarabia, who was born in East Los Angeles and runs [*Shane’s Tamales*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en), started making vegan tamales for friends and family in 2009, looking to recreate his childhood memories of red pork and green chicken tamales.

He and his mother, Micaela Sarabia, now work together, making about 1,000 tamales in a busy week during the holidays, fulfilling the nonstop orders that come in through Instagram, text messages and over the phone, and delivering them throughout the city with salsas and sides.

Mr. Sarabia cooks mushrooms instead of pork. He replaces chicken with a shredded wheat-and-soy mixture which he marinates, dehydrates and simmers in his mother’s green chile for a gently bouncy texture, infused with the tang of tomatillos and garlic.

When he plates a tamal, he unwraps it most of the way, so its chubby shape is revealed, then serves it open-faced, scattered with thinly sliced, pink pickled onions, a dribble of salsa, seasonal flowers and herbs.

It’s beautiful, and a reminder that the tamal is a special, celebratory, valuable food that has never stopped evolving.

“Yes, you can buy a tamal on the street for two bucks, but it’s not street food,” said Ms. Serrato. “It’s a portal, it’s a storyteller, it’s a carrier of ancestral memory, and it’s gone through a lot of hands.”

Recipes: [*Tamales de Frijol (Oaxacan Black Bean Tamales)*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en) | [*Tamales de Chile Rojo (Red Chile Tamales With Meat)*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en) | [*Carne con Chile Rojo (Chuck Braised in Chile)*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en) | [*Tamales de Pollo (Chipotle Chicken Tamales)*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en) | [*Tinga de Pollo (Chicken with Chipotle and Onions)*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en)

Follow [*NYT Food on Twitter*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en) and [*NYT Cooking on Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en), [*Facebook*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en), [*YouTube*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en) and [*Pinterest*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en). [*Get regular updates from NYT Cooking, with recipe suggestions, cooking tips and shopping advice*](https://www.instagram.com/xicana_indigena/?hl=en).

PHOTOS: Tamales de pollo (chipotle chicken tamales). The methodical process of making tamales can be traced back for generations in many families. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MALOSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS. PROP STYLIST: PAIGE HICKS.) (D1); Top, Claudia Serrato and her family making tamales with blue corn and braised bison in Montebello, Calif. Center row, from left: dried corn kernels, soaked with slaked lime, then ground up to make the masa preparada for tamales; amal de chile rojo, the blue corn tamal filled with bison braised in red chiles and tomato, wrapped in a dried corn husk; and tamales in a pot. Left, Ms. Serrato and her family tasting the fruits of their labor. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA PONS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; DAVID MALOSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS. PROP STYLIST: PAIGE HICKS) (D6)

**Load-Date:** December 25, 2020

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[***For the Next Battle, Two Parties Will Be Taking On Themselves***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616R-VMK1-JBG3-60W2-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1701 words

**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer

**Body**

No matter who wins, Democrats will be split between younger progressives and a moderate old guard. And a Republican Party redefined in President Trump's image will start weighing where it goes next.

PLANO, Texas -- Facing the toughest race of his Senate career, John Cornyn warned a small crowd of supporters from the second floor of his campaign bus last week that his party's long-held dominance in this historically ruby-red state was at risk.

But while the three-term Texas senator demonized Democrats at length, he didn't spend much time talking up the obvious alternative: President Trump, the leader of his party, the man at the top of his ticket on Tuesday.

Asked whether Mr. Trump, the man who redefined Republicanism, was an asset to Mr. Cornyn's re-election effort, the senator was suddenly short on words.

''Absolutely,'' he said, stone-faced.

Mr. Cornyn's gentle distancing from Mr. Trump foreshadows a far less genteel battle to come. This year's election seems likely to plunge both Republicans and Democrats into a period of disarray no matter who wins the White House. With moderates and progressives poised to battle each other on the left, and an array of forces looking to chart a post-Trump future on the right (be it in 2021 or in four years), both parties appear destined for an ideological wilderness in the months ahead as each tries to sort out its identities and priorities.

The questions facing partisans on both sides are sweeping, and remain largely unresolved despite more than a year of a tumultuous presidential campaign. After Democrats cast their eyes backward several generations for a more moderate nominee, does a rising liberal wing represent their future? And what becomes of a Republican Party that has been redefined by the president's populist approach, and politicians like Mr. Cornyn who have been in the long shadow of Mr. Trump for four years?

Traditionally, presidential elections provide clarity on how a party sees its political future. When Barack Obama won the White House in 2008, he reinvigorated a progressive public image of his increasingly diverse party. Eight years earlier, George W. Bush remade Republicanism with a message of ''compassionate conservatism.''

Today, with both presidential candidates content to make the race a referendum on Mr. Trump, questions about him have overshadowed the debates raging within both parties over how to govern a country in the midst of a national crisis.

''Both sides have been content to make this election about a personality,'' said Brad Todd, a Republican strategist and an author of a book about the conservative populist coalition that fueled Mr. Trump's victory in 2016. ''Therefore, we've not had a lot of light shown on the ideological realignment that's occurred in the country.''

The jockeying has already begun. If Mr. Biden wins, progressive Democrats are preparing to break their election-season truce, laying plans to push for liberals in key government posts, including Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts as Treasury secretary. If Mr. Biden loses, progressives will argue that he failed to embrace a liberal enough platform.

Ambitious Republicans, like the former United Nations ambassador Nikki R. Haley, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, have begun appearing in Iowa, stops that they say are on behalf of their party's embattled Senate candidate there but that have distinctly 2024 overtones.

''The party is headed toward a reckoning, whatever happens in November, because you still have large segments of the party establishment that are not at all reconciled with the president's victory in 2016,'' said Senator Josh Hawley, Republican of Missouri, who is frequently mentioned as a possible 2024 contender. ''These people are still very powerful in the Republican Party, and I think we'll have a real fight for the future.''

The emerging dynamics are particularly stark across in Texas and other states in the Sun Belt, a fast-growing region that embodies the demographic trends that will eventually reshape the nation.

For Republicans like Mr. Cornyn, the battle lines are already being drawn. Four years ago, Mr. Trump mounted a hostile takeover of the Republican Party, winning the support of the party's base with a message that shredded mainstream conservative ideology on issues like fiscal responsibility, foreign policy and trade.

A contingent of the party's old guard is eager to cast the president as an aberration, a detour into nationalism, populism and conspiracy theories with no serious policy underpinning.

Former Senator Jeff Flake, Republican of Arizona, said that he expected Mr. Trump to lose and that he hoped the defeat would refocus the party from ''anger and resentment'' to developing an inclusive message that could win in an increasingly diverse country.

''Nothing focuses the mind like a big election loss,'' said Mr. Flake, who was one of many Republicans to retire in 2018 and who has endorsed Mr. Biden for president. ''The bigger the better when it comes to the president.''

He added, ''Trumpism is a demographic cul-de-sac.''

Mr. Flake would like the party to resurrect its 2012 ''autopsy,'' an assessment commissioned by the Republican National Committee to explore why the party had lost its bid for the White House that year. The report urged the party to better embrace voters of color and women.

A co-chair of the project, Ari Fleischer, said there was no returning to the days of that message. Mr. Trump, he said, had accomplished the goal of the report, expanding the party -- just in a different way.

Rather than engage women or voters of color, the president expanded Republican margins with white, ***working-class*** voters, said Mr. Fleischer, a former press secretary for Mr. Bush who has come to embrace Mr. Trump after leaving his ballot blank in 2016.

Sara Fagen, who was the White House political director for Mr. Bush, agreed: ''Trumpism is cemented in,'' she said. ''The base of the party has changed; their priorities are different than where the Romneys and Bushes would have taken the country.''

Mr. Hawley argued that Republicans should embrace the populist energy of their voters by pursuing the breakup of big technology companies, voicing skepticism of free trade and making colleges more accountable for their high tuition costs.

''If the party is going to have a future, it's got to become the party of working people,'' he said.

Texas may provide a preview of these debates. As Democrats continue to make gains in the state and as the coronavirus rages there, moderate Republicans have tried to steer the state closer to the center while conservatives have tried to push Texas further right.

Hard-line Republican legislators, lawyers and activists have sued Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, formally censured him and protested mandates like a statewide mask order. Over the summer, the party elected a new chairman, Allen B. West, a former Florida congressman and firebrand conservative.

''The governor has continued to issue executive orders that are anything but conservative,'' said Jared Woodfill, a conservative activist and Houston lawyer who has sued Mr. Abbott. ''His base has left him completely.''

Democrats face their own divides over whether to use the moment of national crisis to push for far-reaching structural changes on issues like health care, economic inequality and climate change.

Like Republicans in 2012, Democrats assembled their own task force to try to unify their party after the crowded party primary this year. The group came up with recommendations that were largely broader than what Mr. Biden championed in his primary bid but that stopped short of embracing key progressive policies like ''Medicare for all,'' the Green New Deal and a fracking ban.

Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, a co-chair of the House Progressive Caucus and an ally of Senator Bernie Sanders, said those plans were the ''floor, not the ceiling'' of what the liberal wing of the party plans to demand should Mr. Biden win. A White House victory, she argued, would give Mr. Biden a mandate to push for more sweeping overhauls.

In Texas, a rising number of young, liberal politicians believe they can finally turn the conservative state blue by embracing a progressive platform.

Two years ago, Julie Oliver lost a House race in Texas' 25th Congressional District, based in suburban Austin, by nine percentage points -- a far closer margin than the 20 points that Representative Roger Williams, a Republican, won by in 2016. This year, the race may be even tighter.

''The things we are talking about two years ago that seemed radical don't seem so radical today,'' said Ms. Oliver, who was endorsed by Mr. Biden last month. ''Universal health care doesn't seem radical. Universal basic income doesn't seem so radical. These are popular ideas.''

Others in the state worry that their colleagues are forgetting the lessons of recent history. In 2008, Democrats won control of Congress and the White House. But after passing the Affordable Care Act and pushing a climate bill through the House, they lost seats during the midterm elections and their majority in the House.

''We got to remember, midterms are coming,'' said Representative Henry Cuellar, a moderate Democrat from South Texas. ''If liberals had a mandate, then Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren would have won the primary. The mandate of the American public was to have somebody more to the center.''

Yet in an increasingly polarized country, that center may be shifting.

As he waited for Mr. Cornyn to address the crowd in Plano, Mark Wurst said he had come to embrace the Trump brand of conservatism.

A lifelong Republican, Mr. Wurst, 74, volunteered at the George W. Bush Presidential Library for years. He was skeptical of Mr. Trump initially but was impressed with his actions on immigration and trade -- policies that diverged drastically from Mr. Bush's approach.

''I didn't know at the time how much I really disagreed with Bush on some things,'' Mr. Wurst said. ''Look at what Mr. Trump has gotten done. I don't like his tone, but sometimes you have to look at results.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/02/us/politics/trump-biden-republicans-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/02/us/politics/trump-biden-republicans-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, where party moderates and conservatives are clashing. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15)

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2020

**End of Document**



[***With $300 Monthly, Relief Bill Ushers Revolution in Child Aid***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:625C-SCV1-DXY4-X0WX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jason DeParle

**Body**

The $1.9 trillion pandemic relief package moving through Congress advances an idea that Democrats have been nurturing for decades: establishing a guaranteed income for families with children.

WASHINGTON -- A year ago, Anique Houpe, a single mother in suburban Atlanta, was working as a letter carrier, running a side business catering picnics and settling into a rent-to-own home in Stone Mountain, Ga., where she thought her boys would flourish in class and excel on the football field.

Then the pandemic closed the schools, the boys' grades collapsed with distance learning, and she quit work to stay home in hopes of breaking their fall. Expecting unemployment aid that never came, she lost her utilities, ran short of food and was recovering from an immobilizing bout of Covid when a knock brought marshals with eviction papers.

Depending on when the snapshot is dated, Ms. Houpe might appear as a striving emblem of upward mobility or a mother on the verge of homelessness. But in either guise, she is among the people Democrats seek to help with a mold-breaking plan, on the verge of congressional passage, to provide most parents a monthly check of up to $300 per child.

Obscured by other parts of President Biden's $1.9 trillion stimulus package, which won Senate approval on Saturday, the child benefit has the makings of a policy revolution. Though framed in technocratic terms as an expansion of an existing tax credit, it is essentially a guaranteed income for families with children, akin to children's allowances that are common in other rich countries.

The plan establishes the benefit for a single year. But if it becomes permanent, as Democrats intend, it will greatly enlarge the safety net for the poor and the middle class at a time when the volatile modern economy often leaves families moving between those groups. More than 93 percent of children -- 69 million -- would receive benefits under the plan, at a one-year cost of more than $100 billion.

The bill, which is likely to pass the House and be signed by Mr. Biden this week, raises the maximum benefit most families will receive by up to 80 percent per child and extends it to millions of families whose earnings are too low to fully qualify under existing law. Currently, a quarter of children get a partial benefit, and the poorest 10 percent get nothing.

While the current program distributes the money annually, as a tax reduction to families with income tax liability or a check to those too poor to owe income taxes, the new program would send both groups monthly checks to provide a more stable cash flow.

By the standards of previous aid debates, opposition has been surprisingly muted. While the bill has not won any Republican votes, critics have largely focused on other elements of the rescue package. Some conservatives have called the child benefit ''welfare'' and warned that it would bust budgets and weaken incentives to work or marry. But Senator Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, has proposed a child benefit that is even larger, though it would be financed through other safety net cuts.

While the proposal took center stage in response to the pandemic, supporters have spent decades developing the case for a children's income guarantee. Their arguments gained traction as science established the long-term consequences of deprivation in children's early years, and as rising inequality undercut the idea that everyone had a fair shot at a better life.

The economic shock and racial protests of the past year brought new momentum to a plan whose reach, while broad, would especially help Black and Latino families, who are crucial to the Democrats' coalition.

Mr. Biden's embrace of the subsidies is a leftward shift for a Democratic Party that made deep cuts in cash aid in the 1990s under the theme of ''ending welfare.'' As a senator, Mr. Biden supported the 1996 welfare restrictions, and as recently as August his campaign was noncommittal about the child benefit.

The president now promotes projections that the monthly checks -- up to $300 for young children and $250 for those over 5 -- would cut child poverty by 45 percent, and by more than 50 percent among Black families.

''The moment has found us,'' said Representative Rosa DeLauro, a Connecticut Democrat who has proposed a child allowance in 10 consecutive Congresses and describes it as a children's version of Social Security. ''The crystallization of the child tax credit and what it can do to lift children and families out of poverty is extraordinary. We've been talking about this for years.''

Ms. Houpe's home state has been crucial to the advance of the benefit. Democrats are in position to enact it only because they won Georgia's two Senate seats in runoff elections in January, barely gaining control of the chamber.

While Ms. Houpe, an independent, skipped the presidential election, that promise of cash relief led her to vote Democratic in January. ''I just felt like the Democrats would be more likely to do something,'' she said.

Her precarious situation is the kind the subsidy seeks to address. Born to a teenage mother, Ms. Houpe, 33, grew up straining to escape hardship. Though she was young when she had a child, she came close to finishing a bachelor's degree, found work as pharmacy technician and took a job with the post office to lift her wage to nearly $18 an hour. Raising a son on her own, she took in a nephew whom she regards as a second child.

Ms. Houpe seemed on the rise before the pandemic, with the move to a new house. The monthly payment consumed 60 percent of her income, twice what the government deems affordable, but she trimmed the cost by renting out a room and started a side job catering picnics.

During the pandemic, she spent six months waiting for schools to reopen until the boys' plummeting grades -- Trejion is 14 and Micah 11 -- persuaded her that she could not leave them alone.

''I had to make a decision,'' Ms. Houpe said, ''my boys or my job.''

But when her requests for unemployment were denied, the bottom fell out.

While critics fear cash aid weakens work incentives, Ms. Houpe said it might have saved her job by allowing her to hire someone part time to supervise the boys.

''I definitely would have kept my job,'' she said.

The campaign for child benefits is at least a half-century old and rests on a twofold idea: Children are expensive, and society shares an interest in seeing them thrive. At least 17 wealthy countries subsidize child-rearing for much of the population, with Canada offering up to $4,800 per child each year. But until recently, a broad allowance seemed unlikely in the United States, where policy was more likely to reflect a faith that opportunity was abundant and a belief that aid sapped initiative.

It was a Democratic president, Bill Clinton, who abolished the entitlement to cash aid for poor families with children. The landmark law he signed in 1996 created time limits and work requirements and caused an exodus from the rolls. Spending on the poor continued to grow but targeted low-wage workers, with little protection for those who failed to find or keep jobs.

In a 2018 analysis of federal spending on children, the economists Hilary W. Hoynes and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach found that virtually all the increases since 1990 went to ''families with earnings'' and those ''above the poverty line.''

But rising inequality and the focus on early childhood brought broader subsidies a new look. A landmark study in 2019 by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine showed that even short stints in poverty could cause lasting harm, leaving children with less education, lower adult earnings and worse adult health. Though welfare critics said aid caused harm, the panel found that ''poverty itself causes negative child outcomes'' and that income subsidies ''have been shown to improve child well-being.''

Republicans may have unwittingly advanced the push for child benefits in 2017 by doubling the existing child tax credit to $2,000 and giving it to families with incomes of up to $400,000, but not extending the full benefit to those in the bottom third of incomes.

Republicans said that since the credit was meant to reduce income taxes, it naturally favored families who earned enough to have a tax liability. But by prioritizing the affluent, the move amplified calls for a more equitable child policy.

Efforts to increase the benefit and include the needy drew strong support from Speaker Nancy Pelosi and was led in the Senate by the Democrats Sherrod Brown of Ohio, a progressive, and Michael Bennet of Colorado, a centrist. A majority of Democrats in both chambers were on board when unemployment surged because of the coronavirus.

''The crisis gave Democrats an opportunity by broadening the demand for government relief,'' said Sarah A. Binder, a political scientist at George Washington University.

Welfare critics warn the country is retreating from success. Child poverty reached a new low before the pandemic, and opponents say a child allowance could reverse that trend by reducing incentives to work. About 10 million children are poor by a government definition that varies with family size and local cost of living. (A typical family of four with income below about $28,000 is considered poor.)

''Why are Republicans asleep at the switch?'' wrote Mickey Kaus, whose antiwelfare writings influenced the 1990s debate. He has urged Republicans to run ads in conservative states with Democratic senators, attacking them for supporting ''a new welfare dole.''

Under Mr. Biden's plan, a nonworking mother with three young children could receive $10,800 a year, plus food stamps and Medicaid -- too little to prosper but enough, critics fear, to erode a commitment to work and marriage. Scott Winship of the conservative American Enterprise Institute wrote that the new benefit creates ''a very real risk of encouraging more single parenthood and more no-worker families.''

But a child allowance differs from traditional aid in ways that appeal to some on the right. Libertarians like that it frees parents to use the money as they choose, unlike targeted aid such as food stamps. Proponents of higher birthrates say a child allowance could help arrest a decline in fertility. Social conservatives note that it benefits stay-at-home parents, who are bypassed by work-oriented programs like child care.

And supporters argue that it has fewer work disincentives than traditional aid, which quickly falls as earnings climb. Under the Democrats' plan, full benefits extend to single parents with incomes of $112,500 and couples with $150,000.

Backlash could grow as the program's sweep becomes clear. But Samuel Hammond, a proponent of child allowances at the center-right Niskanen Center, said the politics of aid had changed in ways that softened conservative resistance.

A quarter-century ago, debate focused on an urban underclass whose problems seemed to set them apart from a generally prospering society. They were disproportionately Black and Latino and mostly represented by Democrats. Now, insecurity has traveled up the economic ladder to a broader ***working class*** with similar problems, like underemployment, marital dissolution and drugs. Often white and rural, many are voters whom Republicans hope to court.

''Republicans can't count on running a backlash campaign,'' Mr. Hammond said. ''They crossed the Rubicon in terms of cash payments. People love the stimulus checks.''

The muted opposition to the proposal, he said, showed that ''people on the right are curious about the child benefit -- not committed, but movable.''

An analysis by Sophie M. Collyer of Columbia University underscored the plan's broad reach. She found that in Georgia, the child allowance would bring net gains per child of $1,700 for whites, $1,900 for Latinos and $2,100 for Blacks.

As a suburban independent in a state that was long red, Ms. Houpe is among those whose loyalties are up for grabs. She rejected the argument that a child subsidy would promote joblessness and warned that some parents had to work too much. ''My son had football games every Saturday morning,'' she said, ''and I wasn't there for him as much as I wanted to be.''

If aid posed risks, Ms. Houpe said, so did the lack of any. Out of money last fall, she suffered debilitating depression, and a panic attack grew so severe she pulled her car to the side of road. ''My son was freaking out'' looking for her asthma inhaler, she said.

Still trying to get unemployment benefits, Ms. Houpe has plans for a baking business called The Munchie Shopp. She has practiced strawberries dipped in white chocolate and honed her red velvet cake. This week, she tried dying one blue but denied making a political statement.

''During an election, people say anything to win,'' she said. ''Let's see what they do.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/07/us/politics/child-tax-credit-stimulus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/07/us/politics/child-tax-credit-stimulus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Anique Houpe, a single mother in Georgia, is among the parents whom Democrats are seeking to help with a monthly check of up to $300 per child.

Ms. Houpe decided that she needed to stay home with her boys, so she left a Postal Service job that paid nearly $18 an hour. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AUDRA MELTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2021

**End of Document**



[***After 2016 Shock, Wisconsin Democrats Picked Themselves Off the Floor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616T-JF31-JBG3-62PC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Reid J. Epstein and Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** Hillary Clinton’s narrow loss refocused the party’s efforts to reclaim support and power after years of Republican statehouse dominance.

**Body**

Hillary Clinton’s narrow loss refocused the party’s efforts to reclaim support and power after years of Republican statehouse dominance.

MADISON, Wis. — If there is a symbol of the [*Wisconsin*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html) Democratic comeback following the shock of [*President Trump’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html) 2016 victory and nearly a decade of being beaten into submission by the Republican state legislature, it is Jill Karofsky.

Ms. Karofsky stunned most of [*Wisconsin*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html), and herself, when in April [*she won an 11-point victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html) in a race for a State Supreme Court seat, during an election the state’s Republicans blocked its Democratic governor from delaying because of the coronavirus pandemic.

“I did not see a path for us to win,” Justice Karofsky said during a six-mile run on Monday. But when the polls opened April 7, she said, “I went for a run and I came home and I looked at my phone and I saw all those brave people voting in [*Milwaukee*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html). And that’s when I started to have a glimmer of hope.”

For Wisconsin Democrats, hope has been something in short supply since 2010, when Republicans won control of the state’s government and began to systematically dismantle a progressive political infrastructure built up over generations.

While Justice Karofsky’s race was officially nonpartisan, her allies made the battle lines clear — the contest was a referendum on Mr. Trump and Republican governance in the state. And her victory, with its surprise margin, provided an important psychological boost to a party beaten down by the state’s dominant Republicans and still spooked by 2016, when Hillary Clinton, who never visited the state, [*lost Wisconsin by just 22,748 votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html) — a margin seared into the memory of the state’s top Democrats.

Only in the final hours of the 2020 campaign, when more than half the state’s voters had cast pre-Election Day ballots, did Wisconsin Democrats allow themselves to say out loud that they believed former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. would carry the state by a healthy margin when counting was expected to be completed on Wednesday.

It is a bullishness borne of the combination of high turnout in Madison and Milwaukee, signs they had won back some rural Democrats who voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, and the feeling that, since 2016, they have finally won more than they’ve lost. Democrats also believe that a recent statewide surge in coronavirus cases has helped refocus voters on the president’s handling of the pandemic.

After Mrs. Clinton’s loss in Wisconsin, Democrats here began organizing from the ground up. The Democratic National Committee and other liberal organizations began in 2017 to make investments in the state that the party neglected during the Obama years. In 2019, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin elected as its chairman Ben Wikler, a veteran Moveon.org organizer who in the last 18 months has raised record sums for the party, bringing in more than twice the funds as his Republican counterparts.

All this took place in the ashes of the devastating 2016 contest, when Democrats were certain of a victory, but disinclined to do much to make one happen.

During that campaign, Mandela Barnes, who would be elected lieutenant governor two years later, asked people to pose with him in photographs for Mrs. Clinton’s Instagram page. “People were like, ‘Ehhh, I don’t really know about that.’” Mr. Barnes said. “I was like, ‘We’re friends!’ But also, damn.”

But despite the new optimism, after so many searing defeats, there is a sense among voters that nothing is to be taken for granted.

“For the past 10 years it’s been like living with a boot on our necks,” said Andy Olsen, a policy advocate for an environmental organization who spent Tuesday morning reminding voters at Madison’s Monona Terrace to text three friends to remind them to vote, too. “We kept getting knocked down and trying to get back up again. People are cautious about getting their hopes up too much.”

Even before the April court election, there were already signs that the state’s fragile Trump coalition was crumbling. Republican margins in the Milwaukee suburbs dropped precipitously during the 2018 midterm elections, while Democrats clawed back some of the voters Mr. Trump won in 2016, [*especially in the Fox Valley, a key battleground region of the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html).

Without Mrs. Clinton as a foil, many of these voters began to judge Mr. Trump on his own and didn’t like the results.

“I voted for Trump four years ago out of default,” said Ted Schartner, a plasterer from Green Bay who voted for Mr. Biden last Wednesday. “I regretted it almost right away. I didn’t like the way things were heading.”

While voters were coming to terms with a Trump presidency, Wisconsin Democrats found themselves digging out of their collective nadir. Not only was it the first time since 1984 that a Republican had carried the state’s electoral votes, but Democrats were locked out of state government, gerrymandered into a deep minority in the state legislature and facing a State Supreme Court controlled by conservative justices.

By the time Mr. Trump won the White House, Wisconsinites had already gotten used to the constant partisan warfare that would define his administration.

“You go to a gathering of friends and it turns into politics right away,” said Roben Haggart, who has served as Minocqua’s town clerk for 22 years. “It always turns into an argument.”

Mr. Trump’s victory here led to talk that Wisconsin, with its large population of white ***working-class*** voters, had become a fixture of the Republican Electoral College map, out of reach for Democratic candidates.

The state’s Democratic infrastructure was in shambles, but little by little voters began to turn against Mr. Trump. In January 2018, [*a Democrat won a special election to a rural State Senate district*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html) Mr. Trump had carried by 17 points. That fall, Democrats rode anger against Mr. Trump to a sweep of the statewide elections, ousting Scott Walker, a two-term governor who had crippled the state’s public-sector labor unions.

In June 2019, Wisconsin Democrats elected as their state chairman Mr. Wikler, who had moved his family into his childhood home in Madison. Mr. Wikler brought an organizing and fund-raising heft the state had never seen. The Democratic Party of Wisconsin has raised $58.7 million in the last two years,[*more than twice the haul for the state’s Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html).

“Trump’s win, in a lot of ways, accelerated and pushed forward necessary change within our party,” said Alex Lasry, a senior official for Milwaukee’s pro basketball franchise who is weighing a run for the seat of Ron Johnson, a Republican senator, in 2022. “Democrats realized we can’t just sit on the sidelines in these off-year elections.”

Representative Mark Pocan, a Madison Democrat, said Mr. Biden’s campaign and Mr. Wikler’s leadership created a dramatically different political landscape than four years ago.

“The Biden campaign is 180 degrees different than what we had four years ago,” Mr. Pocan said. One important difference: Mr. Biden has visited Wisconsin three times since the primary. “The candidate never came post-primary four years ago, we had no resources specifically for Wisconsin — or very little resources.”

The 2016 contest was marked by a [*drop in turnout among Black voters in Milwaukee*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-wisconsin.html), who are now a key part of Mr. Biden’s hopes for a Wisconsin victory.

The Rev. Greg Lewis, the executive director of the Milwaukee Souls to the Polls effort, said the Black electorate in the city had changed, thanks in part to Mr. Trump’s presidency. Since 2012, Mr. Lewis said, the money that was absent in 2016 is now flowing to community leaders for get-out-the-vote efforts, just as Black Milwaukeeans have become more engaged in removing Mr. Trump.

“These groups weren’t active four years ago, because we didn’t have funding or resources to do any of the things we’re doing right now,” Mr. Lewis said. “I just think the Democratic Party didn’t come into the community enough to energize and make sure that people were willing to do what needs to be done.”

By October, Wisconsin’s coronavirus spike was among the worst in the country — and by far the worst of any presidential battleground state. The president’s approval rating on the pandemic in Wisconsin had fallen from 51 percent in March to just 40 percent, according to a Marquette Law School poll.

“We’ve got people that are supposed to be leading the country that have just thrown up their hands and said, there’s nothing we can do about this pandemic — which is just demonstrably not true,” said Kate Walton, an emergency room nurse in Madison who said she voted for Mr. Biden.

One after another, Biden voters across the state in the last week said their votes were motivated primarily by a desire to oust Mr. Trump.

“I wouldn’t vote for Trump for nothing, even if you paid me all the money he says he’s worth,” said Terri Konkol, a 58-year-old Milwaukeean who on Saturday voted for Mr. Biden from her wheelchair. She blamed the president for the virus’s spread in the state. “In our whole lifetimes have we ever had to wear masks?”

Rose Goeb, 62, a Milwaukee preschool teacher, voted early for Mr. Biden on one of the first days she could.

Of Mr. Trump, she said, “I made up my mind a long time ago that this man does not have the character or discipline to be president.”

And on Tuesday in Madison, among a line of voters waiting to cast ballots when the polls opened at 7 a.m. was Helen Hawley, an artist who was inspired by Senator Bernie Sanders and a fierce desire to remove Mr. Trump.

“It’s hard to be hopeful about anything right now,” said Ms. Hawley, 40. “But it’s better to have hope than to not. Hope is just something I hold onto because it’s a good idea.”

Reid J. Epstein reported from Madison, Wis., and Astead W. Herndon from Milwaukee.

PHOTOS: From top, election workers in Milwaukee tabulating mail-in and absentee ballots on Tuesday; voting in Madison; Justice Jill Karofsky of the Wisconsin Supreme Court in Madison on Monday. Her surprise victory in an election in April was a sign of lagging Republican support in the state. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES; LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2020

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[***As in 2016, a Contrarian Pollster's Mysterious Surveys Suggest Trump Will Win***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616R-VMK1-JBG3-60VY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Giovanni Russonello and Sarah Lyall

**Body**

Robert Cahaly's polls have Arizona, Michigan and Florida in the president's column. It's hard to find another pollster who agrees with him. But they didn't believe him in 2016 either.

If President Trump pieces together an Electoral College win on Tuesday, at least one pollster -- and perhaps only one -- will be able to say, ''I told you so.''

That person is Robert Cahaly, whose Trafalgar Group this year has released a consistent stream of battleground-state polls showing the president highly competitive against Joseph R. Biden Jr., and often out ahead, in states where most other pollsters have shown a steady Biden lead.

Trafalgar does not disclose its methods, and is considered far too shadowy by other pollsters to be taken seriously. Mostly, they dismiss it as an outlier. But for Mr. Cahaly, ''I told you so'' is already a calling card.

In 2016, its first time publicly releasing polls, Trafalgar was the firm whose state surveys most effectively presaged Mr. Trump's upset win. A veteran Republican strategist, Mr. Cahaly even called the exact number of Electoral College votes that Mr. Trump and Hillary Clinton would receive -- 306 to 227 -- although his prediction of which states would get them there was just slightly off.

So with liberal anxieties flaring over whether to trust the polls, the gregarious, goatee-and-bowtie-wearing Mr. Cahaly has been in demand on cable news lately. In addition to frequent appearances on Fox News, Mr. Cahaly was on CNN last week, explaining to Michael Smerconish why he thought the president would walk away with an easy victory -- and defending himself against a battery of critiques that Mr. Smerconish called up, one by one, from Mr. Cahaly's peers.

Amid a crush of pre-election media coverage seeking his theory of the case -- it drove more than 1.5 million clicks to Trafalgar's site on Monday, he said -- the big question seems to be: Is it possible to believe a guy whose polls consistently give Mr. Trump just enough support for a narrow lead in most swing states, and who refuses to reveal much of anything about how he gets his data?

In his last few polls of this election season, Mr. Cahaly has found Mr. Trump with two-to-three-point advantages in North Carolina, Arizona, Michigan and Florida, and wider leads elsewhere. That puts him far out of line with almost all major pollsters, whose surveys in those states are generally showing Mr. Biden with the edge. As different as things are this year, it's hard to miss the echo of 2016, when Trafalgar occupied a similarly lonely position on the eve of Nov. 8.

Above all, Mr. Cahaly's approach centers on the belief that everyone lies, but especially conservatives. This has largely been disproved by social science, but that hasn't softened his conviction. To hear him explain it, traditional pollsters (he calls them ''dinosaurs'') are crippled by ''social desirability bias'': the tendency for respondents to say what they think an interviewer wants to hear, not what they actually believe. In Mr. Trump's America, he says, that problem has grown worse.

''I just think people are not what they say they are, ever,'' Mr. Cahaly said in a recent phone interview from Atlanta, where he lives. ''We cannot eliminate the social desirability bias, we can only minimize it.''

Four years ago, he addressed this by asking people both whom they would support for president and whom they thought their neighbors would support. This year, he said, he is using other means to achieve the same result.

But he's not saying what they are. Mr. Cahaly releases almost no real explanation of his polling methodology; the methods page on Trafalgar's website contains what reads like a vague advertisement of its services and explains that its polls actively confront social desirability bias, without giving specifics as to how. He says that he uses a mixture of text messages, emails and phone calls -- some automated, and some by live callers -- to reach an accurate representation of the electorate.

Conventional pollsters, who abide by long-tested and broadly effective methods to glean a representative sample, aren't buying it. Besides, if there was ever such a thing as a ''shy Trump supporter'' -- someone reluctant to admit that he or she plans to vote for the president -- that species has been made virtually extinct during the raucous, rally-holding Trump presidency, said Daniel Cox, a polling and public opinion expert at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute.

''People do not seem embarrassed to support Mr. Trump,'' Mr. Cox said. In the past four years, studies seeking to quantify a so-called ''shy Trump'' effect in surveys have generally found little evidence to support it.

Late last month, Nate Silver of FiveThirtyEight got his hands on the cross tabs of a Trafalgar poll of Michigan that was still in progress. It found that more than a quarter of Democrats and Republicans expected to vote for the other party's nominee, so far out of line with almost all other polls that Mr. Silver called the numbers ''just crazy.''

Mr. Cahaly, of course, has no use for the skepticism of experts. He doesn't seem to care whether he's abiding by the best practices of the American Association of Public Opinion Research, the standard-bearing trade organization, any more than Mr. Trump says he cares whether the United States' NATO allies respect him.

Among his polling colleagues, the main sticking point is Mr. Cahaly's lack of transparency about his methods.

Josh Pasek, a professor of communications, data and political science at the University of Michigan, said that without a sense of the methods the firm uses to reach survey respondents, it's not possible to rely on the numbers.

''It is wildly inappropriate not to tell me, not only what modes you use to draw your sample, but how specifically you did it,'' he said. His general rule: ''If somebody's not transparent you can generally assume they're crap.''

There is something undeniably enticing about the story of a swashbuckling, norm-busting Southern pollster who rode into 2016 with a fresh approach and proved all the bigger shops wrong. Born in Georgia and raised in upstate South Carolina by a banker and a teacher, Mr. Cahaly developed a politics obsession as a child and majored in it at the University of South Carolina. He soon came under the wing of the pollster Rod Shealy, an acolyte of the Republican strategist Lee Atwater, and eventually started his own firm.

Named after a battle in the Napoleonic Wars when the British navy turned back French and Spanish ships on the high seas, Trafalgar, which he runs alone, has been doing surveys on behalf of clients since 2006.

Most of Trafalgar's polling is done for conservative and Republican clients, although -- in another snub of traditional standards -- it has not reliably revealed when surveys are paid for by partisan interests.

In 2010, Mr. Cahaly was arrested and taken to court for violating a law against using automatic calling machines -- known as robocalling -- to conduct polls. The charges against him were eventually dropped, and he later successfully sued a state law enforcement agency, causing South Carolina's prohibition on robocalls to be declared unconstitutional.

Mr. Cahaly said he was doing legitimate polling, aimed at truly understanding voters' opinions -- and getting what he called ''dead-on'' results. During the 2016 Republican primaries, he was early to spot a surge of enthusiasm from many ***working-class*** voters who had long felt alienated from politics and helped power Mr. Trump's ascent.

''I kept getting these stories about people who showed up to vote and didn't know how to use the voting machines, they hadn't voted in so long,'' Mr. Cahaly said. So he began to look into who those people might be, and used data available online to create a list of roughly 50 lifestyle characteristics -- including, for instance, whether they owned a fishing license -- to identify the sorts of low-engagement voters who were turning out in droves. He used that data to make sure he was reaching the right kinds of respondents as he polled off the voter file in advance of the general election.

In 2018, Mr. Cahaly again amassed a successful track record polling Senate and governors' races, including surveys that correctly presaged Ron DeSantis's and Rick Scott's wins in Florida.

This year, he has continued to see strong Trump support among these voters, and he believes other pollsters are again underestimating their importance. Among Mr. Cahaly's theories is that it takes five times as many calls to get a conservative voter to complete a poll than to get a liberal one. Others in the field say they find no evidence to support this in their own work.

But Mr. Cahaly insists it is presumptuous for pollsters to assume that they are drawing a representative sample of voters just because they are adhering to the scientific method. He returns to the country's political divide, and how unwilling Americans are nowadays to communicate with each other from across the breach of suspicion. In a sense, he has positioned himself as a bard of Trumpism, giving voice to a silent majority -- or at least, a majority in the Electoral College -- that knows the elites consider its views deplorable, and therefore won't express them freely to just anyone.

''Lee Atwater drilled into everyone around me that you have to get out of the head of politicos and into the head of Joe Six-Pack,'' Mr. Cahaly said. ''What do the average people think? And to do that I like to talk to average people. I like to follow up polling calls and chat with people for 30 minutes.''

Mr. Cahaly feels no need to reveal his techniques, despite the near-universal doubt about his work from his peers. ''I've given away enough; I'm not giving away any more,'' he said, arguing that it had been a mistake to even tell the public about his ''neighbor question,'' which some other firms have since adopted in their own surveys.

''I think we've developed something that's very different from what other people do, and I really am not interested in telling people how we do it,'' he said. ''Just judge us by whether we get it right.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/article/trump-polls-trafalgar-group.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/trump-polls-trafalgar-group.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The pollster Robert Cahaly on a set in Atlanta on Monday. His forecast of the 2016 Electoral College vote was exactly borne out. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Win or Lose, Trump and Biden’s Parties Will Plunge Into Uncertainty***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616H-SPK1-DXY4-X1GG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1715 words

**Byline:** Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** No matter who wins, Democrats will be split between younger progressives and a moderate old guard. And a Republican Party redefined in President Trump’s image will start weighing where it goes next.

**Body**

No matter who wins, Democrats will be split between younger progressives and a moderate old guard. And a Republican Party redefined in President Trump’s image will start weighing where it goes next.

[Follow our live coverage of the [*Biden inauguration*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration).]

PLANO, Texas — Facing the toughest race of his Senate career, John Cornyn warned a small crowd of supporters from the second floor of his campaign bus last week that his party’s long-held dominance in this historically ruby-red state was at risk.

But while the three-term Texas senator demonized Democrats at length, he didn’t spend much time talking up the obvious alternative: [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration), the leader of his party, the man at the top of his ticket on Tuesday.

Asked whether Mr. Trump, the man who redefined Republicanism, was an asset to Mr. Cornyn’s re-election effort, the senator was suddenly short on words.

“Absolutely,” he said, stone-faced.

Mr. Cornyn’s gentle distancing from Mr. Trump foreshadows a far less genteel battle to come. This year’s election seems likely to plunge both Republicans and Democrats into a period of disarray no matter who wins the White House. With moderates and [*progressives poised to battle*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration) each other on the left, and an array of forces looking to chart a post-Trump future on the right (be it in 2021 or in four years), both parties appear destined for an ideological wilderness in the months ahead as each tries to sort out its identities and priorities.

The questions facing partisans on both sides are sweeping, and remain largely unresolved despite more than a year of a tumultuous presidential campaign. After Democrats cast their eyes backward several generations for a more moderate nominee, does a rising liberal wing represent their future? And what becomes of a Republican Party that has been redefined by the president’s populist approach, and politicians like Mr. Cornyn who have been in the long shadow of Mr. Trump for four years?

Traditionally, presidential elections provide clarity on how a party sees its political future. When Barack Obama won the White House in 2008, he reinvigorated a progressive public image of his increasingly diverse party. Eight years earlier, George W. Bush remade Republicanism with a message of “compassionate conservatism.”

Today, with both presidential candidates content to make the race a referendum on Mr. Trump, questions about him have overshadowed the debates raging within both parties over how to govern a country in the midst of a national crisis.

“Both sides have been content to make this election about a personality,” said Brad Todd, a Republican strategist and an author of a book about the conservative populist coalition that fueled Mr. Trump’s victory in 2016. “Therefore, we’ve not had a lot of light shown on the ideological realignment that’s occurred in the country.”

The jockeying has already begun. If Mr. Biden wins, progressive Democrats are preparing to break their election-season truce, laying plans to push for liberals in key government posts, including Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts as Treasury secretary. If Mr. Biden loses, progressives will argue that he failed to embrace a liberal enough platform.

Ambitious Republicans, like the former United Nations ambassador Nikki R. Haley, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, have begun appearing in Iowa, stops that they say are on behalf of their party’s embattled Senate candidate there but that have distinctly 2024 overtones.

“The party is headed toward a reckoning, whatever happens in November, because you still have large segments of the party establishment that are not at all reconciled with the president’s victory in 2016,” said Senator Josh Hawley, Republican of Missouri, who is frequently mentioned as a possible 2024 contender. “These people are still very powerful in the Republican Party, and I think we’ll have a real fight for the future.”

The emerging dynamics are particularly stark across in Texas and other states in the Sun Belt, a fast-growing region that embodies the demographic trends that will eventually reshape the nation.

For Republicans like Mr. Cornyn, the battle lines are already being drawn. Four years ago, Mr. Trump mounted a hostile takeover of the Republican Party, winning the support of the party’s base with a message that shredded mainstream conservative ideology on issues like fiscal responsibility, foreign policy and trade.

A contingent of the party’s old guard is eager to cast the president as an aberration, a detour into nationalism, populism and conspiracy theories with no serious policy underpinning.

Former Senator Jeff Flake, Republican of Arizona, said that he expected Mr. Trump to lose and that he hoped the defeat would refocus the party from “anger and resentment” to developing an inclusive message that could win in an increasingly diverse country.

“Nothing focuses the mind like a big election loss,” said Mr. Flake, who was one of many Republicans to retire in 2018 and who has endorsed Mr. Biden for president. “The bigger the better when it comes to the president.”

He added, “Trumpism is a demographic cul-de-sac.”

Mr. Flake would like the party to resurrect its 2012 “autopsy,” an assessment commissioned by the Republican National Committee to explore why the party had lost its bid for the White House that year. The report urged the party to better embrace voters of color and women.

A co-chair of the project, Ari Fleischer, said there was no returning to the days of that message. Mr. Trump, he said, had accomplished the goal of the report, expanding the party — just in a different way.

Rather than engage women or voters of color, the president expanded Republican margins with white, ***working-class*** voters, said Mr. Fleischer, a former press secretary for Mr. Bush who has come to embrace Mr. Trump after leaving his ballot blank in 2016.

Sara Fagen, who was the White House political director for Mr. Bush, agreed: “Trumpism is cemented in,” she said. “The base of the party has changed; their priorities are different than where the Romneys and Bushes would have taken the country.”

Mr. Hawley argued that Republicans should embrace the populist energy of their voters by pursuing the breakup of big technology companies, voicing skepticism of free trade and making colleges more accountable for their high tuition costs.

“If the party is going to have a future, it’s got to become the party of working people,” he said.

Texas may provide a preview of these debates. As Democrats continue to make gains in the state and as the coronavirus rages there, moderate Republicans have tried to steer the state closer to the center [*while conservatives have tried to push Texas further right*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration).

Hard-line Republican legislators, lawyers and activists have sued Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, formally censured him and protested mandates like a statewide mask order. Over the summer, the party elected a new chairman, Allen B. West, a former Florida congressman and firebrand conservative.

“The governor has continued to issue executive orders that are anything but conservative,” said Jared Woodfill, a conservative activist and Houston lawyer who has [*sued Mr. Abbott*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration). “His base has left him completely.”

Democrats face their own divides over whether to use the moment of national crisis to push for far-reaching structural changes on issues like health care, economic inequality and climate change.

Like Republicans in 2012, Democrats assembled their own task force to try to unify their party after the crowded party primary this year. The group came up with recommendations that were largely broader than what Mr. Biden championed in his primary bid but that stopped short of embracing key progressive policies like [*“Medicare for all,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration) the Green New Deal and a fracking ban.

Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, a co-chair of the House Progressive Caucus and an ally of Senator Bernie Sanders, said those plans were the “floor, not the ceiling” of what the liberal wing of the party plans to demand should Mr. Biden win. A White House victory, she argued, would give Mr. Biden a mandate to push for more sweeping overhauls.

In Texas, a rising number of young, liberal politicians believe they can finally turn the conservative state blue by embracing a progressive platform.

Two years ago, Julie Oliver lost a House race in Texas’ 25th Congressional District, based in suburban Austin, by nine percentage points — a far closer margin than the 20 points that Representative Roger Williams, a Republican, won by in 2016. This year, the race may be even tighter.

“The things we are talking about two years ago that seemed radical don’t seem so radical today,” said Ms. Oliver, who was endorsed by Mr. Biden last month. “Universal health care doesn’t seem radical. Universal basic income doesn’t seem so radical. These are popular ideas.”

Others in the state worry that their colleagues are forgetting the lessons of recent history. In 2008, Democrats won control of Congress and the White House. But after passing the Affordable Care Act and pushing a climate bill through the House, they lost seats during the midterm elections and their majority in the House.

“We got to remember, midterms are coming,” said Representative Henry Cuellar, a moderate Democrat from South Texas. “If liberals had a mandate, then Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren would have won the primary. The mandate of the American public was to have somebody more to the center.”

Yet in an increasingly polarized country, that center may be shifting.

As he waited for Mr. Cornyn to address the crowd in Plano, Mark Wurst said he had come to embrace the Trump brand of conservatism.

A lifelong Republican, Mr. Wurst, 74, volunteered at the George W. Bush Presidential Library for years. He was skeptical of Mr. Trump initially but was impressed with his actions on immigration and trade — policies that diverged drastically from Mr. Bush’s approach.

“I didn’t know at the time how much I really disagreed with Bush on some things,” Mr. Wurst said. “Look at what Mr. Trump has gotten done. I don’t like his tone, but sometimes you have to look at results.”

PHOTO: Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, where party moderates and conservatives are clashing. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15)

**Load-Date:** January 20, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Where the Very Rich Fly to Hide***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YNP-FS91-JBG3-607R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 17, 2020 Friday 12:59 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1252 words

**Byline:** Justin Farrell

**Highlight:** Wyoming’s Jackson Hole has become a redoubt against the coronavirus.

**Body**

Wyoming’s Jackson Hole has become a redoubt against the coronavirus.

A wall of jagged peaks rises nearly 14,000 feet, towering over the valley floor of Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. Seeing it for the first time can literally be jaw-dropping as you fly into the valley of Jackson Hole, where private jets carrying wealthy passengers fleeing Covid-19 hot spots elsewhere have landed in recent weeks.

Some have brought their own medical equipment — even a ventilator, according to one local doctor — to this remote corner of Wyoming. With its magnificent landscape and extremely favorable state tax policies for the rich, Teton County, home to Jackson Hole, has quietly become the [*richest county*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) in the United States. Its per capita income is the nation’s highest, [*at $251,728*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton), nearly $58,000 more than Manhattan, its closest competitor. The county’s 1 percent earned an average of [*$22.5 million a year*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) in 2015.

Christie Watts, a life coach based in Jackson Hole, said that at the height of the recent influx, “it was difficult to receive” official alerts for residents to stay home “while the airport was crammed with hundreds of people.”

Plane landings have slowed in recent weeks as wealthier arrivals have hunkered down. Yet even a slow trickle of virus interlopers can have an outsize impact on a small rural enclave.

The chasm between the rich and the rest in Teton County is bridged by an uneasy alliance between the wealthy owners of vacation homes and the lower-income residents who depend on them for their livelihoods. The county has the country’s [*widest disparity in income*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) between the top 1 percent and the bottom 99. Now the pandemic is laying bare the tensions of that relationship as service workers must choose between continuing to do jobs that may expose them to the virus, or risk the loss of wages, health insurance and eviction. All three of the area’s ski resorts [*shut down*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) about a month early because of the pandemic, and restaurants and the national parks are closed.

“It’s disgraceful to see people not understand the severity of the problems,” one airport worker told me. “It makes it uneasy to provide the services we do to these kinds of people. I live paycheck to paycheck and I don’t have much saved up in my account to handle” a serious illness.

The rural West lures many because it seems like a different world. It is wilderness without the snares and moral traps of the city, populated with mythical people — the bohemian ski bum, the dusty cowboy. This romantic facade is especially appealing to the stressed-out superrich because it connects them to nature and bygone small-town character, as I discovered doing research for a book examining the ways they see themselves and other people — especially their rural neighbors.

Now the small wealthy communities that dot the West and other remote parts of the country have come in handy as places to hide from the pandemic.

But it turns out you can’t outrun the virus.

Teton County has 57 confirmed cases of Covid-19, the [*highest number*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) in the state after the much more populous Laramie County, with 62. But Teton County far and away leads Wyoming in the rate of cases, with 242.9 per 100,000 people. (An additional three cases were of people who had home addresses outside the county.) As of Tuesday, no one had died in the county, but health officials don’t expect the number of cases in Wyoming to peak until the end of the month.

Spread across 4,216 square miles of mostly wild country, including Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, Teton County is nearly 3\xC2 times the size of Rhode Island. For all that space, only about 23,000 people live there year round. The county’s sole hospital, St. John’s Health, has [*24 ventilators*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) and a [*dwindling supply*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) of personal protective equipment.

Pete Muldoon, the mayor of Jackson, the county seat, says that the extreme wealth of some of the valley’s part-time residents makes it more difficult for local people to stomach job losses from the lockdown, especially when they are wondering if the community’s health care resources “will instead go to someone who might only have a house here to avoid paying taxes.” Despite a great temptation to point fingers at the rich, Mr. Muldoon says, he reminds people that tax policies enable “a small number of people to hoard all of the wealth.”

It is difficult to know how many wealthy people have moved to Teton County to shelter in their mansions. Early on, the county urged outsiders to stay away. In late March, the county’s health officer, Dr. Travis Riddell, was explicit, [*saying*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton), “Nonresident homeowners are strongly encouraged to leave or not travel to Teton County.”

But a pharmacist reported to local health officials recently that he was processing a lot of prescription transfers from other states for three-month refills. And an employee for a company that provides services for the ultrawealthy (few people were willing to be quoted by name) told me that she estimated there are 30 percent more of those families around than usual at this time of year.

“We’ve done all we can to provide for them, such as grocery shopping and other services,” she told me. “Many came for spring break, went home, and then came right back. I know one family of six from Manhattan that has rented a house until August.”

She said she feared going to work. “I can’t believe everyone is flocking here just to be safe,” she said. “I know you want to get out of New York and California. But I shouldn’t be working, and you shouldn’t be here either.”

One physician told me, “I know a doctor in town who was asked to go to someone’s property once the private ventilator arrived, to make sure it was operational.” Disturbed by this hoarding of medical supplies, this person said, the doctor refused.

At the same time, wealthy year-round residents are stepping up. In only a few weeks’ time, the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole [*raised*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) $2 million to help local nonprofits. Owners of a brewery, among others, [*donated $45,000 worth of medical masks*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) to the hospital, emergency medical workers and the county health department. The hospital’s chief executive called them a “godsend.”

“That’s the upside of wealth here,” said one doctor. “These wealthy locals are different from the wealthy people now coming to hide out.”

Other permanent wealthy residents are worried about the toll this will take on the low-income community that props up their way of life. “The worker community that you spoke about in your book are going to be hit hard with no safety net in place,” one told me.

While Western Edens like Teton County provide escapes for the superrich, it often comes at the expense of the rural ***working class***, which is already faced with unaffordable housing, stagnant wages, and overburdened rural health care systems. In this dark hour the pandemic is stripping away the veneer that all is well in Paradise.

[*Justin Farrell*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) is an associate professor at Yale’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the author of “Billionaire Wilderness: The Ultra-Wealthy and the Remaking of the American West.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/richest-u-s-counties-getting-wealthier-from-pitkin-to-teton).

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PHOTO: A private jet taking off from Jackson Hole Airport in Wyoming last year. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Daniel Slim/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Tucker Carlson Stoked White Fear to Conquer Cable; American Nationalist: part 1***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BJ-PFP1-JBG3-62DW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 30, 2022 Saturday 12:06 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 8537 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Confessore

**Highlight:** A string of setbacks made the pundit flee television, the Republican establishment and even his home. He re-emerged with what may be the most racist, and successful, show in the history of cable news.

**Body**

To hear more audio stories from publications like The New York Times, [*download Audm for iPhone or Android*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nyt&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=tucker_carlson_stoked_fear).

Tucker Carlson burst through the doors of Charlie Palmer Steak, enfolded in an entourage of producers and assistants, cellphone pressed to his ear. On the other end was Lachlan Murdoch, chairman of the Fox empire and his de facto boss.

Most of Fox’s Washington bureau, along with the cable network’s top executives, had gathered at the power-class steakhouse, a few blocks from the office, for their annual holiday party. Days earlier, Mr. Carlson had set off an uproar, claiming on air that mass immigration made America “poor and dirtier.” Blue-chip advertisers were [*fleeing*](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/tucker-carlson-tonight-loses-advertiser-as-bowflex-backs-1170195/#!). Within Fox, Mr. Carlson was widely viewed to have finally crossed some kind of line. Many wondered what price he might pay.

The answer became clear that night in December 2018: absolutely none.

When “Tucker Carlson Tonight” [*aired*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/12/18/advertisers-flee-tucker-carlson-brands-himself-mr-dirtier/), Mr. Carlson [*doubled down*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/12/18/advertisers-flee-tucker-carlson-brands-himself-mr-dirtier/), playing video of his earlier comments and citing a report from an Arizona government agency that said each illegal border crossing left up to eight pounds of litter in the desert. Afterward, on the way to the Christmas party, Mr. Carlson spoke directly with Mr. Murdoch, who praised his counterattack, according to a former Fox employee told of the exchange.

“We’re good,” Mr. Carlson said, grinning triumphantly, as he walked into the restaurant.

In the years since, Mr. Carlson has constructed what may be the most racist show in the history of cable news — and also, by some measures, the most successful. Though he frequently declares himself an enemy of prejudice — “We don’t judge them by group, and we don’t judge them on their race,” Mr. Carlson explained to an interviewer a few weeks before accusing impoverished immigrants of making America dirty — his show teaches loathing and fear. Night after night, hour by hour, Mr. Carlson warns his viewers that they inhabit a civilization under siege — by violent Black Lives Matter protesters in American cities, by diseased migrants from south of the border, by refugees importing alien cultures, and by tech companies and cultural elites who will silence them, or label them racist, if they complain. When refugees from Africa, numbering in the hundreds, [*began crossing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/16/us/border-africans-congo-maine.html) into Texas from Mexico during the Trump administration, he warned that the continent’s high birthrates meant the new arrivals might soon “overwhelm our country and change it completely and forever.” Amid nationwide outrage over [*George Floyd’s murder*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/04/20/us/derek-chauvin-verdict-george-floyd) by a Minneapolis police officer, Mr. Carlson dismissed those protesting the killing as “criminal mobs.” Companies like Angie’s List and Papa John’s dropped their ads. The following month, “Tucker Carlson Tonight” became [*the highest-rated cable news show*](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.poynter.org/newsletters/2020/and-the-most-watched-cable-news-show-ever-is/&amp;sa=D&amp;source=docs&amp;ust=1646848626465336&amp;usg=AOvVaw1AUIlB3w2u4MVwHteBaj7G) in history.

His encyclopedia of provocations has only expanded. Since the 2020 presidential election, Mr. Carlson has become the most visible and voluble defender of those who violently stormed the U.S. Capitol to keep Donald J. Trump in office, [*playing down the presence*](https://api.politifact.com/factchecks/2021/feb/23/tucker-carlson/tucker-carlsons-false-claim-downplaying-role-white/) of white nationalists in the crowd and claiming the attack “barely rates as a footnote.” In February, as Western pundits and politicians lined up to condemn the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, for his impending invasion of Ukraine, Mr. Carlson invited his viewers to shift focus back to the true enemy at home. “Why do I hate Putin so much? Has Putin ever called me a racist?” Mr. Carlson [*asked*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/media/2022/02/23/tucker-carlson-putin-russia-ukraine/). “Has he threatened to get me fired for disagreeing with him?” He was roundly labeled an apologist and Putin cheerleader, only to press ahead with segments that parroted Russian talking points and promoted [*Kremlin propaganda*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/23/technology/russia-american-far-right-ukraine.html) about purported Ukrainian bioweapons labs.

Alchemizing media power into political influence, Mr. Carlson stands in a nativist American tradition that runs from Father Coughlin to Patrick J. Buchanan. Now Mr. Carlson’s on-air technique — gleefully courting blowback, then fashioning himself as his aggrieved viewers’ partner in victimhood — has helped position him, as much as anyone, to inherit the populist movement that grew up around Mr. Trump. At a moment when white backlash is the jet fuel of a Republican Party striving to return to power in Washington, he has become the pre-eminent champion of Americans who feel most threatened by the rising power of Black and brown citizens. To channel their fear into ratings, Mr. Carlson has adopted the rhetorical tropes and exotic fixations of white nationalists, who have watched gleefully from the fringes of public life as he popularizes their ideas. Mr. Carlson sometimes refers to “legacy Americans,” a dog-whistle term that, before he began using it on his show last fall, appeared almost exclusively in white nationalist outlets like The Daily Stormer, The New York Times found. He takes up story lines otherwise relegated to far-right or nativist websites like VDare: “Tucker Carlson Tonight” has featured a string of segments about the gruesome murders of white farmers in South Africa, which Mr. Carlson suggested were part of a concerted campaign by that country’s Black-led government. Last April, Mr. Carlson set off yet another uproar, borrowing from [*a racist conspiracy theory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/18/technology/replacement-theory.html) known as “the great replacement” to argue that Democrats were deliberately importing “more obedient voters from the third world” to “replace” the current electorate and keep themselves in power. But a Times analysis of 1,150 episodes of his show found that it was far from the first time Mr. Carlson had done so.

“Tucker is ultimately on our side,” Scott Greer, a former deputy editor at the Carlson-founded Daily Caller, who cut ties with the publication in 2018 after his past [*writings for a white nationalist site were unearthed*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/09/a-daily-caller-editor-wrote-for-an-alt-right-website-using-a-pseudonym/569335/), said on his podcast last spring. “He can get millions and millions of boomers to nod along with talking points that would have only been seen on VDare or American Renaissance a few years ago.”

That pattern is no accident. To a degree not broadly appreciated outside Fox, “Tucker Carlson Tonight” is the apex of a programming and editorial strategy that transformed the network during the Trump era, according to interviews with dozens of current and former Fox executives, producers and journalists. Like the Republican Party itself, Fox has sought to wring rising returns out of a slowly declining audience: the older white conservatives who make up Mr. Trump’s base and much of Fox’s core viewership. To minimize content that might tempt them to change the channel, Fox News has sidelined Trump-averse or left-leaning contributors. It has lost some of its most respected news journalists, most recently Chris Wallace, the longtime host of Fox’s flagship Sunday show. During the same period, according to former employees and journalists there, Fox has leaned harder into stories of illegal immigrants or nonwhite Americans caught in acts of crime or violence, often plucked from local news sites and turbocharged by the channel’s vast digital news operation. Network executives ordered up such coverage so relentlessly during the Trump years that some employees referred to it by a grim nickname: “brown menace.”

A Fox spokeswoman rejected those characterizations of the network’s strategy, pointing to coverage of stories like President Biden’s inauguration and the war in Ukraine, where a Fox [*cameraman was killed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/15/business/media/ukraine-fox-news-cameraman-killed.html) in March while on assignment. In a statement, Justin Wells, a senior executive producer overseeing Mr. Carlson’s show, defended the host’s rhetoric and choice of topics: “Tucker Carlson programming embraces diversity of thought and presents various points of view in an industry where contrarian thought and the search for truth are often ignored. Stories in ‘Tucker Carlson Tonight’ broadcasts and ‘Tucker Carlson Originals’ documentaries undergo a rigorous editorial process. We’re also proud of our ongoing original reporting at a time when most in the media amplify only one point of view.”

Mr. Carlson has led the network’s on-air transformation, becoming Fox’s most influential employee. Outside Fox, Mr. Carlson is bandied about as a potential candidate for president. Inside the network, he answers solely to the Murdochs themselves. With seeming impunity, Mr. Carlson has used his broadcast to attack Fox’s own news coverage, helping drive some journalists off the air and others, like the veteran Fox anchor Shepard Smith, to leave the network entirely. In Australia, the editors of some Murdoch-owned newspapers watch Mr. Carlson’s show religiously, believing it provides clues to Mr. Murdoch’s own views. According to former senior Fox employees, Mr. Carlson boasts of rarely speaking with Fox’s chief executive, Suzanne Scott, but talking or texting regularly with Mr. Murdoch. And in an extraordinary departure from the old Fox code, Mr. Carlson is exempt from the network’s fearsome media relations department, which under Roger Ailes, Fox’s founder, served to both defend the channel’s image and keep its talent in line.

Mr. Carlson is powerful at Fox not merely because he is the network’s face but because he is also its future — a star whose intensity and [*paranoid*](https://www.thedailybeast.com/tucker-carlson-suddenly-says-its-time-to-leave-hunter-biden-alone) style work to bind viewers more closely to the Fox brand, helping lead them through the fragmented post-cable landscape. Last year, Mr. Carlson began producing original content for the network’s nascent streaming service, Fox Nation, and quickly emerged as one of the few Fox stars whose presence could lure viewers to fork over additional dollars. Fox does [*not divulge audience*](https://www.fiercevideo.com/video/fox-nation-still-mum-subscribers-as-distribution-expands) numbers for the service, but last May, Mr. Murdoch told investors that his star had helped increase Fox Nation subscriptions by 40 percent. Executives [*talk openly*](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/can-fox-news-get-younger-viewers-fox-nation-1160947/) about Fox Nation as a boycott-proof version of Fox News — a walled garden where Fox can collect revenue directly from its viewers as carriage fees from cable providers decline. The services’ executives have called those viewers “[*fans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/26/business/media/fox-news-nation-streaming.html)” of [*Fox*](https://www.ft.com/content/4d7de736-de43-45cd-9e82-51b4fddc023f)’s “lifestyle brand.”

But Fox Nation is also a kind of programming cocoon. Its lineup has included shows about patriotism and national parks, the nostalgic series “Who Can Forget?” and a category called, simply, “Conspiracies.” In September, it acquired “Cops,” the police reality show canceled by its previous owner in the wake of the Floyd protests. There is almost no traditional news at all on Fox Nation, but lots of Mr. Carlson — a thrice-weekly talk show called “Tucker Carlson Today” and goading documentaries like “Patriot Purge,” which presented the Jan. 6 insurrection as a false-flag operation by shadowy actors determined to persecute innocent Americans; [*two longtime Fox contributors quit in protest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/21/business/jonah-goldberg-steve-hayes-quit-fox-tucker-carlson.html).

For most of his adult life, Mr. Carlson lived and worked in a very different bubble, the cosmopolitan precincts of Washington. His turn to flagrantly racist ideas has baffled and saddened some longtime associates there, spurring a [*veritable cottage industry of profiles*](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/05/14/media-tucker-carlson-altitude-257560) exploring whether Mr. Carlson’s show is merely lucrative theater or an expression of his true values. But a close reading of Mr. Carlson’s decades in television and journalism, and interviews with dozens of friends and former colleagues, show that “Tucker Carlson Tonight” is both.

Almost from the beginning of his career, he has been marching away from the puckish libertarianism of his young adulthood. Increasingly sympathetic to the nativist currents raging through American politics after the Sept. 11 attacks, and twice cast from the heights of cable news stardom, Mr. Carlson ultimately turned on the old conservative intelligentsia, his hometown and many of his friends. His fall and rise trace the transformation of American conservatism itself. When Mr. Trump ran for president and won, thrusting anti-immigration fervor to the heart of American politics, Mr. Carlson finally found his moment. At Fox, he found his platform.

Mr. Carlson declined to be interviewed for this article. Virtually everyone who did speak asked to remain anonymous in order to speak candidly about Mr. Carlson or his employer; the host is vengeful toward critics, and [*officials*](https://twitter.com/RepSwalwell/status/1451347945069154307?s=20) or media figures Mr. Carlson attacks on his show are sometimes [*threatened with violence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/12/us/politics/republican-violent-rhetoric.html). On his show Thursday night, shortly before The Times received Fox’s statement praising the program, Mr. Carlson sought to weave this article into his nightly narrative. He called journalists at the newspaper “obedient little establishment defenders” and asked: “Why do they keep calling us racist? Well, to make us shut up, obviously.”

After a two-decade run of international reporting trips and regular steakhouse lunches at the Palm, Mr. Carlson now surveys the world from behind an anchor’s desk and rarely goes out to eat. He professes not to use social media or own a television, and communicates with friends and colleagues via late-night texting marathons.

He now lives much of the year in an old family vacation place in a rural, blue-collar corner of Maine. His neighbors today are the kind of people who watch his show, rather than the kind of people who confront him in public about it. At the height of his influence, Mr. Carlson exists in a carefully constructed bubble of his own — a retreat, and a bunker.

You vs. Them

On many nights, the highest-rated cable news show in prime time airs from a converted town garage in the village of Bryant Pond, Maine, not far from Mr. Carlson’s home. Like many rural places, Bryant Pond is [*less busy*](http://realpeoplepamelachodosh.blogspot.com/2018/09/for-tucker-carlson-maine-is-way-life.html?view=mosaic) than it used to be. On a visit last fall, a few large Trump flags still dotted the road into town, and no one bothered with masks at the convenience store. Mr. Carlson’s studio, which is decorated like a cozy cabin in the woods, sits behind a peeling and deserted old grange hall. It is the shiniest, best-kept building in sight.

Each morning, Mr. Carlson sends his staff a memo laying out the night’s lead story and which guests he wants to book, he told the conservative YouTube host [*Dave Rubin*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFkR-DZ_YV8) last year. His senior executive producer, Mr. Wells, oversees a tight-knit team of about two dozen people, some of whom occasionally stay with Mr. Carlson in Maine. Most afternoons, Mr. Carlson sits in his sauna and thinks about what he wants to say. A few hours before his show, he has a cup of coffee and begins writing his monologue, working out of a barn that also houses his boats and his wife’s Peloton.

Mr. Carlson spent a decade writing magazine articles, and he thinks of his television show as a continuous story about America. “I’m a writer, so that’s how I think — in terms of chapters, serials,” he said in the YouTube interview. “I’ll give you one installment today, another tomorrow.” Like Mr. Trump, he is a winking pugilist who rails against elites even as he shapes a movement. Mr. Carlson likes to address his audience directly: “You” are decent, generous, deserving. “They” — the pro-war, pro-China, anti-American “ruling class” — are out to get you. “They’d rather put your life in peril than appear insensitive,” Mr. Carlson says of this ruling class, adding, “They literally don’t care about you, and yet they are still in charge.” He delivers these grim sermons with peppy good cheer and shameless overstatement. On “Tucker Carlson Tonight,” events of the day are further evidence of truths already established; virtually any piece of news can be steered back to the themes of elite corruption, conspiracy and censorship, from gun control to marijuana legalization to [*paper drinking straws*](https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-the-left-wants-to-take-away-your-straws-but-ignores-actual-environmental-problems).

Mr. Carlson’s producers often trawl the web for supporting material, scouring widely read Trumpian sites like Breitbart and The Federalist, [*obscure right-wing blogs*](https://tbdailynews.com/tucker-carlsons-producer-gregg-re-stole-my-work-on-dasha-kelly-story-after-dming-on-twitter-and-promising-to-cite-his-work-for-fox-news-story/) and [*other corners*](https://www.mediamatters.org/tucker-carlson/tucker-carlson-tonight-allegedly-solicits-show-ideas-reddit) of the internet. Early on, clips would sometimes be sent to the network’s research team, an Ailes creation known as the Brain Room, for further fact-checking. When Mr. Carlson’s team requested statistics or original research, it frequently revolved around immigration or race, for instance the respective percentages of Asian-descended and Black people in college. According to one former employee who interacted with Mr. Carlson’s team, the Brain Room would occasionally discover that a story had actually originated farther afield, on a racist or neo-Nazi site like Stormfront. Sometimes the Brain Room suggested that “Tucker Carlson Tonight” look for a different source, and over the years, the researchers there heard less and less from Mr. Carlson’s team. “They weren’t digging,” the former Fox employee said. “They were looking for outrageous stories to outrage their audiences.”

Accuracy isn’t the point on “Tucker Carlson Tonight.” On the air, Mr. Carlson piles up narrative-confirming falsehoods and misleading statements so rapidly — about George Floyd’s [*death*](https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2021/mar/30/facebook-posts/no-autopsy-doesnt-say-george-floyd-died-overdose/), [*white supremacists who took part*](https://api.politifact.com/factchecks/2021/feb/23/tucker-carlson/tucker-carlsons-false-claim-downplaying-role-white/) in the Jan. 6 riot, [*falling testosterone levels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/22/health/tucker-carlson-testosterone.html?unlocked_article_code=AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACEIPuomT1JKd6J17Vw1cRCfTTMQmqxCdw_PIxftm3iWka3DJDmwYiOQYCoyc-wDReKFgasF21D2BQMRGNvozSeduyfRDMlZqTQTuooeBnN5NBRQJnr-JfzF82YPRD_d_-CX2b2K9JaAvnuTn5BvXPX25UKTYzXEkd1x6qZRmIEWp2yYPxanPQuEijYZuzLx2UMABMDQDZiGOuPLtCgwve4nVK0GBtXRlHr1RSjrRntWD6r8fcwg0CVnOSXN35WtU-8oLcZpMf_65d0h8DZK41bYBCWVoL5OrA4kxQuXXlLZsub3KrH-c2SBOqniNU-1J9CTAJwN50Jg&amp;smid=em-share) in men, Covid [*vaccines*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/07/23/tucker-carlson-mangles-story-heart-inflammation-covid-vaccines/?itid=lk_inline_manual_15), the [*Texas power grid*](https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2021/jul/09/tucker-carlson/tucker-carlson-distorts-texas-smart-thermostat-con/) and more — that The Washington Post’s media critic, Erik Wemple, has made a sideline of [*cataloging them*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/14/tucker-carlson-confirms-it-i-lie/). Though Mr. Carlson claims his show to be “the sworn enemy of lying,” Fox’s [*lawyers acknowledged*](https://www.npr.org/2020/09/29/917747123/you-literally-cant-believe-the-facts-tucker-carlson-tells-you-so-say-fox-s-lawye) in 2020, in a [*lawsuit accusing the host of slander*](https://int.nyt.com/data/documenttools/carlson-slander-case/56fe825fc0c3d0d1/full.pdf), that “spirited debate on talk-show programs does not lend itself well to statements of actual fact.”

But if Mr. Carlson has not always been truthful, he has been remarkably consistent. Almost from the beginning, “Tucker Carlson Tonight” has presented a dominant narrative, recasting American racism to present white Americans as an oppressed caste. The ruling class uses fentanyl and other opioids to addict and kill legacy Americans, anti-white racism to cast them as bigots, feminism to degrade their self-esteem, immigration to erode their political power. Republican elites, however improbably, help to import the voters Democrats require at the ballot box. The United States, Mr. Carlson tells his viewers, is “ruled by mercenaries who feel no long-term obligation to the people they rule.”

He leaves little doubt who these mercenaries are. Among the most frequent recurring characters on “Tucker Carlson Tonight” are Black politicians like the Democratic congresswomen Maxine Waters and Ilhan Omar and Vice President Kamala Harris, whom Mr. Carlson has portrayed, against the [*available*](https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/14/politics/kamala-harris-frustrating-start-vice-president/index.html) [*evidence*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/12/04/kamala-harris-staff-departures/), as a kind of shadow president. He regularly disparages Black women as stupid or undeserving of their positions. “No one outside of her own neighborhood had ever heard of Kamala Harris before she showed up as Willie Brown’s girlfriend,” Mr. Carlson said last November, referring to Ms. Harris’s long-ago relationship with the California politician. “Then a few years later, she became Montel Williams’s girlfriend. Interesting.” When President Biden nominated Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court, Mr. Carlson demanded that the White House release her law school admissions test scores to prove she was qualified.

Seemingly every social ill is laid at the feet of immigrants and refugees — not just ***working-class*** unemployment, but rising home prices, out-of-wedlock births among native-born Americans, even the supposedly sorry state of his favorite Beltway fishing spots. With pastoral care, Mr. Carlson reassures his viewers. “It’s OK for you to say: ‘What is this?’ and ‘Maybe I don’t want to live in a country that looks nothing like the country I grew up in,’” Mr. Carlson told a guest in 2017. “Is that bigoted?”

Like his counterparts on the fringe, Mr. Carlson obsesses over Somali immigrants, who represent a tiny fraction of first-generation Americans but are at once Black, Muslim and foreign-born. One of the largest communities of Somali Americans, numbering several thousand people, lives less than an hour from his home in Maine, in the old mill city of Lewiston. In Mr. Carlson’s hands — as on sites like American Renaissance, which promotes “the biological reality of race” — Lewiston is a parable of replacement. Mr. Carlson has repeatedly depicted Somalis as threatening strangers deposited in a small, struggling city without the consent of its citizenry. “Go to Lowell, Mass., or Lewiston, Maine, or any place where large numbers of immigrants have been moved into a poor community, and it hasn’t become richer,” Mr. Carlson lectured a guest in 2017. “It’s become poorer. That’s real.”

In fact, according to Maine’s Labor Department, Lewiston’s unemployment rate has generally tracked that of the rest of the state, and the city has experienced neither a significant drop nor a surge in economic growth since the first Somalis arrived. And economists broadly reject Mr. Carlson’s central argument that immigration to the United States “drives down wages for low-skilled workers nationwide,” as he said in a 2019 segment. As [*one review of the relevant literature*](https://wol.iza.org/articles/do-immigrant-workers-depress-the-wages-of-native-workers/long) put it, “Decades of research have provided little support for the claim that immigrants depress wages by competing with native workers.” Immigrants compete for jobs but also help generate new ones, not only by raising demand for goods and services but also by helping fill out workplaces as they expand to hire native-born workers with different skills. While some studies have found that earlier waves of low-skill immigration may have had short-term impacts on the wages of one relatively small group — high school dropouts — other studies have found “small to zero effects,” as [*a landmark analysis by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine*](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/23550/the-economic-and-fiscal-consequences-of-immigration) stated in 2017.

But as televised theater, the formula works. Mr. Carlson reliably draws more than three million viewers. When he defended the idea of demographic “replacement” on a different Fox show in April, the Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish civil rights group, called for his firing, [*noting that*](https://www.adl.org/news/media-watch/adl-letter-to-fox-news-condemns-tucker-carlsons-impassioned-defense-of-great) the same concept had helped fuel a string of terrorist attacks, including the 2018 mass shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue. But when Mr. Carlson ran a clip of his comments on his own prime-time show a few days later, according to Nielsen data, the segment got 14 percent more viewers in the advertiser-sweet “demo” of 24- to 54-year-olds than Mr. Carlson’s average for the year.

Every cable network cares about ratings, but none more so than Fox, whose [*post-Ailes slogan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/14/business/media/fox-news-fair-and-balanced.html) stresses neither fairness nor balance but sheer audience dominance: “Most Watched, Most Trusted.” And at Fox, according to former employees, no host scrutinizes his ratings more closely than Mr. Carlson. He learned how to succeed on television, in part, by failing there.

Unhumble Beginnings

The talk-show host who rails against immigrants and the tech barons of a new Gilded Age is himself the descendant of a German immigrant who became one of the great ranching barons of the old Gilded Age. Henry Miller landed in New York in 1850 and built a successful butcher business in San Francisco; along with a partner, he went on to assemble a land empire spanning three states. They obtained some parcels simply by bribing government officials. Others were wrung from cash-poor Mexican Californians who, following the Mexican-American War, now lived in a newly expanded United States and couldn’t afford to defend their old Mexican land grants in court against speculators like Mr. Carlson’s ancestor. Through the early 20th century, Mr. Miller’s land and cattle empire “was utterly dependent on immigrant labor,” said David Igler, a historian at the University of California, Irvine, and author of a history of the Miller empire.

Over the years, the Miller fortune dispersed, as great fortunes often do, into a fractious array of family branches. Mr. Carlson’s mother, Lisa McNear Lombardi, was born to a third-generation Miller heiress, debuted in San Francisco society and met Richard Carlson, a successful local television journalist, in the 1960s. They eloped to Reno, Nev., in 1967; Tucker McNear Carlson was born two years later, followed by his brother, Buckley. The family moved to the Los Angeles area, where Richard Carlson took a job at the local ABC affiliate, but the Carlsons’ marriage grew rocky and the station fired him a few years later. In early 1976, he moved to San Diego to take a new television job. The boys went with him — according to court records, their parents had agreed it would be temporary — and commuted to Los Angeles on weekends while he and Lisa tried to work out their differences.

But a few months later, just days after the boys returned from a Hawaii vacation with their mother, Richard began divorce proceedings and sought full custody of the children. In court filings, Lisa Carlson claimed he had blindsided her and left her virtually penniless. The couple separated and began fighting over custody and spousal support. Mr. Carlson alleged that his wife had “repeated difficulties with abuse of alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and amphetamines,” and that he had grown concerned about both her mental state and her treatment of the boys. On at least one occasion, he asserted, the boys had walked off the plane in San Diego without shoes; the mother’s own family members, he said, had urged him not to let her see the children unsupervised. He won custody when Tucker was 8, at a hearing Lisa did not attend: According to court records, she had left the country. She eventually settled in France, never to see her sons again. A few years later, Richard Carlson married Patricia Swanson, an heiress to the frozen-food fortune, who adopted both boys.

For many years, Tucker Carlson was tight-lipped about the rupture. In a New Yorker [*profile*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/10/tucker-carlsons-fighting-words) in 2017, not long after his show debuted, he described his mother’s departure as a “totally bizarre situation — which I never talk about, because it was actually not really part of my life at all.” But as controversy and criticism engulfed his show, Mr. Carlson began to describe his early life in darker tones, painting the California of his youth as a countercultural dystopia and his mother as abusive and erratic. In 2019, speaking on [*a podcast*](https://podscribe.app/feeds/http-feedsfeedburnercom-theadamcarollapodcast/episodes/92f15e65-cb43-4f3b-9ed0-a8519c9de199#00:48:05) with the right-leaning comedian Adam Carolla, Mr. Carlson said his mother had forced drugs on her children. “She was like, doing real drugs around us when we were little, and getting us to do it, and just like being a nut case,” Mr. Carlson said. By his account, his mother made clear to her two young sons that she had little affection for them. “When you realize your own mother doesn’t like you, when she says that, it’s like, oh gosh,” he told Mr. Carolla, adding that he “felt all kinds of rage about it.”

Mr. Carlson was a heavy drinker until his 30s, something he has attributed in part to his early childhood. But by his own account, his mother’s abandonment also provided him with a kind of pre-emptive defense against the attacks that have rained down on his Fox show. “Criticism from people who hate me doesn’t really mean anything to me,” Mr. Carlson told Megyn Kelly, the former Fox anchor, on [*her podcast*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmG9bqZ-qQY) last fall. He went on to say: “I’m not giving those people emotional control over me. I’ve been through that. I lived through that as a child.” One lesson from his youth, Mr. Carlson told [*one interviewer*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuMaZ49IaeY), was that “you should only care about the opinions of people who care about you.”

The remaining Carlsons placed a high premium on family loyalty, and Mr. Carlson formed an exceptionally tight bond with his brother and father. The elder Mr. Carlson began a political career in San Diego Republican circles — Pete Wilson, the future California governor, was a frequent guest at their dinner table — and eventually moved the family to Washington, where he led Voice of America in the Reagan administration. Tucker, an avid reader but indifferent student, went to boarding school in Rhode Island, where he met his future wife, Susie Andrews, the headmaster’s daughter. They married when he was 22 and had four children. “I wanted a totally happy family, where everyone’s close and everyone’s named after someone else and everyone gets together all the time,” Mr. Carlson has said. After college, he followed his father’s footsteps into journalism.

He took a junior position at Policy Review, a conservative journal, where he wrote earnest, plodding articles on the Washington police department and the decline of a predominantly Black high school. Later, after begging his way to a job at the newly launched, Murdoch-backed Weekly Standard, Mr. Carlson emerged as a gifted observational reporter, turning out punchy riffs on Monica Lewinsky’s oversharing therapist and Ross Perot’s dalliance with Marxists. He was sometimes mean but usually funny, with a knack for getting people to talk, and assignments piled up from glossy magazines in New York. He also became a regular on CNN and C-SPAN, a side gig that would quickly become his consuming ambition. On television, he mocked Mr. Buchanan, the populist commentator and failed presidential candidate, as “kooky,” noting with [*a smirk that*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4958308/user-clip-tucker-carlson-criticizes-pat-buchanan) when Mr. Buchanan was attacked, he invariably claimed that “the tiny cabal that controls American politics doesn’t like me because I speak truth to power.”

Like many up-and-coming conservative writers in the 1990s, Mr. Carlson had vaguely libertarian politics — or, at least, [*a vaguely libertarian sensibility*](https://nymag.com/nymetro/news/politics/columns/nationalinterest/5612/). In a 1997 opinion [*essay*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB875739465952259500) for The Wall Street Journal, he attacked the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a leading anti-immigration group, spotlighting its links to eugenicists and alarmist portrayals of Latin American immigration. “FAIR itself has made a conscious play for the support of social conservatives, running ads that blame immigration for ‘multiculturalism,’ ‘multilingualism,’ ‘increasing ethnic tension’ and ‘middle-class flight,’” Mr. Carlson wrote. He singled out FAIR’s executive director, Dan Stein, who had once argued that immigrants’ higher birthrates would eventually give them too much political power, a situation he had likened to “[*competitive breeding*](https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/04/26/1991-fair-president-dan-stein-said-immigrants-are-getting-competitive-breeding).” Mr. Carlson wondered why “conservatives seem to be making common cause with Mr. Stein and FAIR.”

Within just a few years, he would be one of them.

Crossing the Border

As Mr. Carlson’s star rose, illegal immigration was exploding. Border apprehensions approached [*near-record levels*](https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2021-Aug/U.S.%20Border%20Patrol%20Total%20Apprehensions%20%28FY%201925%20-%20FY%202020%29%20%28508%29.pdf) during the late 1990s; in Washington, Democrats and Republicans debated what to do about the millions of people already living in the country illegally. In 1999, Mr. Buchanan left CNN to mount a campaign for president, pledging to build a “Buchanan fence” on the Southern border and make English the official language; the race was won by George W. Bush, who campaigned in Spanish and took a gentler tone on illegal immigration. In 2001, Mr. Carlson took over Mr. Buchanan’s old “Crossfire” seat at CNN, and when Mr. Buchanan reappeared on the show a few months later, to debate the new president’s immigration policy, the two men [*were united in opposition*](http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0109/07/cf.00.html). “Both parties, looking for votes, are for it. Big business, which is always looking for cheaper labor, is for it,” Mr. Carlson argued. “But it turns out the average person isn’t for it.”

A few days later, hijackers flew two planes into the twin towers. Anti-Muslim hate crimes [*skyrocketed*](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/15/assaults-against-muslims-in-u-s-surpass-2001-level/), and millions of Americans [*turned sharply against*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/1660/immigration.aspx) immigration. On CNN, Mr. Carlson [*took up their cause*](http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0110/23/cf.00.html). “Are they racists? No,” he said. “They understand a basic truth: that the 19 hijackers who came here and destroyed the World Trade Centers, hit the Pentagon, came here because they were able to, because it’s easy, because we have virtually no control at the border.” One of his guests that day was Mr. Stein, the FAIR official, now welcomed as an important voice in an increasingly urgent debate.

Mr. Carlson has never written extensively about exactly when and why his views changed, but clues are sprinkled through his writing and TV appearances. He has spoken about how, in his view, immigration transformed California for the worse during the 1990s, ushering in an era of Democratic-led decline and decay. He seemed to take Latino support for Democrats there as a demographic inevitability, rather than [*a specific response to policies and rhetoric promoted by California Republicans*](https://www.cato.org/blog/proposition-187-turned-california-blue) like Mr. Wilson, who won re-election, in part, by embracing a ballot initiative barring illegal immigrants from public benefits. (Other successful Republicans of the era, including Mr. Bush, won a significant share of the Hispanic vote; Mr. Trump [*increased his share of Hispanic voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/us/politics/trump-latino-voters-2020.html) in 2020 despite advocating more restrictive immigration policies.) “I was always very pro-immigration, always,” Mr. Carlson told a guest on Fox in 2017. “And watching this happen in California really made me pause.”

His politics were evolving in other ways, too. After the Sept. 11 attacks, he dutifully defended the Bush administration’s turn to war and [*backed the invasion of Iraq*](http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0306/18/cf.00.html). But after the fall of Baghdad, he traveled there for Esquire and found it a tinderbox of trigger-happy contractors and resentful Iraqis. Mr. Carlson later described the trip as a transformative experience, the seed of his broader shift away from the establishment Republicanism of the day. “I arrived a tepid supporter of the war, and of neoconservatism more generally,” Mr. Carlson wrote recently, in a new collection of his magazine reportage. “I returned home a determined opponent of both.”

In 2004, while still at CNN, he started a short-lived talk show on PBS. He told The New York Observer that it would allow more voices that didn’t fit neatly into the mainstream. “I was thinking this morning: ‘Diversity is the strength of our country.’ Oh yeah?” Mr. Carlson said, trying out a line that would become one of his go-to attacks on “Tucker Carlson Tonight.” “How’s that? I mean, is diversity the strength of the Balkans? No.”

At “Crossfire,” Mr. Carlson told colleagues he felt overproduced and trapped by the rigid left-right debate format. The show was drawing [*dwindling audiences*](https://ew.com/article/2005/01/05/after-22-years-cnn-cancels-crossfire/), and after it was canceled [*in early 2005*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/06/business/media/cnn-will-cancel-crossfire-and-cut-ties-to-commentator.html), he moved to MSNBC with [*a new show*](https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna8049787), “The Situation With Tucker Carlson.” (The writer of this article is an MSNBC contributor.) Mr. Carlson dropped his signature bow tie and took an even sharper turn against immigration, adopting the resentful, combative language of the Republican Party’s increasingly vocal nativist wing. “We didn’t take our lands from Mexico,” [*said*](https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna10254944) Henry Miller’s great-great-great-grandson, adding: “This is our country. That is their country.”

Illegal immigration, he now insisted, was not merely a political or economic matter, but a civilizational threat. He defended billboards in California that read “Stop the Invasion, Secure Our Borders.” (“It’s an invasion,” he said. “I don’t know what’s wrong with saying so.”) In the spring and summer of 2006, as Mr. Bush [*tried to revive*](https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060515-8.html) his plan to offer legal status to millions of illegal immigrants, Mr. Carlson inveighed against it. “You’re talking about completely changing the nature of the country,” he claimed.

A revolt by Republican lawmakers [*ultimately doomed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/28/washington/28cnd-immig.html) Mr. Bush’s immigration plan; in ways not yet fully appreciated by Republican leaders, immigration was becoming their party’s animating issue. At the time, though, Mr. Carlson’s viewpoint seemed to be on the wane. His MSNBC show cycled through [*three time slots and two different names*](https://newrepublic.com/article/72794/the-scribbler) without [*finding a big audience*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/10/business/media/10cnd-tucker.html). He was canceled — again — in 2008, as the network’s prime-time lineup began to shift left. Mr. Carlson [*retreated to Maine*](http://realpeoplepamelachodosh.blogspot.com/2018/09/for-tucker-carlson-maine-is-way-life.html?view=mosaic), where he spent a few months fishing.

That fall, Barack Obama won election as the country’s first Black president, seeming to validate the ascent of an increasingly multiracial electorate. Mr. Carlson eventually snagged a pundit contract at Fox and an unpaid fellowship at the Cato Institute, the libertarian think tank. But his days as a TV star seemed at an end. With four school-age children, the Carlsons sold their $4 million Washington home, and he had what he [*later described*](https://www.maxraskin.com/interviews/interview-with-tucker-carlson) as a kind of meltdown. “I was living in that world, and I was not succeeding,” he said. “It forced me to think about what I had done wrong, because I had no choice, because I had no money.”

Tabloid Impresario

Over lunch at the Palm one day with his college roommate, a former White House aide named Neil Patel, Mr. Carlson gamed out his next act. They imagined a new right-leaning digital tabloid, one that would be conservative without being partisan. The website, The Daily Caller, [*went live*](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/tucker-carlson-launches-t_n_418064) in 2010, in a right-wing media landscape dominated by the Drudge Report, Fox itself and the vast analog domain of talk radio. The Caller promised to emphasize original reporting. “Our goal is not to get Republicans elected,” Mr. Carlson said. “Our goal is to explain what your government is doing.”

The Caller was eclectic and boisterous, with an [*office beer keg*](https://www.adweek.com/performance-marketing/daily-caller-to-celebrate-new-keg-o-rater/) and a staff that was underpaid, largely inexperienced and overwhelmingly young. Mr. Carlson was by most accounts a loyal and generous boss. He enjoyed stirring people up and getting them arguing with one another — or with him. He also liked to hire outrageous personalities and set them loose to write whatever they wanted. He wasn’t so much hiring a newsroom, he sometimes told his staff, as filling out a pledge class or casting a sitcom. “I like to have this character, and that character,” he later recalled [*in a 2015 podcast interview with a Caller*](https://www.mattklewis.com/matt-lewis-and-the-news/tucker-carlson/) colleague. “I always want a fat character, always.”

Mr. Patel sometimes described The Caller as an experiment in libertarian management principles. No one really had a permanent editor, and though the staff prided itself on breaking news, some of its biggest scoops imploded under scrutiny: an article that the Environmental Protection Agency planned to hire [*thousands of new bureaucrats*](https://www.politico.com/story/2011/09/epa-21b-rumors-comically-wrong-064582) to enforce greenhouse-gas regulations, for example, or [*reports that a Democratic senator*](https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2013/the-daily-callers-menendez-prostitution-scoop-unravels/) had paid for sex while visiting a campaign donor in the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Carlson seemed to [*relish the criticism*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/for-daily-caller-menendez-controversy-makes-for-a-very-good-day/2013/03/05/689c95fe-85d9-11e2-98a3-b3db6b9ac586_story.html?hpid=z3), treating it as proof that The Caller was needed. The site embraced what Eric Owens, a former writer and editor there, called a “gently anti-P.C. atmosphere.” To boost traffic, it frequently featured slide shows of the swimsuit model Kate Upton. Mr. Owens, who covered education, wrote dozens of articles about female teachers having sex with minor male students. The Caller framed these stories with mock outrage, under the rubric “Teacher Sex,” suggesting that the boys probably enjoyed the experience. “Tucker loved those stories, because they were funny and got a lot of traffic,” Mr. Owens said in an interview. “The theory was: Let’s give people what they want. Whatever is working, let’s give them more of that.”

Mr. Patel focused relentlessly on audience metrics, and within a couple of years, The Caller was turning a small profit. Mr. Carlson, though, still harbored dreams of succeeding on TV. In 2013, Fox gave him a shot in its minor leagues, as a weekend co-host of “Fox and Friends,” the popular morning show. The hours were terrible — Mr. Carlson, a night owl, once [*fell asleep on air*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFTf59puq8U) — and the work sometimes fluffy. But it put him back in the game, and it helped pay the bills. His media career had given him adventures and an exciting life, he told a [*Caller*](https://www.mattklewis.com/matt-lewis-and-the-news/tucker-carlson/) colleague in 2015, but it had been hard to earn the kind of living he aspired to. “I’ve sweated a lot about money, a lot,” he said. “And continue to, probably more than a 45-year-old should.”

At the time, Mr. Carlson was locked in an increasingly bitter inheritance battle. His mother had died a few years earlier in France, apparently without a will, leaving her sons and her second husband, Michael Vaughan, to divide up her estate. Alongside her paintings and jewelry were the dregs of the Miller ranching fortune — a share of mineral rights sprinkled over 68,000 acres of inland Central California and valued at around $37,000.

The orderly disposal of the estate was interrupted in the fall of 2013, according to court records in California, when one of Mr. Vaughan’s daughters from a prior marriage discovered a handwritten will that left everything to him. It also included a one-sentence codicil: “I leave my sons Tucker Swanson McNear Carlson and Buckley Swanson Peck Carlson one dollar each.”

Mr. Carlson and his brother sued, alleging that the will was a forgery; a forensics specialist brought in to examine it stated that it was probably authentic. Mr. Carlson’s uncle asserted that the “discovery” of his sister’s will occurred only after a new well on the family’s California property began pumping out hundreds of barrels of oil. In court filings, the Vaughans now valued the estate’s mineral assets at $2.6 million. The litigation was still going on years later when Mr. Carlson showed up on Mr. Carolla’s [*podcast*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUnqT1Hg8qo) to hawk “Ship of Fools,” his Fox-era jeremiad about America’s selfish elites. “She didn’t raise us, she was horrible, and then she dies and causes all these problems,” Mr. Carlson told the host, describing a conversation with his brother. “And he goes, ‘It’s just perfect — she’s a bitch from the grave.’”

But another, more consequential family feud was unfolding inside The Caller. At the start of Mr. Obama’s second term, a bipartisan group of senators known as the Gang of Eight tried to resurrect immigration reform. Mr. Carlson was already known to his staff as an immigration hawk; in office debates, he would sometimes invoke Lewiston as a kind of personal turning point, telling colleagues that he had watched Somali refugees ruin the city. In 2013, he met Stephen Miller — future architect of the Trump administration’s immigration policies, then a congressional aide working to defeat the Gang of Eight — and found in him a kindred spirit. Though Mr. Carlson allowed The Caller’s pro-immigration writers free rein, the site’s news coverage of immigration reform, led by a reporter named Neil Munro, was relentlessly hostile. Mr. Miller and his allies on the Hill fed Mr. Munro a steady diet of tips and story suggestions. The Caller’s audience loved it.

“Immigration was always the most animating thing — it wasn’t even close,” said a former Caller employee familiar with the site’s readership metrics, who requested anonymity for fear of antagonizing Mr. Carlson.

But The Caller’s immigration coverage set off intense debates among writers and editors there, reflecting the battle that would soon remake the Republican Party itself. One former writer recalled filing pieces about immigration that would come back from editors with supportive quotes stripped out. Some Caller staff members viewed Mr. Munro’s news articles as little more than opinion columns, with an obvious slant and often factual problems. Mr. Patel, himself an immigrant, pushed editors for more balanced coverage; Mr. Carlson, though, usually defended Mr. Munro’s stories, and plainly agreed with them, as did many of The Caller’s younger employees, former staff members said. On a group email list for editors, one argument culminated in a frustrated message from a longtime editor, Jamie Weinstein, asking whether The Caller now had an official editorial position against immigration.

The Caller had always attracted young writers with more or less conventional conservative politics. But in the years before Mr. Trump declared for president, the site’s free-for-all atmosphere and low barriers to entry also attracted other types — people with short résumés and edgy views on race and American identity. “Whatever sort of was fashionable among smart young conservatives tended to be the trend in the office,” said Jim Antle, a former editor and writer at The Caller. “When The Caller started, most smart young conservatives were libertarian. Within a few years after that, a lot of them were populist, nationalist types — which also meant that they were sometimes attracted to things that were much worse than that.”

‘What We Pretend to Be’

One of the new arrivals was a young Dartmouth graduate named Blake Neff, who joined The Caller in 2014. Mr. Neff, who grew up in South Dakota, was smart but awkward, with a callous streak that most of his colleagues excused as cluelessness. He sometimes complained that women only liked men with looks or money. Once, according to two former Caller employees, he told a colleague she would need to find her future husband before she reached her 30s, then walked over to a whiteboard to chart out the years, months and days she had left. Mr. Neff, who declined to be interviewed for this article, covered education, which mostly meant churning out pieces on [*far-left professors*](https://dailycaller.com/2015/07/02/professor-blames-whites-for-her-menstrual-problems/) (“Professor Blames Whites for Her Menstrual Problems”) and [*strident student protesters*](https://dailycaller.com/2015/12/17/oberlin-students-release-gargantuan-14-page-list-of-demands/) (“Hispanic Students at Duke Demand a Nicer Office, [*Free Trophies*](https://dailycaller.com/2016/01/27/hispanic-students-at-duke-demand-a-nicer-office-free-trophies/)”).

Mr. Carlson soon took Mr. Neff under his wing. In August 2015, the two traveled together to the Albany wedding of a Caller colleague. After they returned, Mr. Carlson raved about Mr. Neff’s intelligence. He told others he enjoyed Mr. Neff’s writing style — especially his satires, among them an [*imagined Trump stump speech*](https://dailycaller.com/2015/07/21/jesus-hes-a-loser-secret-super-authentic-trump-speech-leaked/) about Jesus that Mr. Neff wrote the month after Mr. Trump entered the race. (“I mean, he got out-dealed by Pontius Pilate, a loser if I ever saw one.”) Later, when Mr. Carlson got his own Fox show, he brought Mr. Neff along as a writer. “Anything he’s reading off the teleprompter, the first draft was written by me,” Mr. Neff told [*his college alumni magazine*](https://dartmouthalumnimagazine.com/blake-neff-tucker-carlson).

In his downtime, he liked to post on AutoAdmit, an online forum popular with law students, and one of the many digital watering holes where young men egg one another on to be outrageous and offensive. He started one thread titled “Urban business idea: He Didn’t Do Muffin!,” referring to a racist joke that arose on Reddit in the wake of the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and he mocked a female acquaintance as an “Azn megashrew,” using a slang term for “Asian.” In 2020, after CNN [*revealed Mr. Neff*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/10/media/tucker-carlson-writer-blake-neff/index.html) as the posts’ author, Mr. Carlson distanced himself, saying they “have no connection” to “Tucker Carlson Tonight.” Mr. Neff’s AutoAdmit posts, however, do not appear to have been a closely kept secret at The Caller. His fellow education writer, Mr. Owens, recalled him bragging about his exploits on the site. “It struck me as, this is just a kid who doesn’t understand why he shouldn’t say this and he’ll grow out of it,” Mr. Owens said.

In an email to The Times, Mr. Neff denied making disparaging comments about women to his colleagues and dismissed criticism of his AutoAdmit posts, which he said Mr. Carlson was unaware of. “I make no apologies for now-ancient posts on an anonymous message board which offended no one,” Mr. Neff said.

Mr. Neff didn’t stop posting, and he wasn’t alone. Over the next several years, almost a dozen Caller employees or regular contributors would be outed for posting racist material elsewhere online, or for their connections to an underground clique of next-generation white nationalists in and around Washington. At The Caller, they wrote articles claiming that [*illegal immigrants were predisposed to rape*](https://dailycaller.com/2015/07/03/heres-one-rape-culture-the-media-wants-to-be-fake/), [*highlighting a grisly MS-13 murder*](https://www.mediamatters.org/daily-caller/right-wing-media-provided-home-white-supremacist-he-organized-charlottesville-rally) or [*mocking diversity consultants*](https://archive.fo/OFsLV). On their own time, according to exposés in The Atlantic, Splinter, ProPublica and other outlets, [*they wrote under pseudonyms for white nationalist websites*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/09/a-daily-caller-editor-wrote-for-an-alt-right-website-using-a-pseudonym/569335/), went to conferences organized by leaders of the “alt-right” or [*traded antisemitic jokes on an email list*](https://splinternews.com/leaked-emails-show-how-white-nationalists-have-infiltra-1837681245) titled “Morning Hate.” In interviews, two former Caller employees, recalling the cascade of revelations, each quoted a line from the Kurt Vonnegut novel “Mother Night”: “We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be.”

In 2015, Caller employees came across a picture of an intern named Ashley Rae Goldenberg standing with [*a young white nationalist*](https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/matthew-heimbach) leader named Matthew Heimbach, who carried a flag dating from imperial Germany, now a neo-Nazi emblem. The circumstances of the picture were unclear, and according to Mr. Owens, Mr. Carlson decided not to fire her, arguing that she was only an intern and doing so would only bring more attention to the matter. When white nationalists carried torches in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017 to protest the removal of a Confederate statue, The Caller’s reporter [*on the scene turned out to be one of the rally’s speakers*](https://www.propublica.org/article/things-got-left-out-of-the-daily-callers-report-confederate-monument-rally); The Caller later scrubbed his bylines from the site.

That summer, the Southern Poverty Law Center [*published pictures*](https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/08/16/daily-caller-has-white-nationalist-problem) showing that Mr. Greer, the Caller deputy editor, had mingled with members of the Wolves of Vinland and Youth for Western Civilization, groups the center has linked to white nationalism. Mr. Greer told his editors that the pictures were from heavy metal shows he had gone to in college. The Caller would only sever ties with him later, after The Atlantic [*revealed*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/09/a-daily-caller-editor-wrote-for-an-alt-right-website-using-a-pseudonym/569335/) that he had also written pseudonymous posts about “Indo-European virtue” and the threat of “non-White hordes” for an alt-right website.

By then, Mr. Carlson had stepped away from day-to-day management of The Caller to focus on his Fox show. In an email to The Times, Mr. Patel said that he would “admit freely that we should have screened writers better in our earlier years.” He added: “The truth is, I did not imagine those white-identity types trying to join us. I still believe that represents the tiniest minority of conservative America.”

But even outside The Caller’s office, the border that once separated mainstream conservatism from the cranks and nativists of the far right had thinned. While white nationalists infiltrated The Caller in private, Mr. Trump began taking over the Republican Party in public, casting Mexican migrants as rapists and criminals and promising to [*bar Muslims*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/12/07/donald-trump-calls-for-total-and-complete-shutdown-of-muslims-entering-the-united-states/?noredirect=on) from entering the country. Mr. Trump said the things you weren’t supposed to say, and found that millions of voters were eager to listen. The political markets were moving, and Mr. Carlson took note. In early 2016, as Republican leaders scrambled to figure out how to stop Mr. Trump, Mr. Carlson sat down in his kitchen in Washington to explain why they would fail.

He pounded out [*a piece for Politico*](https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-is-shocking-vulgar-and-right-213572/), the Beltway-insider bible, pausing occasionally to read passages to his wife. “It seemed obvious that Trump could win the nomination and be president,” Mr. Carlson later explained. “I wanted to predict that in print before it happened.” He excoriated the Republican elite — the lobbyists and think-tank experts and congressional leaders, his neighbors and onetime friends — for betraying the party’s voters. Friends and colleagues would come to think of the essay as Mr. Carlson’s personal declaration of war on the conservative establishment that had long nurtured him, and where his father had built a second career. “They’re the ones who’ve been advocating for open borders, and nation-building in countries whose populations hate us, and trade deals that eliminated jobs while enriching their donors,” he wrote. Mr. Trump was loved because he told the truth, Mr. Carlson wrote, and he could win because no one else did.

“It’s thrilling to hear someone say what he really thinks, even if you believe he’s wrong,” Mr. Carlson wrote. “It’s especially exciting when you suspect he’s right.”

Reporting was contributed by Larry Buchanan, Weiyi Cai, Ben Decker, Barbara Harvey, Candice Reed, Michael D. Shear and Karen Yourish. Julie Tate contributed research.

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**Byline:** Jason DeParle

**Highlight:** The $1.9 trillion pandemic relief package moving through Congress advances an idea that Democrats have been nurturing for decades: establishing a guaranteed income for families with children.

**Body**

The $1.9 trillion pandemic relief package moving through Congress advances an idea that Democrats have been nurturing for decades: establishing a guaranteed income for families with children.

WASHINGTON — A year ago, Anique Houpe, a single mother in suburban Atlanta, was working as a letter carrier, running a side business catering picnics and settling into a rent-to-own home in Stone Mountain, Ga., where she thought her boys would flourish in class and excel on the football field.

Then the pandemic closed the schools, the boys’ grades collapsed with distance learning, and she quit work to stay home in hopes of breaking their fall. Expecting unemployment aid that never came, she lost her utilities, ran short of food and was recovering from an immobilizing bout of Covid when a knock brought marshals with eviction papers.

Depending on when the snapshot is dated, Ms. Houpe might appear as a striving emblem of upward mobility or a mother on the verge of homelessness. But in either guise, she is among the people Democrats seek to help with a mold-breaking plan, on the verge of congressional passage, to provide most parents a monthly check of up to $300 per child.

Obscured by other parts of President Biden’s $1.9 trillion [*stimulus*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) package, which [*won Senate approval*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) on Saturday, the child benefit has the makings of a policy revolution. Though framed in technocratic terms as an expansion of an existing tax credit, it is essentially a guaranteed income for families with children, akin to children’s allowances that are common in other rich countries.

The plan establishes the benefit for a single year. But if it becomes permanent, [*as Democrats intend*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details), it will greatly enlarge the safety net for the poor and the middle class at a time when the [*volatile modern economy often leaves families*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details)moving between those groups. More than 93 percent of children — 69 million — would receive benefits under the plan, at a one-year cost of more than $100 billion.

The bill, which is likely to pass the House and be signed by Mr. [*Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) this week, raises the maximum benefit most families will receive by up to 80 percent per child and extends it to millions of families whose earnings are too low to fully qualify under existing law. Currently, a quarter of children get a partial benefit, and the poorest 10 percent get nothing.

While the current program distributes the money annually, as a tax reduction to families with income tax liability or a check to those too poor to owe income taxes, the new program would send both groups monthly checks to provide a more stable cash flow.

By the standards of previous aid debates, opposition has been surprisingly muted. While the bill has not won any Republican votes, critics have largely focused on other elements of the rescue package. Some conservatives have called the child benefit “welfare” and warned that it would bust budgets and weaken incentives to work or marry. But Senator Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, has [*proposed a child benefit*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) that is even larger, though it would be financed through other safety net cuts.

While the proposal took center stage in response to the pandemic, supporters have spent decades developing the case for a children’s income guarantee. Their arguments gained traction as science established the long-term consequences of deprivation in children’s early years, and as rising inequality undercut the idea that everyone had a fair shot at a better life.

The economic shock and racial protests of the past year brought new momentum to a plan whose reach, while broad, would especially help Black and Latino families, who are crucial to the Democrats’ coalition.

Mr. Biden’s embrace of the subsidies is a leftward shift for a Democratic Party that made deep cuts in cash aid in the 1990s under the theme of “ending welfare.” As a senator, Mr. Biden supported the 1996 welfare restrictions, and as recently as August his campaign was [*noncommittal about the child benefit*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details).

[*The president*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) now promotes [*projections*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) that the monthly checks — up to $300 for young children and $250 for those over 5 — would cut [*child poverty*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) by 45 percent, and by more than 50 percent among Black families.

“The moment has found us,” said Representative Rosa DeLauro, a Connecticut Democrat who has proposed a child allowance in 10 consecutive Congresses and describes it as a children’s version of Social Security. “The crystallization of the [*child tax credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) and what it can do to lift children and families out of poverty is extraordinary. We’ve been talking about this for years.”

Ms. Houpe’s home state has been crucial to the advance of the benefit. Democrats are in position to enact it only because they [*won Georgia’s two Senate seats in runoff elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) in January, barely gaining control of the chamber.

While Ms. Houpe, an independent, skipped the presidential election, that promise of cash relief led her to vote Democratic in January. “I just felt like the Democrats would be more likely to do something,” she said.

Her precarious situation is the kind the subsidy seeks to address. Born to a teenage mother, Ms. Houpe, 33, grew up straining to escape hardship. Though she was young when she had a child, she came close to finishing a bachelor’s degree, found work as pharmacy technician and took a job with the post office to lift her wage to nearly $18 an hour. Raising a son on her own, she took in a nephew whom she regards as a second child.

Ms. Houpe seemed on the rise before the pandemic, with the move to a new house. The monthly payment consumed 60 percent of her income, twice what the government deems affordable, but she trimmed the cost by renting out a room and started a side job catering picnics.

During the pandemic, she spent six months waiting for schools to reopen until the boys’ plummeting grades — Trejion is 14 and Micah 11 — persuaded her that she could not leave them alone.

“I had to make a decision,” Ms. Houpe said, “my boys or my job.”

But when her requests for unemployment were denied, the bottom fell out.

While critics fear cash aid weakens work incentives, Ms. Houpe said it might have saved her job by allowing her to hire someone part time to supervise the boys.

“I definitely would have kept my job,” she said.

The campaign for child benefits is at least a half-century old and rests on a twofold idea: Children are expensive, and society shares an interest in seeing them thrive. At least 17 wealthy countries subsidize child-rearing for much of the population, with Canada offering up to $4,800 per child each year. But until recently, a broad allowance seemed unlikely in the United States, where policy was more likely to reflect a faith that opportunity was abundant and a belief that aid sapped initiative.

It was a Democratic president, Bill Clinton, who abolished the entitlement to cash aid for poor families with children. The landmark law he signed in 1996 created time limits and work requirements and caused an exodus from the rolls. Spending on the poor continued to grow but targeted low-wage workers, with little protection for those who failed to find or keep jobs.

In a 2018 [*analysis of federal spending on children*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details), the economists Hilary W. Hoynes and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach found that virtually all the increases since 1990 went to “families with earnings” and those “above the poverty line.”

But rising inequality and the focus on early childhood brought broader subsidies a new look. A [*landmark study*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) in 2019 by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine showed that even short stints in poverty could cause lasting harm, leaving children with less education, lower adult earnings and worse adult health. Though welfare critics said aid caused harm, the panel found that “poverty itself causes negative child outcomes” and that income subsidies “have been shown to improve child well-being.”

Republicans may have unwittingly advanced the push for child benefits in 2017 by doubling the existing [*child tax credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) to $2,000 and giving it to families with incomes of up to $400,000, but not extending the full benefit to those in the bottom third of incomes.

Republicans said that since the credit was meant to reduce income taxes, it naturally favored families who earned enough to have a tax liability. But by prioritizing the affluent, the move [*amplified calls for a more equitable child policy.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details)

Efforts to increase the benefit and include the needy drew strong support from Speaker Nancy Pelosi and was led in the Senate by the Democrats Sherrod Brown of Ohio, a progressive, and Michael Bennet of Colorado, a centrist. A majority of Democrats in both chambers were on board when unemployment surged because of the coronavirus.

“The crisis gave Democrats an opportunity by broadening the demand for government relief,” said Sarah A. Binder, a political scientist at George Washington University.

Welfare critics warn the country is retreating from success. Child poverty reached a new low before the pandemic, and opponents say a child allowance could reverse that trend by reducing incentives to work. About 10 million children are poor by a government definition that varies with family size and local cost of living. (A typical family of four with income below about $28,000 is considered poor.)

“Why are Republicans asleep at the switch?” [*wrote Mickey Kaus*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details), whose antiwelfare writings influenced the 1990s debate. He has [*urged Republicans to run ads*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) in conservative states with Democratic senators, attacking them for supporting “a new welfare dole.”

Under Mr. Biden’s plan, a nonworking mother with three young children could receive $10,800 a year, plus food stamps and Medicaid — too little to prosper but enough, critics fear, to erode a commitment to work and marriage. Scott Winship of the conservative American Enterprise Institute wrote that the new benefit creates “[*a very real risk of encouraging more single parenthood and more no-worker families*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details).”

But a child allowance differs from traditional aid in ways that appeal to some on the right. Libertarians like that it frees parents to use the money as they choose, unlike targeted aid such as food stamps. Proponents of higher birthrates say a child allowance could help arrest a decline in fertility. Social conservatives note that it benefits stay-at-home parents, who are bypassed by work-oriented programs like child care.

And supporters argue that it has fewer work disincentives than traditional aid, which quickly falls as earnings climb. Under the Democrats’ plan, full benefits extend to single parents with incomes of $112,500 and couples with $150,000.

Backlash could grow as the program’s sweep becomes clear. But Samuel Hammond, a [*proponent of child allowances*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details) at the center-right Niskanen Center, said the politics of aid had changed in ways that softened conservative resistance.

A quarter-century ago, debate focused on an urban underclass whose problems seemed to set them apart from a generally prospering society. They were disproportionately Black and Latino and mostly represented by Democrats. Now, insecurity has traveled up the economic ladder to a broader ***working class*** with similar problems, like underemployment, marital dissolution and drugs. Often white and rural, many are voters whom Republicans hope to court.

“Republicans can’t count on running a backlash campaign,” Mr. Hammond said. “They crossed the Rubicon in terms of cash payments. People love the [*stimulus checks*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details).”

The muted opposition to the proposal, he said, showed that “people on the right are curious about the child benefit — not committed, but movable.”

An analysis by Sophie M. Collyer of Columbia University underscored the plan’s broad reach. She found that in Georgia, the child allowance would bring net gains per child of $1,700 for whites, $1,900 for Latinos and $2,100 for Blacks.

As a suburban independent in a state that was long red, Ms. Houpe is among those whose loyalties are up for grabs. She rejected the argument that a child subsidy would promote joblessness and warned that some parents had to work too much. “My son had football games every Saturday morning,” she said, “and I wasn’t there for him as much as I wanted to be.”

If aid posed risks, Ms. Houpe said, so did the lack of any. Out of money last fall, she suffered debilitating depression, and a panic attack grew so severe she pulled her car to the side of road. “My son was freaking out” looking for her asthma inhaler, she said.

Still trying to get unemployment benefits, Ms. Houpe has plans for a baking business called [*The Munchie Shopp*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/06/business/stimulus-check-plan-details). She has practiced strawberries dipped in white chocolate and honed her red velvet cake. This week, she tried dying one blue but denied making a political statement.

“During an election, people say anything to win,” she said. “Let’s see what they do.”

PHOTOS: Anique Houpe, a single mother in Georgia, is among the parents whom Democrats are seeking to help with a monthly check of up to $300 per child.; Ms. Houpe decided that she needed to stay home with her boys, so she left a Postal Service job that paid nearly $18 an hour. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AUDRA MELTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Warren Says Sanders Is 'Out to Trash Me' in Campaign Calls***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1C-B761-JBG3-623S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 13, 2020 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1188 words

**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher and Sydney Ember

**Body**

Ms. Warren said she was ''disappointed'' the Sanders campaign had used a script for volunteers that suggested she appealed mainly to highly educated voters. Mr. Sanders called her a good friend and said reports of tension were overblown.

MARSHALLTOWN, Iowa -- A nearly yearlong run of good will between two of the leading progressives in the 2020 presidential race, Senator Elizabeth Warren and Senator Bernie Sanders, appears to be evaporating in the run-up to the Iowa caucuses.

Ms. Warren said on Sunday she was ''disappointed'' that Mr. Sanders's campaign had been using a script for volunteers that suggested she was appealing mainly to highly educated voters and would not be able to expand the Democratic Party coalition.

''I was disappointed to hear that Bernie is sending his volunteers out to trash me,'' Ms. Warren, of Massachusetts, said. ''I hope Bernie reconsiders and turns his campaign in a different direction.''

After months of studiously avoiding any negative words about Mr. Sanders, Ms. Warren went on to cite the divisiveness of the 2016 primary race between Mr. Sanders and Hillary Clinton, implying it had helped President Trump. ''We all saw the impact of the factionalism in 2016, and we can't have a repeat of that,'' she warned. ''Democrats need to unite our party and that means pulling in all parts of the Democratic coalition.''

In a rare question-and-answer session with reporters after his final event of a weekend Iowa swing, Mr. Sanders -- in response to a question on whether he approved of his campaign's criticism of Ms. Warren -- denied responsibility for the script, saying he himself had never attacked Ms. Warren. And he blamed the news media for overstating the tension between the two campaigns. ''I got to tell you, I think this is a little bit of a media blowup, that kind of wants conflict,'' he said.

''Elizabeth Warren is a very good friend of mine,'' Mr. Sanders, of Vermont, said. ''We have worked together in the Senate for years. Elizabeth Warren and I will continue to work together, we will debate the issues.''

''No one is going to trash Elizabeth Warren,'' he added.

The Sanders campaign did not provide any further information on the script. Pressed again on the topic, Mr. Sanders said: ''We have hundreds of employees. Elizabeth Warren has hundreds of employees. And people sometimes say things that they shouldn't. You have heard me give many speeches. Have I ever said one negative word about Elizabeth Warren?''

The exchange on Sunday -- just two days after a major Iowa poll showed them in first and second place in the state -- was a rare fraying of a de facto nonaggression pact the two senators have shared since the beginning of the primary race. On the debate stage, they have often formed a progressive tag team of sorts, defending their far-reaching policy proposals against criticism from moderates that they were unrealistic. This was perhaps never clearer than when Ms. Warren, answering a debate question, declared ''I'm with Bernie'' on the issue of ''Medicare for all.''

In recent weeks, Mr. Sanders has indicated a willingness to draw more direct contrasts with Ms. Warren: At an event on New Year's Eve, he highlighted a subtle policy distinction with her over their health care plans.

But until Sunday, the two liberal senators, who are each other's chief ideological rivals, were wary of saying anything inflammatory about the other.

That changed swiftly after Politico published a report late Saturday night on the talking points for Sanders volunteers, known as a call script. Its authenticity was not disputed by the Sanders campaign. It begins: ''I like Elizabeth Warren. [optional] In fact, she's my second choice. But here's my concern about her. The people who support her are highly educated, more affluent people who are going to show up and vote Democratic no matter what.''

It goes on: ''She's bringing no new bases into the Democratic Party.''

A top Warren supporter in Iowa, State Senator Claire Celsi, strongly disputed that argument and said she was unsurprised that the Sanders campaign was leveling it. ''Doesn't surprise me about Bernie,'' she said. ''He went straight to the gutter with Hillary. More of the same.''

The Sanders campaign declined to comment. His national press secretary, Briahna Joy Gray, wrote on Twitter that ''Warren has plenty to recommend her'' but that ''only Bernie's volunteer army, fund-raising numbers, and popularity with a diverse ***working-class*** coalition can compete'' with Mr. Trump.

The back-and-forth with Ms. Warren is only one of several fronts that the Sanders campaign opened in recent days. On his first weekend as a front-runner in Iowa -- after his first-place finish in the poll, by The Des Moines Register/CNN -- his campaign advisers also fervently attacked former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. for his record on the Iraq War, lodging repeated salvos on Twitter and in a statement late Saturday.

In his session with reporters, Mr. Sanders said he was doing nothing more than running a campaign.

Asked about Mr. Biden, Mr. Sanders -- who has long been averse to political catfights -- suggested his recent offensive was part of the game of politics. ''We are going to be talking about the record,'' he said. ''People are talking about my record. I was just asked a question about my record. That's kind of what a campaign is about. We will contrast records -- nothing wrong with that.''

Ms. Warren's campaign has begun to project her as a ''unity candidate'' -- ''We need someone who will excite every part of the Democratic Party,'' she told reporters Sunday -- and her latest big-name endorser, the former housing secretary Julián Castro, has sharpened that message as a cudgel against her rivals.

''About 25 percent of the folks out there, when you look at Democrats, about 25 percent, for instance, say they would be unhappy if Vice President Biden was the nominee,'' Mr. Castro said in Marshalltown, Iowa, on Sunday. ''About 25 percent say that they would be unhappy if Senator Sanders were the nominee. The person that scores the best on that, who people are good with, that they would get out there and vote if they're the nominee, is Elizabeth Warren.''

Still, Mr. Sanders is not the first to try to pigeonhole Ms. Warren as the candidate of the elites. Mr. Biden did so last fall, irritating Ms. Warren's allies. In a Medium post in November, Mr. Biden accused Ms. Warren, though not by name, of engaging in a '''my way or the highway' approach to politics.''

''It's condescending to the millions of Democrats who have a different view,'' Mr. Biden wrote at the time. ''It's representative of an elitism that working- and middle-class people do not share: 'We know best; you know nothing.'''

On Sunday, Ms. Warren's campaign and supporters pushed back at the idea that she had an affluent-only coalition.

''I earned my GED before going to a state school and I am proud to support Elizabeth Warren!'' Roger Lau, Ms. Warren's campaign manager, wrote on Twitter.

Shane Goldmacher reported from Marshalltown, Iowa, and Sydney Ember from Iowa City.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/12/us/politics/warren-sanders.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/12/us/politics/warren-sanders.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: ''I hope Bernie reconsiders and turns his campaign in a different direction,'' Senator Elizabeth Warren said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 6, 2020

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[***Elizabeth Warren Says Bernie Sanders Sent Volunteers ‘Out to Trash Me’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XYT-HGB1-JBG3-63YY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 12, 2020 Sunday 00:06 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

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**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher and Sydney Ember

**Highlight:** Ms. Warren said she was “disappointed” the Sanders campaign had used a script for volunteers that suggested she appealed mainly to highly educated voters. Mr. Sanders called her a good friend and said reports of tension were overblown.

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Ms. Warren said on Sunday she was “disappointed” that Mr. Sanders’s campaign had been using a script for volunteers that suggested she was appealing mainly to highly educated voters and would not be able to expand the Democratic Party coalition.

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Shane Goldmacher reported from Marshalltown, Iowa, and Sydney Ember from Iowa City.

PHOTO: “I hope Bernie reconsiders and turns his campaign in a different direction,” Senator Elizabeth Warren said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2020

**End of Document**



[***That Healing Jazz Thing on a Porch in Brooklyn***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6083-7B81-DXY4-X28K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 2, 2020 Thursday 21:48 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1303 words

**Byline:** Michael Powell

**Highlight:** For 82 days straight, a diverse group of musicians found their way to a stoop in Flatbush, and everybody followed the sax player. (It was his house.)

**Body**

For 82 days straight, a diverse group of musicians found their way to a stoop in Flatbush, and everybody followed the sax player. (It was his house.)

He was our heard-out-the-window Pied Piper, this saxophonist who signaled the arrival of evening by playing that haunting hymn “Amazing Grace.”

He began playing in the depths of plague and loss in Brooklyn, those early April days when the wail of ambulance sirens was our city’s night song. It took several days of listening out our window in Flatbush for my wife, Evelyn, and me to slip on our masks and wander around the corner to Marlborough Road.

We found our neighbor, the wiry jazzman Roy Nathanson, 69, with a gray-flecked goatee and a Groucho Marx smile, blowing up a storm on his sax on his second-floor balcony, while in the yard below the jazz teacher Lloyd Miller thumped expertly on his stand-up bass.

Mr. Nathanson’s band grew by the day. Albert Marquès, a Barcelona-born Latin jazz musician and public-school teacher, began piping away on his melodica as his children, ages 3 and 6, danced and twirled on the sidewalk. The Haitian jazz guitarist Eddy Bourjolly came in from Canarsie, while Eric Alabaster, a retired teacher and drummer, and Mo Saleem, a Pakistani musician marooned by the virus, kept rhythm on drums and the dholak, a two-headed hand drum.

In rain and chill and welcome shafts of sunlight, the audience grew, young and not so young, African-Americans and whites and Pakistanis and Mexicans, masked and occupying spaces between cars and trucks and on lawns and in driveways. It was like this the world round, Italians and Argentines, French and Greeks and New Yorkers, singing and playing in rebellion against the darkness.

Mr. Nathanson and his band played each evening from April 2 until Father’s Day, 82 days total. In that time, they started a [*website*](http://5pmporchconcerts.com/), raised donations for local food pantries and penniless musicians, and lit up a neighborhood.

What, I asked Mr. Nathanson, led to this journey?

“Everything had stopped. I had no more gigs,” he replied. “I had seen the Italians singing off their balconies, and I thought, yeah, yeah. I want that secular-religious healing thing to happen here.”

As he played, as musicians migrated to the sidewalk outside his house, the repertoire expanded to songs by Bill Withers and Al Green, John Coltrane and the Beatles. This was not the usual fare for these accomplished musicians. Mr. Nathanson is an old East Village guy, a veteran of the Lounge Lizards and Jazz Passengers, a buddy of Elvis Costello and Debbie Harry, an out-there jazzman. [*Mr. Marquès*](http://5pmporchconcerts.com/) is about Afro-Latin jazz and played with Arturo O’Farrill. Mr. Bourjolly and his trio, Mozayik, dig Herbie Hancock and Creole-infused rhythms.

But Mr. Nathanson was their maestro, and they shared his intent to explore the American Songbook. “You play the melody so that people can hear it in their brains, so that it speaks inside,” Mr. Nathanson said. So they riffed off “Tennessee Waltz” and “Ain’t No Sunshine,” “Imagine” and “My Favorite Things.”

Late one afternoon, four Central American men raking out a garden paused and wandered up and listen and clapped approval. Another afternoon, a Mister Softee truck nosed onto the block and the sight of the crowd brought the driver to a halt. He shut off the ignition and tapped his hands to the music on the wheel until the musicians took bows. Pakistani women sat on porches and clapped, as did an older white couple on a nearby stoop every single day.

This was Flatbush as Mr. Nathanson had known it as a boy and as he wishes to recreate it, dowager Victorians and prewar buildings and Little Pakistan and West Indian communities overlapping with Black and white homeowners, streets running beneath canopies of sycamores and oaks. He grew up here a ***working-class*** kid in a chaotic family until he rode the subway into the city and settled in the East Village. He returned to recite the Kaddish when his brother committed suicide.

Years later, a gentrified co-op board in the now gentrified East Village voted to toss Mr. Nathanson out, a jazzman found guilty of practicing his saxophone. He came home to Flatbush, he and his wife buying a house on Marlborough Road with a white dogwood in the front yard and a backyard patio that borders the B and Q tracks. Our conversation took a Morse Code quality as subways rumbled by.

He smiled. “Growing up here, man, it was Shangri-La,” he said. “The architecture of this neighborhood is like the architecture of my life.”

His virus band came together by happenstance, musicians sniffing out a chance to play. His son, Gabe, a student at the University of Vermont and a butter-smooth trumpet player, came south and joined his father on the balcony. Aidan Scrimgeour (who plays in the [*jazz-folk band Pumpkin Bread*](http://5pmporchconcerts.com/)) also lives on Marlborough with a half-dozen bandmates, all packed into half an old Victorian house. He heard the music trickle through his window, grabbed his melodica and jogged over.

Mr. Marquès shook his head. Since the age of 3 in Barcelona he has sung in choirs and played in bands. The virus fell like a dark curtain, snuffing his sound. He tried to keep going on Zoom, but, please.

“To teach, to play, you must feel the music” — he tapped his chest and stomach — “in here.”

“It takes 45 minutes to dress my kids and 20 minutes for us to get here on our scooters and we play five minutes,” he said. “And it’s the damned highlight of my day. It’s kept me sane.”

Mr. Bourjolly, who wears a wool cap and a bandito bandanna as he plays, is no different. He drove in from Canarsie, so eager he often was first to arrive. As the months passed and dogwood and blue hydrangea bloomed and rose bushes popped scarlet red, he could barely see Roy and Gabe and Lloyd Miller on that bass.

They were playing as if by Braille.

“It’s beautiful; I love it; we are communicating with a musical language,” he said. “It’s social distancing intuition.”

For Mr. Alabaster too the 5 o’clock gig took on an outsized importance. A retired public school music teacher, a former composition student of the [*legendary saxophonist Jimmy Heath*](http://5pmporchconcerts.com/), he long ago turned a room in his house into a meeting place for the Pakistani musicians who flocked to this neighborhood. They called it Erik Ki Baithak — Eric’s gathering place. The grandson of Jewish immigrants, he felt a kinship with these wanderers and they taught him to play the beautiful and mysterious tabla. He has traveled five times to Pakistan to visit friends and play with teachers.

Pakistan is at times a troubled land. Do you have problems, I asked.

“I’ve been in some uncomfortable situations.” At this he paused, shrugged and added: “But, you know, who hasn’t?”

In late May on Eid al-Fitr, the holiday that punctuates the end of Ramadan, Mr. Nathanson and Mr. Alabaster had a talk. Saleem had felt despair as the plague kept him from playing and earning enough money to send to his family in Pakistan. So they asked him to break out his tabla, the twin drums of the subcontinent, and set it alongside Eric’s drums. With a yell, Mr. Nathanson and the band took off on a rollicking whirling version of “Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.”

Mr. Nathanson jumped and bounced on his balcony like a dervish, he and his son Gabe, playing call and response with Salaam, who smiled and beat a treble- and bass-toned fury on his tabla. It was a jazz Eid.

Not for the first time in 90 days of impromptu jazz on Marlborough, the eyes of those listening and watching grew red and souls jumped and we howled against the darkness.

PHOTOS: Roy Nathanson on the sax, and on his porch, with his trumpet-playing son, Gabe, in late May. (MB1); Clockwise from top left: a Marlborough Road jam session that included Eric Alabaster on drums; many neighbors and jazz fans gathered; and musicians played in. PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB4)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***After World War I, Art to Help Build A Whole New World***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61JB-HHF1-DXY4-X0PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 8; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 1733 words

**Byline:** By Jason Farago

**Body**

The Museum of Modern Art debuts a transformative acquisition of Soviet, Polish, German and Dutch graphic arts from after World War I.

Hostile times don't automatically engender great art. Let's put to rest that chestnut, which resurfaced during and after the 2016 election -- and which, as the presidency of Donald J. Trump draws to a close, is looking pretty deflated. A crisis can inspire your vision, but just as easily it can wash you out. And rising to the challenges of an anxious age takes ambition, stamina and not a little bravery.

That's the conclusion of ''Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented,'' a momentous new show that papers the walls of the Museum of Modern Art with posters, magazines, advertisements and brochures from an earlier age of upheaval. Exactly a century ago, a cross-section of artists from Moscow to Amsterdam opened their eyes in a continent reshaped by war and revolution. Rapid advances in media technology made their old academic training feel useless. They were living through a political and social earthquake.

And when the earthquake hit, what did these artists do? They rethought everything. They disclaimed the autonomy that modern art usually assigned to itself. They plunged their work into dialogue with politics, economics, transport, commerce. Nothing was automatic for these artistic pioneers, who took it upon themselves to recast painting, photography and design as a kind of public works job.

''Engineer, Agitator, Constructor'' debuts the acquisition of more than 300 works from Merrill C. Berman, a financial adviser who has spent the last 50 years assembling probably the finest private collection of graphic arts from the 1920s and '30s. With a stroke, this addition makes MoMA (alongside the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam) the world's premier repository of European graphics from between the wars. It also introduces into the collection a host of female artists, including the bold Soviet poster artists Anna Borovskaya and Maria Bri-Bein, the Polish polymath Teresa Zarnower and the Dutch designer Fré Cohen. Almost a third of the works here are by women, which, for a show of historical avant-gardes, counts as a lot.

The exhibition moves, roughly speaking, from east to west. We start in the Soviet Union, the uncontested champion of artistic innovation after World War I -- where Constructivist artists caught up in a revolution rebranded themselves as organizers, propagandists, fomenters of change. Then the show migrates to Poland and Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria, then Germany and the Netherlands. French design is a soft spot, represented only by some welding brochures. A more notable weak point is Italy; we'll get to why.

But for now, imagine you are a young artist in imperial Russia, brought up on a visual diet of portraiture, religious painting, pretty pictures of gardens. Then, in 1917, the czar is overthrown. A provisional republic is established, which Lenin topples before the year is out. Russia has tumbled into a civil war. It feels like the fate of not just your country but all humanity is on the line.

Of course you jump in. You join a collective -- Unovis, ''Champions of the New Art'' -- where you make posters and signs and clothing as a joint enterprise, like workers in a factory. You embrace new abstract forms, meant to construct a whole new society. Two unsigned Unovis posters here (probably done by Wladyslaw Strzeminski, a young Polish expat in Russia) reroute the abstract geometric forms Kazimir Malevich conceived just before the Russian Revolution into high-volume agitprop, papered on buildings all over town. Red circles and black squares appear on the walls of the telegraph office and the sides of streetcars. And this baffling new syntax has a meaning: workers of the world, unite.

When revolution comes an artist can't be precious. You have to be ''a public person, a specialist in political and cultural work with the masses,'' in the words of Gustav Klutsis, perhaps the greatest designer of the Soviet era, though he'd have bridled at being called an individual artist at all. Klutsis, from rural Latvia, joined Unovis after the revolution, and would become Europe's most fearless practitioner of photomontage, pasting pictures of soldiers, sportsmen and Stalin at wildly discordant scales and against high-contrast backgrounds.

Surely the most stunning item in MoMA's Berman acquisition is the cut-and-paste original of ''Electrification of the Entire Country,'' one of Klutsis's earliest photomontages. If you look closely, you'll see that the artist pasted Lenin's head onto a totally different body, to make him look larger than life. Lenin struts across a perfect gray circle, overlaid by a red square, radiating radio waves: a new man walking into a new world.

This show includes 16 works by Klutsis, though it's a thrill to discover here lesser-known photomonteurs, including Klutsis's wife, Valentina Kulagina. In one of her pieces from 1929, a gray-clad welder, which Kulagina draws at a dynamic 40 degrees, lets sparks fly in front of a skyscraper (actually a photo of Detroit!) and a grid of white and gray struts stretching to the sky. At the welder's feet are white housing blocks, like some dream of an infinite city. ''STROIM,'' shouts a red-lettered caption. We are building.

Kulagina was one of numerous Soviet women who embraced a new role of artist as revolutionary proletarian. Varvara Stepanova designed journal covers with reworked, vigorous photographs of Red Army heroes. Elena Semenova and Lydia Naumova combined bar graphs and clipped photos for informational posters on trade union membership or factory efficiency -- a data visualization that should leave today's spreadsheet geeks agog. Semenova also designed a lounge for a prototype proletarian club, complete with windows spanning the walls and blue-striped deck chairs for chilling out after a day on the factory floor. There's nothing too good for the ***working class***!

The burst of new visions in the Soviet Union would, by the mid-1930s, give way to authoritarian rigidity. Socialist Realism became the country's one official artistic style, and Klutsis was executed, on Stalin's orders, in 1938. But these explosively inventive Soviet artists had counterparts among left-wing German photomonteurs, like John Heartfield, who designed a campaign poster for the Weimar-era Communist Party with a giant, sooty worker's hand ready to grasp his future or choke a capitalist.

In Warsaw, Teresa Zarnower and Mieczyslaw Szczuka founded Blok, a magazine that showcased a Polish avant-garde with multilingual articles and discordant layouts. An entire gallery here is devoted to Blok and other boldly designed Central and Eastern European magazines of the 1920s, including Ma, a Hungarian publication based in Vienna, and Veshch/Gegenstand/Objet, edited by El Lissitzky and lasting just two issues.

A surprising Dutch discovery is the photomontaged brochures of Fré Cohen, who promoted Schiphol Airport or the Amsterdam harbor with collaged pictures and dynamic, off-center red typography. Cohen is one of numerous Jewish artists of the left in this show, and one who met a terrible end. Arrested by the Nazis in 1943, she committed suicide rather than face deportation to a death camp.

''Engineer, Agitator, Constructor'' is a feast of interwar innovation, but it has an undercurrent that I don't like: a suggestion that progress in art and progress in society go naturally together. The curators Jodi Hauptman and Adrian Sudhalter make this point explicit at the show's entrance, celebrating ''profound links between radical art and struggles for social change,'' and suggesting that these designers' bold invention is ''paralleled in the works of countless artists today, also facing crisis and turmoil.''

Really, an hour inside a Chelsea gallery and another on Instagram should disabuse you of the notion that today's artists are breaking boundaries like these ones did. On the contrary: As artists have made louder and louder noise about political relevance, they've also become more traditionalist in the images and objects they celebrate. For artists, the Trump years turned out to be a period of individualism and nostalgia. Unovis-style novelty was not on the table; the art form that rose to greatest prominence was probably portrait painting, one of the most conservative genres of all.

But more to the point: to believe only artists with ''progressive'' politics can innovate is an ahistoric delusion. In the last room is a small painting by the Italian artist Fortunato Depero, a mock-up for a cover for the magazine Twentieth Century, with the red Roman numerals XX looming in space. Depero was an innovator on par with the Soviets, Poles and Dutchmen in this collection. He was also a proud Fascist, whose embrace of new technologies served the aims of a reactionary military dictatorship.

Fascist Italy looms as a gaping hole in this show's map of European graphic invention. That's largely because of what Mr. Berman collected; he focused instead on the anarchic photomontages of Bruno Munari, who was not a Fascist party member. Yet the Italian lacuna nourishes a misunderstanding, too common in today's cultural conversation, that good artists must be good people.

They needn't be. You can be politically radical and visually doctrinaire, or vice versa, and we shouldn't ignore that the Pan-European graphic innovations preserved in Mr. Berman's astounding collection crossed not just borders but ideologies. (Photomontage was well established in Fascist Italy and also in imperial Japan, whose most graphically progressive magazines glorified racial purity and colonial conquest.)

I don't know, maybe it's just this current passage in American culture, when right-wing artists are so few, that has led us to some bad assumptions. But the best lesson today's artists can draw from this earlier avant-garde is that neither ideas nor images are enough on their own. First, picture a new world; then learn to design it.

Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist ReinventedThrough April 10 at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, Manhattan; 212-708-9400; moma.org. Timed tickets are required. Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist ReinventedThrough April 10 at the Museum of Modern Art, Manhattan; 212-708-9400, moma.org. Timed tickets are required.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/arts/design/engineer-agitator-constructor-moma.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/arts/design/engineer-agitator-constructor-moma.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above left, the maquette for ''We Are Building,'' by Valentina Kulagina

above, Gustav Klutsis' montage of ''Electrification of the Entire Country''

far left, a poster for trade unions by the designers Elena Semenova and Lydia Naumova

near left, ''The Hand Has Five Fingers,'' by John Heartfield, a poster in the German elections of 1928

below left, an untitled work by Hannah Höch (1920). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VALENTINA KULAGINA

VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

ESTATE OF GUSTAV KLUTSIS/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

ELENA SEMENOVA AND LYDIA NAUMOVA

VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

JOHN HEARTFIELD

VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

HANNAH HOCH

VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART)

**Load-Date:** December 18, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Summer Jobs Eluded Grasp Of City Teens***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60S5-0271-JBG3-62PD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 5, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1151 words

**Byline:** By David Gonzalez and Benjamin Norman

**Body**

When Laisha Gonzalez de Peña landed an office job at a Washington Heights day camp last summer, she knew the money would help her with household expenses and college tuition. What she didn't expect was how she, a recent immigrant who was shy and legally blind from lupus, would also find the confidence to open up about her life during chats with the young campers.

''I was scared to talk about being legally blind and tell people why I use a cane,'' said Laisha, 19, a Bronx Community College student who wants to be a vocal coach. ''I felt people would look at me weird. But the camp gave me the space to be original and not feel weird talking about my disability.''

She had hoped to return to that job, funded by the city's Summer Youth Employment Program, this year. But then coronavirus hit, and the city initially decided to eliminate the program. At the last minute, officials brought it back in a drastically reduced and virtual form, leaving thousands of young people without work.

Laisha landed one of the jobs two weeks into the program -- online classes on work skills that she hardly found engaging. She almost dropped out.

''I was bored, to be honest,'' she said.

Worried about the pandemic and a looming financial crisis, the city cut the program, referred to as S.Y.E.P., in April to save $124 million -- just over a tenth of a percent of the $88 billion budget proposed by Mayor Bill de Blasio for the coming fiscal year.

In June, after pushback from neighborhood groups, social service agencies and young people, the City Council revived the program. But the now shortened, all-virtual program, called Summer Bridge, had only about half the usual slots.

''So many good things came out of S.Y.E.P.,'' said Eddie Silverio, director of Catholic Charities Community Services' Alianza Division, which sponsored Laisha's job last year. ''This is an entry-level opportunity that adds to their résumé. The young people take every opportunity to make things better.''

With one day seemingly blending into the next because of the pandemic, many participants this summer said they found it difficult to stay engaged. For those who didn't get a job, the missed opportunity was yet another letdown in a year of uncertainty and isolation.

S.Y.E.P. is considered the largest program of its kind in the country. Every year since 1963, the organizations that it funds employ 75,000 people ages 14 to 24 -- who are selected through a lottery -- at day camps, social service agencies and, increasingly, neighborhood businesses.

Apart from boosting participants' social and workplace skills, the program also strengthens communities by exposing young people to options their parents never had, officials say. It has taught them leadership and organizing skills, all while pumping money into local economies.

''If you're from a ***working-class*** community, the only jobs you know about are what your parents do,'' said Bill Chong, commissioner of the city's Department of Youth and Community Development, which runs S.Y.E.P. ''We want to make sure we nurture leadership skills in young people. We want to prepare the next generation's work force.''

Mr. Chong -- who participated in S.Y.E.P. in 1973 -- was recovering from Covid-19 in the spring when the plans for the summer program were being hashed out.

When Summer Bridge began in July, funding allowed for only 35,000 slots for five weeks. The program paid participants 16 and older a $1,000 stipend, instead of the $2,250 they earned last summer. Younger participants received $700.

At stake was not just their finances: A study published several years ago showed that participation in S.Y.E.P. led to better self-esteem and academic accomplishment. It also found that the young people who applied but did not get selected were at greater risk of incarceration or death.

Bryan Aju, 19, worked last summer at Sistas and Brothas United, a group for young people organizing around social justice issues in the Bronx.

''I got to learn in-depth what it means to be an organizer,'' Bryan said. ''Even better, I got paid for it. I used it for necessities, especially food. I wasn't doing this for video games.''

Experiences like Bryan's show how neighborhood groups have successfully used the jobs program to nurture future community leaders through service projects focused on issues like voter registration and nutrition.

''It's part of our community revitalization strategy,'' said Lowell Herschberger, director of career and education programs at the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Brooklyn. ''The youth are part of our mission not just in terms of their careers, but in being able to work and build up our local economy.''

Some of that work has translated to the virtual program; some participants are doing phone outreach for the census and helping area businesses gain visibility on social media. But for others, this year's program can feel like watching one long -- and not so interesting -- video lesson that lacks the give-and-take of a workplace.

And while some groups were able to cobble together a virtual program, others, like Operation Exodus in Manhattan's Washington Heights neighborhood, which usually has about 200 slots, had to forgo participation entirely because they didn't have time to prepare.

''S.Y.E.P. has always been a huge part of what we've done,'' said Mark Gonzalez, the executive director of Operation Exodus. ''But this year, we didn't have the opportunity to turn it around. It's unfortunate, since this just adds to the isolation they're feeling this summer.''

While this summer's jobs can't provide the in-person experiences that have led to many of S.Y.E.P.'s successful outcomes, supporters say the way the program has adapted might provide a blueprint for moving forward.

Mr. Herschberger's group has only 259 slots, slashed from 900 last year. But several small teams have partnered with neighborhood stores and restaurants -- many of them immigrant-owned -- to boost their online presence.

''Our businesses are beginning to open,'' he said. ''We think it's a perfect time to involve the youth to help the merchants.''

Many of the community-based organizations where S.Y.E.P. places participants are also seeing higher demand, said Nora Moran, director of policy and advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses, an umbrella group of 40 social service groups in New York City.

''We're going to have to wait and see broadly what's happening in the city economy in the coming years to determine where we'll place young people,'' she said.

Already some of her member organizations have had to set up food pantries overnight.

''I'm sure it'll be a tough time for the city,'' Ms. Moran said. ''But that's especially true for our community institutions that will have to do so much work to help rebuild and recover.''

Benjamin Norman contributed reporting.Benjamin Norman contributed reporting.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Bernard Maison, 15: ''It's good to have some money in the bank,'' he said.

Laisha Gonzalez de Peña, 19: ''I was bored, to be honest,'' she said. (A12)

Wehymi Vargas, 20: She wanted to work, but was unable to. (A12-A13)

Bryan Aju, 19 ''I wasn't doing this for video games,'' she said.

Montell Joseph, 19 ''I'm no quitter,'' he said, determined to find a job. (A13)

Left, Montell Joseph's mother, Andrea Jones, braiding his hair at home in Brownsville. She said his previous S.Y.E.P. jobs made him more responsible. Montell did not get a slot in the program this summer, so he spent much of his time with his friend Nakido Diaz, right at center, and his sister, Mikayla.

Top, Laisha Gonzalez de Peña, right, and her friend Marifer Lora recording a TikTok dance. Laisha, who is legally blind, said that working at a day camp last summer gave her confidence to speak about her disability. But she said that this summer's job, which was all online, was not engaging. (A14)

Top, Wehymi Vargas, center, looking after her siblings in front of their apartment near the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. Below, Wehymi tending to her mother, who is unable to walk after neck surgery. ''Staying home, taking care of kids and cleaning, that's literally all I can remember from this summer,'' she said. (A14-A15)

Left, Bryan Aju with her mother, Nydia Coriano, and brother Josh Melendez, right. She wanted a summer job to be able to help her family pay grocery bills. Bryan learned to be a community organizer at her S.Y.E.P. job last year, and used those lessons this summer in advocating for reforms to policing in schools.

Left, Bernard Maison at home with his mother, Marcelle Clark, a nurse who contracted the virus in the spring. Right, Bernard climbing in Baisley Pond Park in Queens, where he likes to spend time when he's not working. He was excited to get a S.Y.E.P. job this summer for a project about incarceration, and he is saving some money, knowing that ''anything can happen.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN NORMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14)

**Load-Date:** September 7, 2020

**End of Document**



[***I’m Darker Than My Daughter. Here’s Why It Matters.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YNV-CJH1-JBG3-601J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** PARENTING

**Length:** 1225 words

**Byline:** Norma Newton

**Highlight:** Breaching colorism with my little girl sent me reeling back into my childhood shame.

**Body**

Breaching colorism with my little girl sent me reeling back into my childhood shame.

Our bedtime routine that night started off like so many others, harried but mostly sweet. After making our way through brushing teeth and getting into pajamas, my daughter and I lay down on her bedroom floor to sing songs, the final step before crawling into bed.

When I tried to curl up next to my 4-year-old, though, I sensed her hesitation. She wiggled her little body away from mine each time I inched closer. “Do you not want mommy close to you, sweetie?” I asked, assuming she was initiating a game to extend our nighttime ritual. Her light-brown eyes locked in on me as she brushed her honey-colored locks aside with her hand.

In a casual on-the-edge-of-sleep voice she cooed, “Your skin is dark. I don’t want you to touch me.”

My brown Indigenous Latina body stiffened; I labored to breathe, outraged and confused. She rendered me speechless.

Did my daughter think I would contaminate her pinkish, almost golden skin? Had she already begun to decode what our culture adores and what it abhors? Had I unknowingly conveyed negative views of brownness, causing her to absorb them? Did she intuit my lifelong ambivalence about my skin color?

Some 35 years earlier, after being teased by white classmates because of my brown skin, I ran home from school crying inconsolably and pleaded with my mother: Why am I not white? Can I be white, like them? Her laughter is all I remember from our exchange.

Growing up in 1950s Mexico, among the calcified disdain for its Indigenous past, left my mother without the skills and necessary self-reflection to guide me through the maze of color consciousness. These were tools she never thought twice about as a ***working-class*** immigrant in racially stratified California, with no spare time to ruminate about skin color. Perhaps because my mother was left to make meaning of her dark skin on her own, she could not help me make meaning of mine.

History now threatened to repeat itself. If I didn’t say something soon, I feared my daughter would resent me for leaving her alone with these undigested feelings, or worse, I would grow to hate her for saying what she did. I wanted to run away, to shield myself and her, from the cultural realities that had crept into her bedroom.

But I forced myself to engage with her. I was determined to muster language and a parenting style different from what I’d known. I had to dig in, without making her feel ashamed or burdening her with how deeply wounded I felt.

“What’s wrong with my skin color, honey?” My hue is raw almond-like in the winter, darkening to an unpeeled macadamia nut shade by summer’s end.

“It’s ugly,” she blurted.

What spilled from my mouth next was false, though I wished it wasn’t: “I love the color of my skin.” I desperately wanted her to believe me, and maybe even a little more than that, I wanted to believe myself. Yet having been silenced by laughter and left alone to process years of slights, by both white and Latinx individuals because of my color, I was submerged in shame.

The truth is: I have a fraught relationship with my brownness. Tortured, actually. Some days I take pride in being brown for the rich history it reveals. The story of my Purépecha ancestors’ creativity, strength and resilience, my skin color is testimony of a legacy that not even Spanish colonialism could entirely erase.

Other days, I wish I could walk through the world carefree, without being dismissed as hired help by white mothers, or receiving suspicious glances by these women as I leave the park with my too-light-to-possibly-be-mine child. Love, hate. Sometimes something in between.

And here it is, within the confines of my own home: daughter and mother playing out what goes on in my world, in our culture, daily.

Seemingly repulsed, she scooted even further away. I inched closer. She stuck a stiff arm out to stop me, as if to protect her porcelain skin from my muddied shade. Could she smell my shame? I felt pulled to apologize for being ugly in her eyes, for being brown. I yearned to tell her I understood why she disliked the way I looked, and to share that I disliked myself sometimes too. I resisted.

All I wanted to do was peel my skin off, to hang it up for someone else to wear. Anything to avoid the absolute humiliation and reminder that my pigmentation made me untouchable in the eyes of someone I loved so much, someone I assumed would accept me in the same unconditional way I accepted her. Someone I made. Someone who could have looked like me but doesn’t.

I figured the unexamined nuances of my relationship with my melanin would be lost on her, so I kept my words simple and held back my tears. “What skin color do you think is beautiful?” Without pause, she chirped, “White! Like daddy’s belly.” She coveted the whitest part of his body, the color furthest from mine.

I repeated, “I love my skin color.” She said nothing. Her silence felt equal parts dismissive and contemplative. I was unsure if my words had seeped in.

Was I the only brown mother being shunned by her light-skinned preschooler?

Parents who differ in hue from their children rarely discuss moments like these publicly, leaving gaping holes in the understanding of family lineage, cultural history and development of self-esteem. Nonetheless, [*studies*](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2016/culturally-responsive-classroom) show children as young as 3 months old are aware of racial differences and, by preschool, children begin selecting playmates based on race. [*Studies*](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/1-WHITE-BIAS-IN-3-7-YEAR-OLD-CHILDREN-ACROSS-Wallace-Robbins/2e15aa4deb7c9aff1e974a37f05f00c468d25a00) also show that young children, across ethnic backgrounds, demonstrate a preferential bias toward white dolls and objects.

Apparently, my 4-year-old articulated precisely what researchers know to be true for children her age. Plain and simple: White is best. And therefore, I am not.

Confronted by her unintentionally harsh words, I was forced to reckon with how I feel about my color, a reality that has pained me for decades. And it’s time. In order for my daughter to see brown as beautiful and normal, I need to believe it too.

Since that night, I’ve reached for positive examples of dark-skinned people in books, art and history, collecting in my home and heart reflections of brown beauty, brown greatness, to share with my daughter. My plan also includes expert support: child whisperers to counsel me through race conversations with my kids and personal therapy to facilitate deeper self-examination.

I’m evolving. I can’t honestly say I wholeheartedly love the color of my skin every day. But I can say that our hurtful interaction woke me up to something that deserved examination. My daughter’s perspective on skin color is also changing. We still have occasional bedtime chats about color, although her attitude around the topic has softened. While she continues to explore skin tone, her uneasiness with darkness has subsided, making space for her to recognize the beauty and humanity in brownness.

It turns out, my need to hear affirming words about my skin was as pressing as my daughter’s need to hear them from me. By guiding her through the complexity of love and color, I’m also educating myself.

[How one mom confronted her family’s[*racial blind spots*](https://parenting.nytimes.com/parent-life/kids-racial-slur)]

This story was originally published on May 21, 2019 in NYT Parenting.

Norma Newton is a [*writer*](https://www.normafabiannewton.com/) living in Los Angeles.

PHOTO: Norma Newton and her daughter at their home in Los Angeles. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Carolina Adame FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[***The Artists Who Redesigned a War-Shattered Europe; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61J6-8GG1-DXY4-X05F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1838 words

**Byline:** Jason Farago

**Highlight:** The Museum of Modern Art debuts a transformative acquisition of Soviet, Polish, German and Dutch graphic arts from after World War I.

**Body**

The Museum of Modern Art debuts a transformative acquisition of Soviet, Polish, German and Dutch graphic arts from after World War I.

Hostile times don’t automatically engender great art. Let’s put to rest that chestnut, [*which resurfaced*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art) during and [*after the 2016 election*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art) — and which, as the presidency of Donald J. Trump draws to a close, is looking pretty deflated. A crisis can inspire your vision, but just as easily it can wash you out. And rising to the challenges of an anxious age takes ambition, stamina and not a little bravery.

That’s the conclusion of “Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented,” a momentous new show that papers the walls of the Museum of Modern Art with posters, magazines, advertisements and brochures from an earlier age of upheaval. Exactly a century ago, a cross-section of artists from Moscow to Amsterdam opened their eyes in a continent reshaped by war and revolution. Rapid advances in media technology made their old academic training feel useless. They were living through a political and social earthquake.

And when the earthquake hit, what did these artists do? They rethought everything. They disclaimed the autonomy that modern art usually assigned to itself. They plunged their work into dialogue with politics, economics, transport, commerce. Nothing was automatic for these artistic pioneers, who took it upon themselves to recast painting, photography and design as a kind of public works job.

“Engineer, Agitator, Constructor” debuts the acquisition of more than 300 works from Merrill C. Berman, a financial adviser who has spent the last 50 years assembling probably the finest private collection of graphic arts from the 1920s and ’30s. With a stroke, this addition makes MoMA (alongside the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam) the world’s premier repository of European graphics from between the wars. It also introduces into the collection a host of female artists, including the bold Soviet poster artists Anna Borovskaya and [*Maria Bri-Bein*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), the Polish polymath [*Teresa Zarnower*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art) and the Dutch designer [*Fré Cohen*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art). Almost a third of the works here are by women, which, for a show of historical avant-gardes, counts as a lot.

The exhibition moves, roughly speaking, from east to west. We start in the Soviet Union, the uncontested champion of artistic innovation after World War I — where Constructivist artists caught up in a revolution rebranded themselves as organizers, propagandists, fomenters of change. Then the show migrates to Poland and Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria, then Germany and the Netherlands. French design is a soft spot, represented only by some welding brochures. A more notable weak point is Italy; we’ll get to why.

But for now, imagine you are a young artist in imperial Russia, brought up on a visual diet of portraiture, religious painting, pretty pictures of gardens. Then, in 1917, the czar is overthrown. A provisional republic is established, which Lenin topples before the year is out. Russia has tumbled into a civil war. It feels like the fate of not just your country but all humanity is on the line.

Of course you jump in. You join a collective — Unovis, “Champions of the New Art” — where you make posters and signs and clothing as a joint enterprise, like workers in a factory. You embrace new abstract forms, meant to construct a whole new society. Two unsigned Unovis posters here (probably done by [*Wladyslaw Strzeminski*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), a young Polish expat in Russia) reroute the abstract geometric forms Kazimir Malevich conceived just before the Russian Revolution into high-volume agitprop, papered on buildings all over town. Red circles and black squares appear on the walls of the telegraph office and the sides of streetcars. And this baffling new syntax has a meaning: workers of the world, unite.

When revolution comes an artist can’t be precious. You have to be “a public person, a specialist in political and cultural work with the masses,” in the words of [*Gustav Klutsis*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), perhaps the greatest designer of the Soviet era, though he’d have bridled at being called an individual artist at all. Klutsis, from rural Latvia, joined Unovis after the revolution, and would become Europe’s most fearless practitioner of photomontage, pasting pictures of soldiers, sportsmen and Stalin at wildly discordant scales and against high-contrast backgrounds.

Surely the most stunning item in MoMA’s Berman acquisition is the cut-and-paste original of “[*Electrification of the Entire Country*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art),” one of Klutsis’s earliest photomontages. If you look closely, you’ll see that the artist pasted Lenin’s head onto a totally different body, to make him look larger than life. Lenin struts across a perfect gray circle, overlaid by a red square, radiating radio waves: a new man walking into a new world.

This show includes 16 works by Klutsis, though it’s a thrill to discover here lesser-known photomonteurs, including Klutsis’s wife, [*Valentina Kulagina*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art). In one of her pieces from 1929, a gray-clad welder, which Kulagina draws at a dynamic 40 degrees, lets sparks fly in front of a skyscraper (actually a photo of Detroit!) and a grid of white and gray struts stretching to the sky. At the welder’s feet are white housing blocks, like some dream of an infinite city. “STROIM,” shouts a red-lettered caption. We are building.

Kulagina was one of numerous Soviet women who embraced a new role of artist as revolutionary proletarian. [*Varvara Stepanova*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art) designed journal covers with reworked, vigorous photographs of Red Army heroes. Elena Semenova and Lydia Naumova combined bar graphs and clipped photos for [*informational posters on trade union membership*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art) or factory efficiency — a data visualization that should leave today’s spreadsheet geeks agog. Semenova also designed a lounge for [*a prototype proletarian club*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), complete with windows spanning the walls and blue-striped deck chairs for chilling out after a day on the factory floor. There’s nothing too good for the ***working class***!

The burst of new visions in the Soviet Union would, by the mid-1930s, give way to authoritarian rigidity. Socialist Realism became the country’s one official artistic style, and Klutsis was executed, on Stalin’s orders, in 1938. But these explosively inventive Soviet artists had counterparts among left-wing German photomonteurs, like John Heartfield, who designed a campaign poster for the Weimar-era Communist Party with [*a giant, sooty worker’s hand*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art) ready to grasp his future or choke a capitalist.

In Warsaw, Teresa Zarnower and Mieczyslaw Szczuka founded [*Blok*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), a magazine that showcased a Polish avant-garde with multilingual articles and discordant layouts. An entire gallery here is devoted to Blok and other boldly designed Central and Eastern European magazines of the 1920s, including [*Ma*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), a Hungarian publication based in Vienna, and [*Veshch/Gegenstand/Objet*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), edited by El Lissitzky and lasting just two issues.

A surprising Dutch discovery is the photomontaged brochures of Fré Cohen, who promoted Schiphol Airport or the Amsterdam harbor with collaged pictures and dynamic, off-center red typography. Cohen is one of numerous Jewish artists of the left in this show, and one who met a terrible end. Arrested by the Nazis in 1943, she committed suicide rather than face deportation to a death camp.

“Engineer, Agitator, Constructor” is a feast of interwar innovation, but it has an undercurrent that I don’t like: a suggestion that progress in art and progress in society go naturally together. The curators Jodi Hauptman and Adrian Sudhalter make this point explicit at the show’s entrance, celebrating “profound links between radical art and struggles for social change,” and suggesting that these designers’ bold invention is “paralleled in the works of countless artists today, also facing crisis and turmoil.”

Really, an hour inside a Chelsea gallery and another on Instagram should disabuse you of the notion that today’s artists are breaking boundaries like these ones did. On the contrary: As artists have made louder and louder noise about political relevance, they’ve also become more traditionalist in the images and objects they celebrate. For artists, the Trump years turned out to be a period of individualism and nostalgia. Unovis-style novelty was not on the table; the art form that rose to greatest prominence was probably portrait painting, one of the most conservative genres of all.

But more to the point: to believe only artists with “progressive” politics can innovate is an ahistoric delusion. In the last room is a small painting by the Italian artist Fortunato Depero, a mock-up for [*a cover for the magazine Twentieth Century*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), with the red Roman numerals XX looming in space. Depero was an innovator on par with the Soviets, Poles and Dutchmen in this collection. He was also a proud Fascist, whose embrace of new technologies served the aims of a reactionary military dictatorship.

Fascist Italy looms as a gaping hole in this show’s map of European graphic invention. That’s largely because of what Mr. Berman collected; he focused instead on the anarchic photomontages of [*Bruno Munari*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art), who was not a Fascist party member. Yet the Italian lacuna nourishes a misunderstanding, too common in today’s cultural conversation, that good artists must be good people.

They needn’t be. You can be politically radical and visually doctrinaire, or vice versa, and we shouldn’t ignore that the Pan-European graphic innovations preserved in Mr. Berman’s astounding collection crossed not just borders but ideologies. (Photomontage was well established in Fascist Italy and also in imperial Japan, whose most [*graphically progressive magazines*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art) glorified racial purity and colonial conquest.)

I don’t know, maybe it’s just this current passage in American culture, when right-wing artists are so few, that has led us to some bad assumptions. But the best lesson today’s artists can draw from this earlier avant-garde is that neither ideas nor images are enough on their own. First, picture a new world; then learn to design it.

Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented

Through April 10 at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, Manhattan; 212-708-9400; [*moma.org*](https://www.fastcompany.com/3065497/could-trump-be-good-for-art). Timed tickets are required.

Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented Through April 10 at the Museum of Modern Art, Manhattan; 212-708-9400, moma.org. Timed tickets are required.

PHOTOS: Above left, the maquette for “We Are Building,” by Valentina Kulagina; above, Gustav Klutsis’ montage of “Electrification of the Entire Country”; far left, a poster for trade unions by the designers Elena Semenova and Lydia Naumova; near left, “The Hand Has Five Fingers,” by John Heartfield, a poster in the German elections of 1928; below left, an untitled work by Hannah Höch (1920). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VALENTINA KULAGINA; VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART; ESTATE OF GUSTAV KLUTSIS/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART; ELENA SEMENOVA AND LYDIA NAUMOVA; VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART; JOHN HEARTFIELD; VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART; HANNAH HOCH; VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART)

**Load-Date:** December 28, 2020

**End of Document**



[***N.Y.C. Cut 40,000 Youth Jobs When They Were Needed Most***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60RY-B8K1-JBG3-60X9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1475 words

**Byline:** David Gonzalez and Benjamin Norman

**Highlight:** “I wasn’t doing this for video games,” said one participant in the Summer Youth Employment Program, whose budget was slashed because of the pandemic. For those who didn’t get a slot, it was yet another letdown in an uncertain year.

**Body**

When Laisha Gonzalez de Peña landed an office job at a Washington Heights day camp last summer, she knew the money would help her with household expenses and college tuition. What she didn’t expect was how she, a recent immigrant who was shy and legally blind from lupus, would also find the confidence to open up about her life during chats with the young campers.

“I was scared to talk about being legally blind and tell people why I use a cane,” said Laisha, 19, a Bronx Community College student who wants to be a vocal coach. “I felt people would look at me weird. But the camp gave me the space to be original and not feel weird talking about my disability.”

She had hoped to return to that job, funded by the city’s Summer Youth Employment Program, this year. But then coronavirus hit, and the city initially decided to eliminate the program. At the last minute, officials brought it back in a drastically reduced and virtual form, leaving thousands of young people without work.

Laisha landed one of the jobs two weeks into the program — online classes on work skills that she hardly found engaging. She almost dropped out.

“I was bored, to be honest,” she said.

Worried about the pandemic and a looming financial crisis, the city cut the program, referred to as S.Y.E.P., in April to save $124 million — just over a tenth of a percent of the $88 billion budget proposed by Mayor Bill de Blasio for the coming fiscal year.

In June, after pushback from neighborhood groups, social service agencies and young people, the City Council revived the program. But the now shortened, all-virtual program, called Summer Bridge, had only about half the usual slots.

“So many good things came out of S.Y.E.P.,” said Eddie Silverio, director of Catholic Charities Community Services’ Alianza Division, which sponsored Laisha’s job last year. “This is an entry-level opportunity that adds to their résumé. The young people take every opportunity to make things better.”

With one day seemingly blending into the next because of the pandemic, many participants this summer said they found it difficult to stay engaged. For those who didn’t get a job, the missed opportunity was yet another letdown in a year of uncertainty and isolation.

S.Y.E.P. is considered the largest program of its kind in the country. Every year since 1963, the organizations that it funds employ 75,000 people ages 14 to 24 — who are selected through a lottery — at day camps, social service agencies and, increasingly, neighborhood businesses.

Apart from boosting participants’ social and workplace skills, the program also strengthens communities by exposing young people to options their parents never had, officials say. It has taught them leadership and organizing skills, all while pumping money into local economies.

“If you’re from a ***working-class*** community, the only jobs you know about are what your parents do,” said Bill Chong, commissioner of the city’s Department of Youth and Community Development, which runs S.Y.E.P. “We want to make sure we nurture leadership skills in young people. We want to prepare the next generation’s work force.”

Mr. Chong — who participated in S.Y.E.P. in 1973 — was recovering from Covid-19 in the spring when the plans for the summer program were being hashed out.

When Summer Bridge began in July, funding allowed for only 35,000 slots for five weeks. The program paid participants 16 and older a $1,000 stipend, instead of the $2,250 they earned last summer. Younger participants received $700.

At stake was not just their finances: A [*study*](https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/the-impact-of-a-summer-job/) published several years ago showed that participation in S.Y.E.P. led to better self-esteem and academic accomplishment. It also found that the young people who applied but did not get selected were at greater risk of incarceration or death.

Bryan Aju, 19, worked last summer at Sistas and Brothas United, a group for young people organizing around social justice issues in the Bronx.

“I got to learn in-depth what it means to be an organizer,” Bryan said. “Even better, I got paid for it. I used it for necessities, especially food. I wasn’t doing this for video games.”

Experiences like Bryan’s show how neighborhood groups have successfully used the jobs program to nurture future community leaders through service projects focused on issues like voter registration and nutrition.

“It’s part of our community revitalization strategy,” said Lowell Herschberger, director of career and education programs at the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Brooklyn. “The youth are part of our mission not just in terms of their careers, but in being able to work and build up our local economy.”

Some of that work has translated to the virtual program; some participants are doing phone outreach for the census and helping area businesses gain visibility on social media. But for others, this year’s program can feel like watching one long — and not so interesting — video lesson that lacks the give-and-take of a workplace.

And while some groups were able to cobble together a virtual program, others, like Operation Exodus in Manhattan’s Washington Heights neighborhood, which usually has about 200 slots, had to forgo participation entirely because they didn’t have time to prepare.

“S.Y.E.P. has always been a huge part of what we’ve done,” said Mark Gonzalez, the executive director of Operation Exodus. “But this year, we didn’t have the opportunity to turn it around. It’s unfortunate, since this just adds to the isolation they’re feeling this summer.”

While this summer’s jobs can’t provide the in-person experiences that have led to many of S.Y.E.P.’s successful outcomes, supporters say the way the program has adapted might provide a blueprint for moving forward.

Mr. Herschberger’s group has only 259 slots, slashed from 900 last year. But several small teams have partnered with neighborhood stores and restaurants — many of them immigrant-owned — to boost their online presence.

“Our businesses are beginning to open,” he said. “We think it’s a perfect time to involve the youth to help the merchants.”

Many of the community-based organizations where S.Y.E.P. places participants are also seeing higher demand, said Nora Moran, director of policy and advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses, an umbrella group of 40 social service groups in New York City.

“We’re going to have to wait and see broadly what’s happening in the city economy in the coming years to determine where we’ll place young people,” she said.

Already some of her member organizations have had to set up food pantries overnight.

“I’m sure it’ll be a tough time for the city,” Ms. Moran said. “But that’s especially true for our community institutions that will have to do so much work to help rebuild and recover.”

Benjamin Norman contributed reporting.

Benjamin Norman contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Bernard Maison, 15: “It’s good to have some money in the bank,” he said.; Laisha Gonzalez de Peña, 19: “I was bored, to be honest,” she said. (A12); Wehymi Vargas, 20: She wanted to work, but was unable to. (A12-A13); Bryan Aju, 19 “I wasn’t doing this for video games,” she said.; Montell Joseph, 19 “I’m no quitter,” he said, determined to find a job. (A13); Left, Montell Joseph’s mother, Andrea Jones, braiding his hair at home in Brownsville. She said his previous S.Y.E.P. jobs made him more responsible. Montell did not get a slot in the program this summer, so he spent much of his time with his friend Nakido Diaz, right at center, and his sister, Mikayla.; Top, Laisha Gonzalez de Peña, right, and her friend Marifer Lora recording a TikTok dance. Laisha, who is legally blind, said that working at a day camp last summer gave her confidence to speak about her disability. But she said that this summer’s job, which was all online, was not engaging. (A14); Top, Wehymi Vargas, center, looking after her siblings in front of their apartment near the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. Below, Wehymi tending to her mother, who is unable to walk after neck surgery. “Staying home, taking care of kids and cleaning, that’s literally all I can remember from this summer,” she said. (A14-A15); Left, Bryan Aju with her mother, Nydia Coriano, and brother Josh Melendez, right. She wanted a summer job to be able to help her family pay grocery bills. Bryan learned to be a community organizer at her S.Y.E.P. job last year, and used those lessons this summer in advocating for reforms to policing in schools.; Left, Bernard Maison at home with his mother, Marcelle Clark, a nurse who contracted the virus in the spring. Right, Bernard climbing in Baisley Pond Park in Queens, where he likes to spend time when he’s not working. He was excited to get a S.Y.E.P. job this summer for a project about incarceration, and he is saving some money, knowing that “anything can happen.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN NORMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15)

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Close Are Barack Obama and Joe Biden?; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5X8T-YJF1-DXY4-X2SH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 14, 2020 Tuesday 11:26 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1267 words

**Byline:** Jason Zengerle

**Highlight:** Steven Levingston’s “Barack and Joe” looks at a relationship that continues to influence American politics.

**Body**

BARACK AND JOE

The Making of an Extraordinary Partnership

By Steven Levingston

Joe Biden’s first two presidential campaigns were dismal affairs. He was forced to drop out of the 1988 race, several months before the first primary vote was even cast, when it was revealed that [*he’d plagiarized large portions*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html)of his stump speech from the British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock. His 2008 bid began with a racial gaffe: On the day Biden officially filed to run, he told a reporter that [*Barack Obama*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html) was “articulate” and “clean” — and he ended with a 1 percent showing in the Iowa caucuses.

Today, [*Biden*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html) is hoping the third time’s the charm, and his 2020 presidential campaign has so far been a much more buoyant endeavor. Biden entered the race in April as the Democratic front-runner, raising $6.3 million in his first day as a candidate. Since then, although Elizabeth Warren has gained steady ground on him, his place at or near the top of the primary polls has proved stubbornly durable. This despite numerous gaffes (confusing Theresa May for Margaret Thatcher; conflating the stories of heroism of several different military members into one tale; [*calling President Trump “Donald Hump”*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html)); a disastrous debate performance (failing to rebut Kamala Harris’s attack on his opposition to school busing by meekly offering, [*“My time is up”*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html)); and, most recently, being subjected to unrelenting (and false) attacks by President Trump and his Republican allies that Biden and his son Hunter are corrupt.

There are a number of factors that account for Biden’s current standing, from the belief among many Democratic voters that he’s the most electable candidate to the reality that rank-and-file Democrats aren’t as liberal as those who spout off on Twitter. But the most important reason for Biden’s strong 2020 showing to date is also the most straightforward: He spent eight years as the vice president to a man who, according to one poll, enjoys a 97 percent approval rating among Democrats. Biden hasn’t been subtle about trying to exploit this advantage. His speeches and campaign ads are larded with mentions and images of Obama. In the Democratic debate in September, Biden defended his opposition to Medicare for All — and his support for adding a public option to the Affordable Care Act — by simply stating, “I’m for Barack.” (Never mind that last year Obama described Medicare for All as one of Democrats’ “good new ideas.”)

The highlight (such as it was) of Biden’s 2008 campaign was when he said of the former New York City mayor and then-Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani, “There’s only three things he mentions in a sentence: [*a noun, a verb and 9/11*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html).” In the 2020 campaign, it could be argued that there are only three things Joe Biden needs to make a sentence: a noun, a verb and Barack Obama.

As [*Steven Levingston*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html) recounts in “Barack and Joe,” the partnership between Obama and Biden was an unlikely — and, initially, an uneasy — one. Obama, Levingston writes, was “a young, cerebral African-American who sweated over the precision of his words”; Biden was “an older chummy white guy given to impulsively speaking his mind.” Obama considered Biden a Washington blowhard; listening to one of Biden’s long-winded speeches during a Senate hearing, he wrote a note to an aide: “Shoot. Me. Now.” Biden, for his part, believed Obama to be an impudent tyro. But when Obama needed to choose a running mate, Biden — with his decades of Senate experience and his popularity among white, ***working-class*** voters in Rust Belt states — checked the right boxes. During the campaign and then in the White House, their relationship developed and deepened, to the point that, in 2014, when Biden considered taking out a second mortgage to help pay for his son Beau’s brain cancer treatments, Obama told him not to and that, if necessary, he would give Biden the money himself. “Barack and Joe filled in the spaces that were missing in the other man and created something bigger than their separate parts,” Levingston writes. They were “a perfectly matched odd couple.”

Levingston spends much of “Barack and Joe” dwelling on the public-facing aspect of — and public response to — their “bromance.” He quotes from both men’s Twitter and Instagram accounts; late-night hosts, cable news gasbags and internet meme-makers are all frequently cited. And he attempts to tease out why those who were “observing the president and vice president from a distance” were so invested in Obama and Biden’s relationship. Part of it, Levingston theorizes, was that “America had a weakness for buddy teams. Felix and Oscar. Bert and Ernie. Buzz and Woody.” More interestingly, he argues that Obama and Biden’s partnership, “just by its existence and daily workings … served as a badge of racial harmony.”

What “Barack and Joe” fails to do is shed much new light on the private nature of the two men’s relationship. The nonfiction book editor of The Washington Post, Levingston has combed through the memoirs of Obama administration officials, as well as a number of other journalists’ books, for anecdotes and insights about events that transpired behind the scenes, but he appears to have done little original reporting of his own, interviewing only a handful of people who observed the relationship up close. (Noting that Obama and Biden both declined to be interviewed for his book, Levingston writes, “It has seemed curious to me that, despite their busy schedules, Barack and Joe could not find time to discuss their complicated but largely felicitous relationship.”)

As a result, “Barack and Joe” frequently reads like a rehash of episodes and events that are already well known, with seemingly minor matters being afforded undue significance if only because they’ve previously been well documented. Does the world in 2019, for instance, really need 20 pages on [*the “Beer Summit”*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html) — the 2009 pseudo-event in which Biden and Obama hoisted beers in the Rose Garden with the black Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates and the white Cambridge police officer who mistakenly arrested him? Even worse, “Barack and Joe” is written in a cloying style — “Barack and Joe, no longer opponents, were now able to move into a new phase with each other,” or “Through straight talk over lunch, Barack and Joe resolved their spat” — that seems better suited to a children’s book than a sophisticated political account.

That’s a shame, because with Biden now casting his third presidential run as an attempt to create a third Obama term, it’s never been more important to understand the true and substantive nature of the two men’s political partnership. For all the affectionate lunch outings and bro-hugs that lit up the internet, Obama nonetheless dissuaded Biden from running for president in 2016, instead putting his chips on Hillary Clinton. And in the 2020 race, Obama hasn’t endorsed Biden — or anyone else — in the Democratic primaries. The two men’s friendship may have “moved the nation” as no White House pairing ever had, as Levingston writes. But was it — and should it be — enough to move one of them back into the White House?

Jason Zengerle is a writer at large for The Times Magazine. BARACK AND JOE The Making of an Extraordinary Partnership By Steven Levingston Illustrated. 337 pp. Hachette. $28.

PHOTO: Barack Obama presents Joe Biden with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Jan. 12, 2017. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SUSAN WALSH/ASSOCIATED PRESS.)

**Related Articles**

* [*Obama and Biden’s Relationship Looks Rosy. It Wasn’t Always That Simple.*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html)

1. [*Biden and Obama’s ‘Odd Couple’ Relationship Aged Into Family Ties*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html)
2. [*The Bygone Baggage of Joe Biden*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/echoes-of-bidens-1987-plagiarism-scandal-continue-to-reverberate/2019/06/05/dbaf3716-7292-11e9-9eb4-0828f5389013_story.html)

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[***On Politics: An Eye Toward Opening for Business***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YNF-WC71-DXY4-X0NM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1260 words

**Byline:** Giovanni Russonello

**Highlight:** East and West Coast governors unite, and so do Biden and Sanders: This is your morning tip sheet.

**Body**

Good morning and welcome to On Politics, a daily political analysis of the 2020 elections based on reporting by New York Times journalists.

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Where things stand

* Separate groups of governors — one on the East Coast, one on the West — [*announced on Monday that they would be working together*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) as they eventually reopen their economies. Hours earlier, President Trump wrote on Twitter that a decision on when “to open up the states” was the White House’s to make. And certainly, any change in federal recommendations will carry weight across the country. But Gov. Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania, a Democrat, said Trump had missed his chance to take the reins. “Seeing as we had the responsibility for closing the state down, I think we probably have the primary responsibility for opening it up,” Wolf said. The governors, all Democrats except for Charlie Baker of Massachusetts, said they would work together on regional frameworks but continue to make decisions state by state.

1. Joe Biden [*received Bernie Sanders’s endorsement*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) yesterday, and he also won the last election they’ll fight as rivals (though there’s always 2024!). The results from last week’s [*contentious Wisconsin elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) were finally reported on Monday: Biden [*won over 60 percent of the vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) in the Democratic primary. It was yet another sign of his strength — at least against Sanders — in the Midwest, a region where he will need to do well come November.
2. Wisconsin’s election took place only because Republican officials in the State Legislature and a conservative State Supreme Court refused to postpone it amid the coronavirus pandemic. But after insisting on moving ahead, they may now have buyer’s remorse: On Monday, the most closely watched state-level race on the ballot went Democrats’ way. Jill Karofsky, a liberal Circuit Court judge, [*unseated the incumbent, Justice Daniel Kelly*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), to win a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. With Ms. Karofsky on the court, conservatives will hold only a four-to-three majority during a crucial election year, when the bench is almost guaranteed to see more voting-rights cases. Her victory also demonstrated Democrats’ ability to turn out voters and effectively wield vote-by-mail efforts in a key presidential battleground.

* Republicans in Congress want to quickly pass a $250 billion expansion of the small business loan program set up under last month’s stimulus bill. With the Senate away, any amendment would have to pass by a consensus vote. But [*Democrats have refused to get behind the expansion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) if it doesn’t include additional money for state and local governments, hospitals, food assistance and coronavirus testing. The loan program, known as the Paycheck Protection Program, is on track to rapidly run out of money — but states, too, are on the verge of amassing large budget shortfalls if they do not receive further federal assistance.

Photo of the day

Dr. Anthony Fauci listened as President Trump spoke during the coronavirus briefing at the White House on Monday.

Our Bernie Sanders reporter weighs in on the senator’s endorsement.

Sanders endorsed Biden in a split-screen video appearance on Monday, opting for a quick display of Democratic unity over a drawn-out public jostling for power in the lead-up to the party’s convention.

“We need you in the White House,” Sanders said. “And I will do all that I can to make that happen.”

The endorsement came much faster than it did in 2016, when Sanders waited until July to back Hillary Clinton’s candidacy. Biden’s campaign hopes it will help allay concerns about his candidacy on the party’s left wing.

Sanders and Biden made a point of demonstrating mutual respect and affection on Monday as they announced the introduction of six working groups aimed at finding common ground on policy. “The task is for them to develop creative new ideas and proposals,” Biden said, “and we’re looking forward to turning that work into positive change for the country.”

Our reporter [*Sydney Ember*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) has covered the Sanders campaign over the past year, and she took the time to answer a few questions about the endorsement and its potential impact.

Sanders dropped out of the race last week, and he endorsed Biden just a few days later. That’s a very different situation than in 2016, when he withheld his endorsement of Clinton until just weeks before the Democratic convention. What was different for Sanders this time?

A few things! Like many Democratic voters, Sanders was determined to defeat President Trump, whom he has called the “most dangerous president” in modern American history. After losing a string of primaries, and once Biden indicated that he was willing to move in Sanders’s direction on some key policies, Sanders realized that the best way to unify the Democratic Party and beat Trump in November was to drop out of the race. Another difference: Unlike his relationship with Clinton, Sanders and Biden are actually friends.

Sanders views himself as being associated with a leftist movement that seeks to rid private money from politics and to elevate ***working-class*** concerns. He’s not your typical Democratic Party loyalist. How does his decision to endorse Biden dovetail with his efforts to build an anti-corporate political movement?

Some of his supporters will certainly view it that way. Sanders has acknowledged that he and Biden do not see eye to eye on some issues that have become litmus tests for the progressive left. But his decision to drop out and endorse Biden was about doing what he could to help beat Trump, rather than watch the country suffer from what he views as even worse. On a related note, when he dropped out, he said his campaign was over but the political movement he started was not. So while he may have had to compromise this time to beat Trump, he views a potential Biden presidency as at least a step in the right direction.

Biden and Sanders revealed that their teams have been working together over the past few weeks to create a few different policy task forces. What is the function of these groups, and do they have the potential to really play a part in shaping the Biden campaign’s platform looking ahead to the general election?

That is one of the big questions right now. During the endorsement announcement, Sanders and Biden said they were creating task forces on six issues: the economy, education, immigration, health care, criminal justice and climate change. Biden’s campaign said that the groups would include “policy experts and leaders that represent the diverse viewpoints of the Democratic Party,” and promised updates on the groups’ progress. You have to think that Sanders at least believes that these groups will help shape the Biden campaign’s platform, given that their formation was an important part of his endorsement announcement.

Biden told Sanders on Monday, “I am going to need you not just to win the campaign, but to govern.” It’s still early, but do we have a sense of whether Sanders might in fact be asked to play a role in a Biden administration? If so, does he have his eye on any particular positions?

I have not gotten any indication at this point that Sanders wants to serve in a Biden administration. But in this crazy world, anything is possible.

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[***Is Education No Longer the ‘Great Equalizer’?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6306-V0C1-DXY4-X3SB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2932 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** It lifts all boats, but not by equal amounts.

**Body**

There is an ongoing debate over what kinds of [*investment*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) in [*human capital*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) — roughly the knowledge, skills, habits, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment, creativity and wisdom possessed by an individual — contribute most to productivity and life satisfaction.

Is education no longer “a great equalizer of the conditions of men,” as [*Horace Mann*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) declared in 1848, but instead a great divider? Can the Biden administration’s efforts to distribute cash benefits to the ***working class*** and the poor produce sustained improvements in the lives of those on the bottom tiers of income and wealth — or would a substantial investment in children’s training and enrichment programs at a very early age produce more consistent and permanent results?

Take the case of education. On this score — if the assumption is “the more education, the better” — then the United States looks pretty good.

From [*1976 to 2016*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) the white high school completion rate rose from 86.4 percent to 94.5 percent, the Black completion rate from 73.5 percent to 92.2 percent, and the Hispanic completion rate rose from 60.3 percent to 89.1 percent. The graduation rate of whites entering four-year colleges from [*1996 to 2012*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) rose from 33.7 to 43.7 percent, for African Americans it rose from 19.5 to 23.8 percent and for Hispanics it rose from 22.8 to 34.1 percent.

But these very gains appear to have also contributed to the widening disparity in income between those with different levels of academic attainment, in part because of the very different rates of income growth for men and women with high school degrees, college degrees and graduate or professional degrees.

Education lifts all boats, but not by equal amounts.

[*David Autor*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), an economist at M.I.T., together with the Harvard economists [*Claudia Goldin*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) and [*Lawrence Katz*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), tackled this issue in a paper last year, “[*Extending the Race Between Education and Technology*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103),” asking: “How much of the overall rise in wage inequality since 1980 can be attributed to the large increase in educational wage differentials?”

Their answer:

Returns to a year of K-12 schooling show little change since 1980. But returns to a year of college rose by 6.5 log points, from 0.076 in 1980 to 0.126 in 2000 to 0.141 in 2017. The returns to a year of post-college (graduate and professional) rose by a whopping 10.9 log points, from 0.067 in 1980 to 0.131 in 2000 and to 0.176 in 2017.

I asked Autor to translate that data into language understandable to the layperson, and he wrote back:

There has been almost no increase in the increment to individual earnings for each year of schooling between K and 12 since 1980. It was roughly 6 percentage points per year in 1980, and it still is. The earnings increment for a B.A. has risen from 30.4 percent in 1980 to 50.4 percent in 2000 to 56.4 percent in 2017. The gain to a four-year graduate degree (a Ph.D., for example, but an M.D., J.D., or perhaps even an M.B.A.) relative to high school was approximately 57 percent in 1980, rising to 127 percent in 2017.

These differences result in large part because ever greater levels of skill — critical thinking, problem-solving, originality, strategizing​ — are needed in a knowledge-based society.

“The idea of a race between education and technology goes back to the Nobel Laureate [*Jan Tinbergen*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), who posited that technological change is continually raising skill requirements while education’s job is to supply those rising skill levels,” Autor wrote in explaining the gains for those with higher levels of income. “If technology ‘gets ahead’ of education, the skill premium will tend to rise.”

But something more homely may also be relevant. Several researchers argue that parenting style contributes to where a child ends up in life.

As the skill premium and the economic cost of failing to ascend the education ladder rise in tandem, scholars find that adults are adopting differing parental styles — a crucial form of investment in the human capital of their children — and these differing styles appear to be further entrenching inequality.

Such key factors as the level of inequality, the degree to which higher education is rewarded and the strength of the welfare state are shaping parental strategies in raising children.

In their paper “[*The Economics of Parenting*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103),” three economists, [*Matthias Doepke*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) at Northwestern, [*Giuseppe Sorrenti*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) at University of Zurich and [*Fabrizio Zilibotti*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) at Yale, describe three basic forms of child rearing:

The permissive parenting style is the scenario where the parent lets the child have her way and refrains from interfering in the choices. The authoritarian style is one where the parent imposes her will through coercion. In the model above, coercion is captured through the notion of restricting the choice set. An authoritarian parent chooses a small set that leaves little or no leeway to the child. The third parenting style, authoritative parenting, is also one where the parent aims to affect the child’s choice. However, rather than using coercion, an authoritative parent uses persuasion: she shapes the child’s preferences through investments in the first period of life. For example, such a parent may preach the virtues of patience or the dangers of risk during when the child is little, so that the child ends up with more adultlike preferences when the child’s own decisions matter during adolescence.

There is an “interaction between economic conditions and parenting styles,” Doepke and his colleagues write, resulting in the following patterns:

Consider, first, a low inequality society, where the gap between the top and the bottom is small. In such a society, there is limited incentive for children to put effort into education. Parents are also less concerned about children’s effort, and thus there is little scope for disagreement between parents and children. Therefore, most parents adopt a permissive parenting style, namely, they keep young children happy and foster their sense of independence so that they can discover what they are good at in their adult life.

The authors cite the Scandinavian countries as key examples of this approach.

Authoritarian parenting, in turn, is most common in less-developed, traditional societies where there is little social mobility and children have the same jobs as their parents:

Parents have little incentive to be permissive in order to let children discover what they are good at. Nor do they need to spend effort in socializing children into adultlike values (i.e., to be authoritative) since they can achieve the same result by simply monitoring them.

Finally, they continue, consider “a high-inequality society”:

There, the disagreement between parents and children is more salient, because parents would like to see their children work hard in school and choose professions with a high return to human capital. In this society, a larger share of parents will be authoritative, and fewer will be permissive.

This model, the authors write, fits the United States and China.

There are some clear downsides to this approach:

Because of the comparative advantage of rich and educated parents in authoritative parenting, there will be a stronger socioeconomic sorting into parenting styles. Since an authoritative parenting style is conducive to more economic success, this sorting will hamper social mobility.

Sorrenti elaborated in an email:

In neighborhoods with higher inequality and with less affluent families, parents tend to be, on average, more authoritarian. Our models and additional analyses show that parents tend to be more authoritarian in response to a social environment perceived as more risky or less inspiring for children. On the other hand, the authoritative parenting styles, aimed at molding child preferences, is a typical parenting style gaining more and more consensus in the U.S., also in more affluent families.

What do these analyses suggest for policies designed to raise those on the lowest tiers of income and educational attainment? Doepke, Sorrenti and Zilibotti agree that major investments in training, socialization and preparation for schooling of very young (4 and under) poor children along the lines of proposals by Nobel Laureate [*James Heckman*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), an economist at the University of Chicago, and [*Roland Fryer*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), a Harvard economist, can prove effective.

In [*an October 2020 paper*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), Fryer and three colleagues described

a novel early childhood intervention in which disadvantaged 3-4-year-old children were randomized to receive a new preschool and parent education program focused on cognitive and noncognitive skills or to a control group that did not receive preschool education. In addition to a typical academic year program, we also evaluated a shortened summer version of the program in which children were treated immediately prior to the start of kindergarten. Both programs, including the shortened version, significantly improved cognitive test scores by about one quarter of a standard deviation relative to the control group at the end of the year.

Heckman, in turn, [*recently wrote*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) on his website:

A critical time to shape productivity is from birth to age five, when the brain develops rapidly to build the foundation of cognitive and character skills necessary for success in school, health, career and life. Early childhood education fosters cognitive skills along with attentiveness, motivation, self-control and sociability — the character skills that turn knowledge into know-how and people into productive citizens.

Doepke agreed:

In the U.S., the big achievement gaps across lines of race or social class open up very early, before kindergarten, rather than during college. So for reducing overall human capital inequality, building high quality early child care and preschool would be the first place to start.

Zilibotti, in turn, wrote in an email:

We view our work as complementary to Heckman’s work. First, one of the tenets of his analysis is that preferences and attitudes are “malleable,” especially so at an early age. This is against the view that people’s success or failure is largely determined by genes. A fundamental part of these early age investments is parental investment. Our work adds the dimension of “how?” to the traditional perspective of “how much?” That said, what we call “authoritative parenting style” is relative to Heckman’s emphasis on noncognitive skills.

The expansion of the Heckman $13,500-per-child test pilot program to a universal national program received strong support in an economic analysis of its costs and benefits by [*Diego Daruich*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), an economist at the University of Southern California. He argues in his 2019 paper “[*The Macroeconomic Consequences of Early Childhood Development Policies*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103)” that such an enormous government expenditure would produce substantial gains in social welfare, “an income inequality reduction of 7 percent and an increase in intergenerational mobility of 34 percent.”

As the debate over the effectiveness of education in reducing class and racial income differences continues, the [*Moving to Opportunity*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) project stresses how children under the age of 13 benefit when they and their families move out of neighborhoods of high poverty concentration into more middle-class communities.

In a widely discussed 2015 paper, “The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children,” three Harvard economists, [*Raj Chetty*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), [*Nathaniel Hendren*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) and Katz, wrote:

Moving to a lower-poverty neighborhood significantly improves college attendance rates and earnings for children who were young (below age 13) when their families moved. These children also live in better neighborhoods themselves as adults and are less likely to become single parents. The treatment effects are substantial: children whose families take up an experimental voucher to move to a lower-poverty area when they are less than 13 years old have an annual income that is $3,477 (31 percent) higher on average relative to a mean of $11,270 in the control group in their mid-twenties.

There is a long and daunting history of enduring gaps in scholastic achievement correlated with socioeconomic status in the United States that should temper optimism.

In a February 2020 paper — “[*Long-Run Trends in the U.S. SES-Achievement Gap*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103)” — [*Eric A. Hanushek*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) of the Hoover Institution at Stanford, [*Paul E. Peterson*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) of Harvard’s Kennedy School, [*Laura M. Talpey*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) of Stanford’s Institute for Economic Policy Research and [*Ludger Woessmann*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) of the University of Munich report that over nearly 50 years:

The SES-achievement gap between the top and bottom SES quartiles (75-25 SES gap) has remained essentially flat at roughly 0.9 standard deviations, a gap roughly equivalent to a difference of three years of learning between the average student in the top and bottom quartiles of the distribution.

The virtually unchanging SES-achievement gap, the authors continue, “is confirmed in analyses of the achievement gap by subsidized lunch eligibility and in separate estimations by ethnicity that consider changes in the ethnic composition.”

Their conclusion:

The bottom line of our analysis is simply that — despite all the policy efforts — the gap in achievement between children from high- and low-SES backgrounds has not changed. If the goal is to reduce the dependence of students’ achievement on the socio-economic status of their families, re-evaluating the design and focus of existing policy programs seems appropriate. As long as cognitive skills remain critical for the income and economic well-being of U.S. citizens, the unwavering achievement gaps across the SES spectrum do not bode well for future improvements in intergenerational mobility.

The pessimistic implications of this paper have not deterred those devoted to seeking ways to break embedded patterns of inequality and stagnant mobility.

In a November 2019 essay, “[*We Have the Tools to Reverse the Rise in Inequality*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103),” [*Olivier Blanchard*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103) of the Peterson Institute for International Economics and [*Dani Rodrik*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), an economist at Harvard, cited the ready availability of a host of policies with strong support among many economists, political scientists and Democrats:

Many areas have low-hanging fruit: expansion of EITC-type programs, increased public funding of both pre-K and tertiary education; redirection of subsidies to employment-friendly innovation, greater overall progressivity in taxation, and policies to help workers reorganize in the face of new production modes.

Adoption of policies calling for aggressive government intervention raises a crucial question, Autor acknowledged in his email: “whether such interventions would kill the golden goose of U.S. innovation and entrepreneurship.” Autor’s answer:

At this point, I’d say the graver threat is from inaction rather than action. If the citizens of a democracy think that “progress” simply means more inequality and stratification, and rising economic insecurity stemming from technology and globalization, they’re eventually going to “cancel” that plan and demand something else — though those demands may not ultimately lead somewhere constructive (e.g., closing U.S. borders, slapping tariffs on numerous friendly trading partners, and starving the government of tax revenue needed to invest in citizens was never going to lead anywhere good).

A promising approach to the augmentation of human capital lies in the exploration of noncognitive skills — perseverance, punctuality, self-restraint, politeness, thoroughness, postponement of gratification, grit — all of which are increasingly valuable in a service-based economy. Noncognitive skills have proved to be teachable, especially among very young children.

[*Shelly Lundberg*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103), an economics professor at the University of California-Santa Barbara, cites a range of projects and studies, including the Perry Preschool Project, an intensive program for 3-to-4-year-old low-income children “that had long-term impacts on test scores, adult crime and male income.” The potential gains from raising noncognitive skills are wide-ranging, she writes in a chapter of the December 2018 book “[*Education, Skills, and Technical Change: Implications for Future US GDP Growth*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829103)”:

Noncognitive skills such as attention and self-control can increase the productivity of educational investments. Disruptive behavior and crime impose negative externalities in schools and communities that increased levels of some noncognitive skills could ameliorate.

But, she cautions,

the state of our knowledge about the production of and returns to noncognitive skills is rather rudimentary. We lack a conceptual framework that would enable us to consistently define multidimensional noncognitive skills, and our reliance on observed or reported behavior as measures of skill make it impossible to reliably compare skills across groups that face different environments.

Education, training in cognitive and noncognitive skills, nutrition, health care and parenting are all among the building blocks of human capital, and evidence suggests that continuing investments that combat economic hardship among whites and minorities — and which help defuse debilitating conflicts over values, culture and race — stand the best chance of reversing the disarray and inequality that plague our political system and our social order.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Audra Melton for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***‘I Used to Like School’: An 11-Year-Old’s Struggle With Pandemic Learning***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62KR-XRS1-DXY4-X50K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 2128 words

**Byline:** Rukmini Callimachi and Tamir Kalifa

**Highlight:** Without home internet, Jordyn Coleman has had trouble staying connected to remote classes during the coronavirus pandemic.

**Body**

CLARKSDALE, Miss. — By the time Precious Coleman returned home from her overnight shift at a casino, it was past 9 in the morning. It had been another night of dealing with belligerent patrons who refused to wear their face masks and drunks who needed to be escorted to the curb. Her eyes stung.

More than anything, she wanted to fall into bed. But her 11-year-old son, Jordyn, was waiting for her.

Or, more specifically, for her cellphone: Because their Mississippi apartment has no internet, Jordyn uses her phone to log into his virtual classroom two days a week.

By the time Jordyn signed in, he had already missed two periods of class. And he would miss more. By the sixth period, he had fallen asleep, cheek smushed into his palm. His mother, who tries as hard as she can to stay awake so that she can supervise him, was also sound asleep in the next room.

And so neither of them heard Jordyn’s math teacher announce an upcoming test, one that was particularly critical for Jordyn, who was failing the class. “If you don’t make at least a C,” the teacher said, in a tone both playful and serious, “we’re going to fight.”

Jordyn is at risk of becoming one of the lost students of the coronavirus pandemic in the most disrupted American school year since World War II. By one estimate, [*three million students*](https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/missing-margins-estimating-scale-covid-19-attendance-crisis) nationwide, roughly the school-age population of Florida, stopped going to classes, virtual or in person, after the [*pandemic*](https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/missing-margins-estimating-scale-covid-19-attendance-crisis) began.

A disproportionate number of those disengaged students are lower-income Black, Latino and Native American children who have struggled to keep up in classrooms that are partly or fully remote, for reasons ranging from poor internet service to needing to support their families by working or caring for siblings. Many are homeless or English language learners. Others whose parents work outside the home have struggled in the absence of adult supervision.

“We do have students who have kind of disappeared,” said Barbara E. Cage, the principal of Oakhurst Intermediate Academy, the school Jordyn attends in Clarksdale, Miss. The district says the number of students with five or more absences since the fall has increased 20 percent over the previous year. “We’re not able to reach them.”

Studies of how much learning American students have lost in the past year are underway, but the preliminary reports are mostly grim. Even one of the more optimistic surveys [*found significant losses in math*](https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/missing-margins-estimating-scale-covid-19-attendance-crisis), with a doubling of the proportion of students described as “sliders,” because they had moved down in their rankings compared with a typical year.

Another [*national study*](https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/missing-margins-estimating-scale-covid-19-attendance-crisis), from the assessment company Curriculum Associates, found a decline of up to 16 percent in the number of elementary school students performing at grade level in math, and up to 10 percent in the number of students performing at grade level in reading.

Jordyn is in many ways better off than some of the truly lost students of the pandemic. The school knows where he lives and he is attending at least some of his classes.

But by his school’s accounting, he is in trouble, having missed three weeks of instruction since September, either because he did not log in or missed most of the day. His school has visited the family’s apartment and sent his mother text messages warning that Jordyn was in danger of repeating fifth grade. But his attendance has continued to suffer, and so have his grades.

Remote learning — which these days Jordyn does for half the week — is clearly part of his struggle. His mother says she cannot afford Wi-Fi on her $12-an-hour salary as a security guard — a situation shared by many families in Mississippi, where [*about half*](https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/missing-margins-estimating-scale-covid-19-attendance-crisis) of students do not have reliable broadband at home, the highest percentage of any state, according to [*a study by Common Sense Media*](https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/missing-margins-estimating-scale-covid-19-attendance-crisis).

But Jordyn’s story, which The New York Times documented over the course of a week in Clarksdale, is about much more than inadequate technology. It is also about the added disruption the pandemic has brought to one ***working-class*** family that was already struggling to make ends meet. And it underscores the limits of hybrid learning to reach those disengaged students.

“I used to like school,” he said softly. “Now I don’t even like it anymore because it’s too hard.”

The Best Score

Until the pandemic, Jordyn and his mother lived in Battle Creek, Mich., where he was known among his teachers as a bright but easily distracted student, one who was capable of soaring when he was engaged.

Shermell Hooper, his second-grade teacher, recalled having to stand over his desk before he would write his name at the top of the page. If she assigned a reading passage, she had to sit next to him to get him to read.

On the day of a nationwide standardized test, she said, Jordyn sat in front of his computer, humming to himself and spinning around in his chair. She thought he was goofing off — until the results came in.

When his mother came to pick him up, a school administrator was waiting for her, and she worried Jordyn had gotten into trouble. “That’s when they told me that he had gotten not just the best score in his class but the best score in the entire grade,” she said.

At a schoolwide assembly, Jordyn’s name was called, his classmates cheered and he received a new bike.

His mother invited some 20 family members for a celebratory lunch at Applebee’s, where she worked as a server. His grandmother framed the certificate and placed it on the wall.

“That’s when I liked school,” Jordyn recalled.

Kelsey Oliver, Jordyn’s fourth-grade teacher at Verona Elementary School in Battle Creek, remembered how the 10-year-old whose mind seemed to wander in class would later stop her in the hallway and ask a penetrating question.

“He’s like, ‘Can you tell me more about …?’” she said. “So, you know he’s kind of been sitting with it and ruminating with it all day.”

But as the arrival of Covid-19 ended indoor dining, his mother’s paycheck dwindled to $200 every two weeks, according to Ms. Coleman. When she could not afford to fix a car axle, she reached a breaking point. She, Jordyn and another son, 15-year-old Jayciyon, had been living in her mother’s apartment, sleeping on the floor. Tempers often flared, she said.

After a cousin in Clarksdale offered to let her and the boys move in, she sold her car to a scrapyard and used the money to buy three train tickets to Mississippi.

It was a familiar place for Ms. Coleman, 34, who spent much of her childhood shuttling between family members. Her mother disappeared when she was a toddler. An aunt cared for her in Clarksdale when she was 7. Then they moved to live in a suburb of Chicago when she was 12.

“This is where I was as a kid,” Ms. Coleman said of Clarksdale. “It’s more homey. Peaceful. Quiet.”

No Fridge, No Car

Clarksdale is a town of about 15,000 people situated in the flat and expansive floodplain known as the Delta. Described as the birthplace of the blues, it is also one of the poorest corners of America.

After a month of hunting for work, Ms. Coleman found the security guard job at a casino in Tunica, about 40 miles away, choosing the night shift so she could supervise her sons for at least part of their school day. By fall, she had saved enough to sign a $400-a-month lease for a two-bedroom apartment with no stove and no refrigerator.

For dinner, Ms. Coleman fries chicken wings on a hot plate or prepares macaroni and cheese in an electric pot. She and Jordyn share a bed. She is saving what she can to buy a car.

“My priorities are a stove, a fridge, a car,” she said. “Then maybe we can talk about internet.”

One recent morning, Ms. Coleman busied herself after work, washing the dishes and sweeping the floor while trying to keep an eye on Jordyn. The boy sat on the couch in his Pikachu pajamas, using her cellphone to watch a video about the Boston Tea Party.

He was supposed to be writing a report, but when she came to check on him, the sheet of paper in his lap was blank. “So what did you learn?” she asked him.

Jordyn said the Tea Party had something to do with a misunderstanding, but he did not know how to spell that word.

“How do you spell ‘under’?” she asked, standing over him as he wrote. “How do you spell ‘stand’?” she added. “See, you don’t need my help, you spelled the whole word.”

That afternoon, she got three hours of sleep before rising at 8 p.m. to catch the bus for the 70-minute ride to the casino.

A Crucial Test

When Jordyn moved to Mississippi over the summer, his mother did not have his birth certificate, delaying his registration until weeks after the start of the school year, Ms. Coleman said.

By May, Jordyn was failing in more than one class and was marked absent for 15 days, either because he had not logged in at all or had missed most of those days. If he hits 20 absences, he will be required to repeat the grade.

His situation is not unique. In the Clarksdale Municipal School District, where all of the 2,368 students qualify for free meals, a key indicator of poverty, the number of students with failing grades has increased fivefold this school year, data provided by the district shows.

Math has proved particularly difficult for Jordyn, compounded by the fact that his teacher introduced key concepts on days he missed.

When his math teacher recently showed pictures of boxes of different sizes on the video screen and asked the class to calculate their volume by using the formula she had taught them, Jordyn was stumped.

He wiggled on the couch. He bopped his shoulders to an imaginary tune. When the screen froze, he pushed a button and then pushed it again. He logged out and logged back in. He got distracted by the news alert that popped up on his mother’s phone, then by the text message she received.

“Jordyn, are you following?” his teacher asked through the screen. When he did not answer, she asked, “Jordyn, what you got?”

He unmuted himself long enough to whisper, “I don’t got anything.”

The morning of the districtwide math test in February, students streamed into the aging middle school on the banks of a muddy river, past a station where their temperatures were checked and another where they picked up the plastic shields they are required to wear over their face masks. It was chilly outside, yet the classroom windows were cracked open to increase ventilation.

The children were still wearing their jackets when the proctor began the clock. They began working furiously — but Jordyn, who is driven to school by a relative, was not there.

He arrived 40 minutes late, tiptoeing into the classroom. “My ride came,” he said, “it just came late.”

In his bulky jacket, he struggled to log into his Chromebook. His password had expired. More time passed before the teacher returned with his new login on a Post-it note.

The teacher had placed a yellow sheet of paper on every desk, and his classmates were using it to do the long division required on the test. Jordyn’s remained untouched, tucked under the banana he received as part of his free lunch.

A week later, the results came in: Jordyn had failed his math test, as well as the tests in social studies and science, according to school officials.

Unless he gets As and Bs for the rest of the year, his teachers say he may need to repeat the grade.

For nearly a week after the test, Jordyn stopped logging into his math class altogether, his instructor said.

School district officials said that they have offered to let Jordyn come into the building four days a week for added in-person instruction, but that his mother has yet to commit to the plan.

Ms. Coleman said she was uncomfortable having him board a bus early in the morning before she has returned from her shift. But she is considering using her tax return to pay for a car service to take him to school.

In the meantime, Jordyn’s name has been entered into a binder of “at-risk” students whose absences have become chronic. One-fifth of all students at Oakhurst Intermediate Academy are now listed.

PHOTOS: Precious Coleman helping her 11-year-old son, Jordyn, with his schoolwork in Clarksdale, Miss. (A1); Jordyn Coleman, above, attending math class on his mother’s phone, was flourishing before the pandemic. But he has struggled since his family moved to Clarksdale, Miss. Below left, a math test went poorly after he arrived late. Below right, Jordyn’s mother explaining to a teacher by text why he did not complete an assignment.; Barbara Cage of Oakhurst Intermediate Academy said the number of students with five or more absences was up 20 percent.; In Clarksdale, where 100 percent of students qualify for free meals, the number who have failing grades has risen fivefold.; A mural in Clarksdale, a town of fewer than 15,000 people in the Mississippi Delta, one of the poorest parts of the country. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20)

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2021

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[***Virus Fans Religious Hatred in India, Leading to Violence Against Muslims***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YN7-7KG1-DXY4-X30W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Jeffrey Gettleman, Kai Schultz and Suhasini Raj

**Body**

Indian officials are blaming an Islamic group for spreading the virus, and Muslims have been targeted in a wave of violence.

NEW DELHI -- After India's health ministry repeatedly blamed an Islamic seminary for spreading the coronavirus -- and governing party officials spoke of ''human bombs'' and ''corona jihad'' -- a spree of anti-Muslim attacks has broken out across the country.

Young Muslim men who were passing out food to the poor were assaulted with cricket bats. Other Muslims have been beaten up, nearly lynched, run out of their neighborhoods or attacked in mosques, branded as virus spreaders. In Punjab State, loudspeakers at Sikh temples broadcast messages telling people not to buy milk from Muslim dairy farmers because it was infected with coronavirus.

Hateful messages have bloomed online. And a wave of apparently fake videos has popped up telling Muslims not to wear masks, not to practice social distancing, not to worry about the virus at all, as if the makers of the videos wanted Muslims to get sick.

In a global pandemic, there is always the hunt for blame. President Trump has done it, insisting for a time on calling the coronavirus a ''Chinese virus.'' All over the world people are pointing fingers, driven by their fears and anxieties to go after The Other.

Here in India, no other group has been demonized more than the country's 200 million Muslims, minorities in a Hindu-dominated land of 1.3 billion people.

From the crackdown on Kashmir, a Muslim majority area, to a new citizenship law that blatantly discriminates against Muslims, this past year has been one low point after another for Indian Muslims living under an increasingly bold Hindu nationalist government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and propelled by majoritarian policies.

In this case, what's making things worse is that there's an element of truth behind the government's claims. A single Muslim religious movement has been identified as being responsible for a large share of India's 8,000-plus coronavirus cases. Indian officials estimated last week that more than a third of the country's cases were connected to the group, Tablighi Jamaat, which held a huge gathering of preachers in India in March. Similar meetings in Malaysia and Pakistan also led to outbreaks.

''The government was compelled to call out this congregation,'' said Vikas Swarup, a senior official at India's foreign ministry.

He said that the gathering in March ''had a significant impact on the containment methods'' but denied that the government's frequent blaming of the group had ''anything to do with a particular community.''

Tablighi Jamaat is a multinational Muslim missionary movement. A tall, white, modern building towering over the Nizamuddin West neighborhood of Delhi serves its global headquarters. The group is one of the world's largest faith-based organizations, with tens of millions of members.

The Indian government has been racing to track down anyone from Tablighi's seminary and quarantine congregants. Masked police officers have sealed the headquarters on all sides; the other morning, they patrolled the area with their fingers on the triggers of assault rifles.

The neighborhood resembles one near a bus depot or a port; the seminary was the center of the economy, and all around it stand money changers, guesthouses, travel agencies and gift shops, catering to the Muslim missionaries who would flow through here.

The virus and the new wave of hatred have changed everything. Mohammed Haider, who runs a milk stall, one of the few businesses allowed to stay open under India's coronavirus lockdown, said, ''Fear is staring at us, from everywhere.''

''People need only a small reason to beat us or to lynch us,'' he said. ''Because of corona.''

Muslim leaders are afraid. They see the intensifying attacks against Muslims and remember what happened in February, when Hindu mobs rampaged in a ***working-class*** neighborhood in Delhi, killing dozens, and the police mostly stood aside -- or sometimes even helped the Hindu mobs. In many villages now, Muslim traders are barred from entering simply because of their faith.

''The government should not have played the blame game,'' said Khalid Rasheed, the chairman of Islamic Center of India. ''If you present the cases based on somebody's religion in your media briefings,'' he said, ''it creates a big divide.''

''Coronavirus may die,'' he added, ''but the virus of communal disharmony will be hard to kill when this is over.''

Tahir Iqbal, a recent university graduate from Kashmir, was among the 4,000 or so gathered at the Tablighi Jamaat headquarters in early March for missionary training. He said people slept, ate and prayed in close quarters, with little fear of the coronavirus. ''We didn't take it seriously at the time,'' he said.

On March 16, the Delhi government banned gatherings of more than 50 people. Several days later, Mr. Modi announced a nationwide lockdown.

But instead of dispersing, more than 1,000 people stayed put at the center. During a March 19 sermon, Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, a Tablighi Jamaat leader, told followers that coronavirus was ''God's punishment'' and not to fear it.

About a week later, health inspectors found around 1,300 people still sheltering at the center without masks or other protective gear. Many Muslim leaders criticized the group's center for not closing down.

But by that point, hundreds of congregants had already left. They wended their way across India by car, bus, train and plane, spreading the coronavirus to more than half of India's states, from beach towns in the Andaman Islands to the hot, farming cities in the country's northern plains.

On March 31, the Delhi authorities filed a criminal case against Maulana Kandhalvi for ''deliberately, willfully, negligently and malignantly'' putting the public's health at risk. Tablighi Jamaat's center was sealed. The maulana, a title for a Muslim scholar, disappeared.

Indian authorities have been tightening the lockdown on hot spots across the country, shutting down all movement in areas where coronavirus cases have been detected. Though the nationwide total remains relatively low, many fear the highly contagious virus could rip through crowded urban areas, overwhelming India's already beleaguered public hospitals.

Indian authorities have used cellphone data to track Tablighi Jamaat congregants and intercepted Malaysian missionaries at an airport before they could board an evacuation flight out of India.

At a public briefing last week, Lav Agarwal, a health ministry spokesman, said that the number of days it would have taken India's coronavirus cases to double would have been 7.4 -- not the more alarming 4.1 days it hit this past week -- had the gathering not happened.

Since then, more than 25,000 people who came in contact with Tablighi members have been quarantined. Some nurses have complained that Tablighi members put in isolation wards acted lewdly. One Muslim man who tested positive for coronavirus slit his throat in a central Indian hospital on Saturday.

Some Hindu nationalist politicians and their supporters seized on the situation, eagerly piling on the anti-Muslim sentiments that have been building in recent years under Mr. Modi's government.

Raj Thackeray, the leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, a far-right nationalist party, told local news outlets that Tablighi Jamaat members ''should be shot.''

Rajeev Bindal, a leader within Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, said Tablighi members were moving through the population ''like human bombs.''

In the village of Harewali, near Delhi, a mob beat Mehboob Ali, a young Muslim man, for attending Tablighi Jamaat events, and filmed the beating.

''Tell us your plan!'' someone shouts in the video. ''Was your plan to spread corona?''

Mr. Ali, bloodied and crouching in a field, shakes his head.

Sensing the backlash against Muslims, India's health ministry has stopped blaming Tablighi Jamaat at public briefings.

''Certain communities and areas are being labeled purely based on false reports,'' the health ministry said in a statement a few days ago. ''There is an urgent need to counter such prejudices.''

Sameer Yasir and Hari Kumar contributed reporting from New Delhi, and Iqbal Kirmani from Srinagar, Kashmir.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/12/world/asia/india-coronavirus-muslims-bigotry.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/12/world/asia/india-coronavirus-muslims-bigotry.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Left, men leaving an Islamic seminary in India last week to enter quarantine. Right, crowds at a mosque in New Delhi last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY YAWAR NAZIR/GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Defying 2016 Racial Divides, Voters May Deliver Surprises***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615P-0331-JBG3-64MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

Racial and ethnic divides? Actually, Biden is making gains with white voters, and Trump with nonwhite ones.

American politicians, including presidents, have often sought to exploit the nation's racial and ethnic divides for political gain. During the Trump era, voters are not responding as expected.

The gap in presidential vote preference between white and nonwhite voters has shrunk by a surprising 16 percentage points since 2016, according to an Upshot analysis of pre-election polls, as Joe Biden gains among white voters and President Trump makes inroads among Black and Hispanic voters.

Mr. Trump's exploitation of resentments over immigration and race was widely credited with fueling his upset victory in 2016, but similar tactics this time have not had the same effect. The president has so far failed to reassemble his coalition of white voters without a college degree across the Northern battleground states, and polls show that many white voters have been repelled by his handling of race, criminal justice and recent protests.

The decrease in racial polarization defies the expectations of many analysts, who believed a campaign focused on appeals to issues like Black Lives Matter or ''law and order'' would do the opposite. It may also upset the hopes of some activists on the left who viewed an embrace of more progressive policies on race as a way to help Democrats carve a new path to the presidency. This path would have been powered by overwhelming support from nonwhite voters, reducing the need to cater to the more conservative white voters who backed Mr. Trump four years ago. Instead, Mr. Biden leads because of gains among those very voters.

With the election less than a week away, there is still time for voter preferences to move toward those of the 2016 campaign. Back then, polls suggested Hillary Clinton was narrowly ahead in the national popular vote, yet hinted at Mr. Trump's path to victory by showing his huge gains among white voters without a degree. Today, the same national surveys offer no comparable hint of strength for Mr. Trump among white voters.

The president's pitch hasn't resonated even among the kinds of voters who seem likeliest to be receptive. Trish Thompson, 69, a white Republican who works as a security guard for pipeline and fracking lands in Brownsville, Texas, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016. This time she will vote for Mr. Biden -- as a vote against Mr. Trump and his ''appalling'' handling of the pandemic and ''his misogynistic behavior and his inability to acknowledge his racial discrimination.''

Over all, Mr. Trump leads among white voters by only five points in high-quality surveys conducted since the Republican National Convention in August, compared with a 13-point advantage in the final surveys before the 2016 election. Not only does Mr. Trump fall short of his own lead with that group from 2016, but he also underperforms every recent Republican presidential candidate since Bob Dole in 1996.

Mr. Biden's gains among white voters are broad, spanning not only the groups expected to shift toward him -- like white suburban women -- but also the white ***working-class*** voters across the Northern battleground states who represented the president's decisive strength four years ago.

Over all, Mr. Trump leads by 21 points among white voters without a degree, 58 percent to 37 percent, compared with his 29-point edge (59-30) in the final polls in 2016. His position with these voters is still strong for a Republican -- in fact, that 21-point lead is the largest for a Republican in recent memory. But while he still runs ahead of Mitt Romney among this group, he faces a daunting deficit among the remainder of the electorate.

By contrast, white college graduates back Mr. Biden by 21 points in recent polls, up from a 13-point edge for Mrs. Clinton in the final polls four years ago.

Mr. Trump tried to win over white voters with a conservative pitch on race and policing. Instead, Mr. Biden steadily gained among white voters in the spring and particularly in June, after the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police. National surveys showed that white voters overwhelmingly disapproved of the president's handling of the protests in the aftermath of Mr. Floyd's death, according to Times/Siena polling.

The president's pivot to ''law and order'' amid unrest over the summer did not help him. In the final Times/Siena national survey, Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump by seven points on who would do a better job on ''law and order.'' Mr. Trump also failed to claim an edge on the issue in Times/Siena polls of Wisconsin and Minnesota, where the president's team believed that unrest in Kenosha and Minneapolis could work to the president's advantage.

The president's weakness among white voters has eroded the party's traditional structural advantages in the Electoral College, the House and the Senate, endangering the Republican hold on a tier of overwhelmingly white districts and states where Democrats usually don't have much of a chance, like Kansas or Montana.

Mr. Biden has tended to make his largest gains across the Northern United States -- in exactly the places where the president made his largest gains four years ago. In contrast, Mr. Trump's support has proved resilient in the Deep South, where upward of 95 percent of the president's former supporters say they back his re-election, giving him a better chance to weather demographic shifts in the region.

The president's standing in the Sun Belt is bolstered by perhaps the single most surprising demographic trend of the cycle: his gains among nonwhite voters.

In recent national polls, Mr. Biden leads by 42 points among nonwhite voters, 66 percent to 24 percent. It's about nine points worse than Mrs. Clinton's 51-point lead in the final 2016 surveys.

Mr. Biden has lost almost exactly as much ground among nonwhite voters as he has gained among white voters, but trading nonwhite for white voters is a favorable deal for Mr. Biden. White voters outnumber nonwhite voters by more than two to one, and by an even greater ratio in the most important battleground states.

In a longer-term compilation of polling since June, Mr. Trump's gains appear to include both Black and Latino voters, though exact measurement of such smaller groups is challenging. It's even harder to measure subgroups: say, Cuban-Americans in Miami-Dade County.

The Times/Siena surveys suggest that the president's strength is particularly significant among Hispanic voters. Across those surveys since September, Mr. Biden holds only an 84-7 lead among Hispanic voters who said they backed Mrs. Clinton four years ago, compared with a 93-2 lead among Black voters and a 94-3 lead among white voters who said they did.

The president's strength among nonwhite voters represents an increasingly vital element of his possible path to re-election. It helps him counter a serious weakness among older white voters in the pivotal state of Florida and in other Sun Belt battlegrounds, including Nevada, which Mrs. Clinton carried four years ago.

In Times/Siena polling so far this fall, Black and Hispanic voters appear somewhat receptive to the kinds of conservative messages usually derided as racist dog whistles. In polling in September, for example, nonwhite voters split roughly evenly on whether ''law and order'' or the coronavirus was more important to their presidential vote. Nonwhite voters were likelier to say they thought Mr. Trump would do a better job handling ''law and order'' than they were to say they supported him over Mr. Biden.

It was not the first time this cycle that nonwhite voters defied the hopes of progressive activists. Black Democrats in Virginia were likelier than white Democrats to say Ralph Northam should remain as governor after the revelation of a 35-year-old racist photo on his medical school yearbook page. And Black voters backed Mr. Biden by overwhelming margins over a variety of more progressive challengers in the primary, despite his often conservative record on race and policing.

Many progressive policies for systematic change, like reparations for the descendants of slaves, defunding the police or removing Confederate monuments, fail to attract strong support in polls, suggesting that a focus on these issues could risk eroding Democratic standing. It also suggests a widening gap between the views of progressive activists and the rank-and-file of nonwhite voters.

While American politics has become less polarized along racial lines during the Trump era, the gender gap has grown. In Times/Siena surveys since September, Mr. Biden has a mere seven-point lead among Hispanic men and a 37-point lead among Hispanic women -- even larger than the 20-point gender gap among white voters. And while the gender gap is smaller among Black voters, Mr. Biden has a relatively poor 78-11 lead among Black men in the Times/Siena poll.

Nonwhite men may like the president for the same kind of reasons that white men do, like a macho appeal. And the president's populism may have some appeal to blue-collar men of all races and ethnic groups. Hispanic voters said they preferred Mr. Biden over Mr. Trump to handle the economy, but by only an eight-point margin.

Matthew Plummer, a 42-year-old Hispanic trucker in Carson City, Nev., usually votes Democratic, including for Mrs. Clinton. But he now backs Mr. Trump.

''I just want government to get back to government instead of playing games and pointing fingers, and it seems like that's what the Democratic Party is doing,'' he said. Although not a fan of Mr. Trump as a person, he said he had achieved things like improving the economy and opening conversations with North Korea.

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Claire Cain Miller contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/28/upshot/election-polling-racial-gap.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/28/upshot/election-polling-racial-gap.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***The Election’s Big Twist: The Racial Gap Is Shrinking***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615F-S7J1-DXY4-X4Y2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 28, 2020 Wednesday 17:36 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1661 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** Racial and ethnic divides? Actually, Biden is making gains with white voters, and Trump with nonwhite ones.

**Body**

Racial and ethnic divides? Actually, Biden is making gains with white voters, and Trump with nonwhite ones.

American politicians, including presidents, have often sought to exploit the nation’s racial and ethnic divides for political gain. During the Trump era, voters are not responding as expected.

The gap in presidential vote preference between white and nonwhite voters has shrunk by a surprising 16 percentage points since 2016, according to an Upshot analysis of pre-election polls, as [*Joe Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/20/us/politics/live-stream-inauguration.html) gains among white voters and President Trump makes inroads among Black and Hispanic voters.

Mr. Trump’s exploitation of resentments over immigration and race was widely credited with fueling his upset victory in 2016, but similar tactics this time have not had the same effect. The president has so far failed to reassemble his coalition of white voters without a college degree across the Northern battleground states, and polls show that many white voters have been repelled by his handling of race, criminal justice and recent protests.

The decrease in racial polarization defies the expectations of many analysts, who believed a campaign focused on appeals to issues like Black Lives Matter or “law and order” would do the opposite. It may also upset the hopes of some activists on the left who viewed an [*embrace*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/20/us/politics/live-stream-inauguration.html) of more progressive policies on race as a way to help Democrats carve a new path to the presidency. This path would have been powered by overwhelming support from nonwhite voters, reducing the need to cater to the more conservative white voters who backed Mr. Trump four years ago. Instead, Mr. Biden leads because of gains among those very voters.

With the election less than a week away, there is still time for voter preferences to move toward those of the 2016 campaign. Back then, polls suggested Hillary Clinton was narrowly ahead in the national popular vote, yet hinted at Mr. Trump’s path to victory by showing his huge gains among white voters without a degree. Today, the same national surveys offer no comparable hint of strength for Mr. Trump among white voters.

The president’s pitch hasn’t resonated even among the kinds of voters who seem likeliest to be receptive. Trish Thompson, 69, a white Republican who works as a security guard for pipeline and fracking lands in Brownsville, Texas, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016. This time she will vote for Mr. Biden — as a vote against Mr. Trump and his “appalling” handling of the pandemic and “his misogynistic behavior and his inability to acknowledge his racial discrimination.”

Over all, Mr. Trump leads among white voters by only five points in high-quality surveys conducted since the Republican National Convention in August, compared with a 13-point advantage in the final surveys before the 2016 election. Not only does Mr. Trump fall short of his own lead with that group from 2016, but he also underperforms every recent Republican presidential candidate since Bob Dole in 1996.

Mr. Biden’s gains among white voters are broad, spanning not only the groups expected to shift toward him — like white suburban women — but also the white ***working-class*** voters across the Northern battleground states who represented the president’s decisive strength four years ago.

Over all, Mr. Trump leads by 21 points among white voters without a degree, 58 percent to 37 percent, compared with his 29-point edge (59-30) in the final polls in 2016. His position with these voters is still strong for a Republican — in fact, that 21-point lead is the largest for a Republican in recent memory. But while he still runs ahead of Mitt Romney among this group, he faces a daunting deficit among the remainder of the electorate.

By contrast, white college graduates back Mr. Biden by 21 points in recent polls, up from a 13-point edge for Mrs. Clinton in the final polls four years ago.

Mr. Trump tried to win over white voters with a conservative pitch on race and policing. Instead, Mr. Biden steadily gained among white voters in the spring and particularly in June, after the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police. National surveys showed that white voters overwhelmingly disapproved of the president’s handling of the protests in the aftermath of Mr. Floyd’s death, according to Times/Siena polling.

The president’s pivot to “law and order” amid unrest over the summer did not help him. In the final Times/Siena national survey, Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump by seven points on who would do a better job on “law and order.” Mr. Trump also failed to claim an edge on the issue in Times/Siena polls of Wisconsin and Minnesota, where the president’s team believed that unrest in Kenosha and Minneapolis could work to the president’s advantage.

The president’s weakness among white voters has eroded the party’s traditional structural advantages in the Electoral College, the House and the Senate, endangering the Republican hold on a tier of overwhelmingly white districts and states where Democrats usually don’t have much of a chance, like Kansas or Montana.

Mr. Biden has tended to make his largest gains across the Northern United States — in exactly the places where the president made his largest gains four years ago. In contrast, Mr. Trump’s support has proved resilient in the Deep South, where upward of 95 percent of the president’s former supporters say they back his re-election, giving him a better chance to weather demographic shifts in the region.

The president’s standing in the Sun Belt is bolstered by perhaps the single most surprising demographic trend of the cycle: his gains among nonwhite voters.

In recent national polls, Mr. Biden leads by 42 points among nonwhite voters, 66 percent to 24 percent. It’s about nine points worse than Mrs. Clinton’s 51-point lead in the final 2016 surveys.

Mr. Biden has lost almost exactly as much ground among nonwhite voters as he has gained among white voters, but trading nonwhite for white voters is a favorable deal for Mr. Biden. White voters outnumber nonwhite voters by more than two to one, and by an even greater ratio in the most important battleground states.

In a longer-term compilation of polling since June, Mr. Trump’s gains appear to include both Black and Latino voters, though exact measurement of such smaller groups is challenging. It’s even harder to measure subgroups: say, Cuban-Americans in Miami-Dade County.

The Times/Siena surveys suggest that the president’s strength is particularly significant among Hispanic voters. Across those surveys since September, Mr. Biden holds only an 84-7 lead among Hispanic voters who said they backed Mrs. Clinton four years ago, compared with a 93-2 lead among Black voters and a 94-3 lead among white voters who said they did.

The president’s strength among nonwhite voters represents an increasingly vital element of his possible path to re-election. It helps him counter a serious weakness among older white voters in the pivotal state of Florida and in other Sun Belt battlegrounds, including [*Nevada*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/20/us/politics/live-stream-inauguration.html), which Mrs. Clinton carried four years ago.

In Times/Siena polling so far this fall, Black and Hispanic voters appear somewhat receptive to the kinds of conservative messages usually derided as racist dog whistles. In polling in September, for example, nonwhite voters split roughly evenly on whether “law and order” or the coronavirus was more important to their presidential vote. Nonwhite voters were likelier to say they thought Mr. Trump would do a better job handling “law and order” than they were to say they supported him over Mr. Biden.

It was not the first time this cycle that nonwhite voters defied the hopes of progressive activists. Black Democrats in Virginia were likelier than white Democrats to say Ralph Northam should remain as governor after [*the revelation*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/20/us/politics/live-stream-inauguration.html) of a 35-year-old racist photo on his medical school yearbook page. And Black voters backed Mr. Biden by overwhelming margins over a variety of more progressive challengers in the primary, despite his often conservative record on race and policing.

Many progressive policies for systematic change, like reparations for the descendants of slaves, defunding the police or removing Confederate monuments, fail to attract strong support in polls, suggesting that a focus on these issues could risk eroding Democratic standing. It also suggests a widening gap between the views of progressive activists and the rank-and-file of nonwhite voters.

While American politics has become less polarized along racial lines during the Trump era, the gender gap has grown. In Times/Siena surveys since September, Mr. Biden has a mere seven-point lead among Hispanic men and a 37-point lead among Hispanic women — even larger than the 20-point gender gap among white voters. And while the gender gap is smaller among Black voters, Mr. Biden has a relatively poor 78-11 lead among Black men in the Times/Siena poll.

Nonwhite men may like the president for the same kind of reasons that white men do, like a [*macho appeal*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/20/us/politics/live-stream-inauguration.html). And the president’s populism may have some appeal to blue-collar men of all races and ethnic groups. Hispanic voters said they preferred Mr. Biden over Mr. Trump to handle the economy, but by only an eight-point margin.

Matthew Plummer, a 42-year-old Hispanic trucker in Carson City, Nev., usually votes Democratic, including for Mrs. Clinton. But he now backs Mr. Trump.

“I just want government to get back to government instead of playing games and pointing fingers, and it seems like that’s what the Democratic Party is doing,” he said. Although not a fan of Mr. Trump as a person, he said he had achieved things like improving the economy and opening conversations with North Korea.

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Claire Cain Miller contributed reporting.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***In India, Coronavirus Fans Religious Hatred***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YN2-3NJ1-DXY4-X1ND-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** WORLD; asia

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**Byline:** Jeffrey Gettleman, Kai Schultz and Suhasini Raj

**Highlight:** Indian officials are blaming an Islamic group for spreading the virus, and Muslims have been targeted in a wave of violence.

**Body**

Indian officials are blaming an Islamic group for spreading the virus, and Muslims have been targeted in a wave of violence.

NEW DELHI — After India’s health ministry repeatedly blamed an Islamic seminary for spreading the coronavirus — and governing party officials spoke of “human bombs” and “corona jihad” — a spree of anti-Muslim attacks has broken out across the country.

Young Muslim men who were passing out food to the poor were [*assaulted with cricket bats*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2kx3KRQCnQ). Other [*Muslims have been beaten up*](https://indianexpress.com/article/coronavirus/covid-19-rumours-linked-to-3-attacks-in-delhi-gurgaon-6350696/), nearly lynched, run out of their neighborhoods or attacked in mosques, branded as virus spreaders. In Punjab State, loudspeakers at Sikh temples broadcast messages telling people not to buy milk from Muslim dairy farmers because it was infected with coronavirus.

Hateful messages have bloomed online. And [*a wave of apparently fake videos*](https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/surge-in-tiktok-videos-aimed-at-misleading-indian-muslims-over-coronavirus-precautions-1662930-2020-04-03) has popped up telling [*Muslims*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/15/magazine/india-assam-muslims.html) not to wear masks, not to practice social distancing, not to worry about the virus at all, as if the makers of the videos wanted Muslims to get sick.

In a global pandemic, there is always the hunt for blame. President Trump has done it, insisting for a time on calling the coronavirus a [*“Chinese virus.’’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/us/politics/china-virus.html) All over the world people are pointing fingers, driven by their fears and anxieties to go after The Other.

Here in India, no other group has been demonized more than the country’s 200 million Muslims, minorities in a Hindu-dominated land of 1.3 billion people.

From the [*crackdown on Kashmir*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/07/world/asia/kashmir-doctors-phone.html), a Muslim majority area, to a [*new citizenship law that blatantly discriminates against Muslims*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/07/world/asia/kashmir-doctors-phone.html), this past year has been one low point after another for Indian Muslims living under an increasingly bold Hindu nationalist government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and propelled by majoritarian policies.

In this case, what’s making things worse is that there’s an element of truth behind the government’s claims. A single Muslim religious movement has been identified as being responsible for a large share of India’s 8,000-plus coronavirus cases. Indian officials estimated last week that more than a third of the country’s cases were connected to the group, Tablighi Jamaat, which held a huge gathering of preachers in India in March. Similar meetings in [*Malaysia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/asia/coronavirus-malaysia-muslims-outbreak.html) and [*Pakistan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/world/asia/pakistan-coronavirus-tablighi-jamaat.html) also led to outbreaks.

“The government was compelled to call out this congregation,” said Vikas Swarup, a senior official at India’s foreign ministry.

He said that the gathering in March “had a significant impact on the containment methods” but denied that the government’s frequent blaming of the group had “anything to do with a particular community.”

Tablighi Jamaat is a multinational Muslim missionary movement. A tall, white, modern building towering over the Nizamuddin West neighborhood of Delhi serves its global headquarters. The group is one of the world’s largest faith-based organizations, with tens of millions of members.

The Indian government has been racing to track down anyone from Tablighi’s seminary and quarantine congregants. Masked police officers have sealed the headquarters on all sides; the other morning, they patrolled the area with their fingers on the triggers of assault rifles.

The neighborhood resembles one near a bus depot or a port; the seminary was the center of the economy, and all around it stand money changers, guesthouses, travel agencies and gift shops, catering to the Muslim missionaries who would flow through here.

The virus and the new wave of hatred have changed everything. Mohammed Haider, who runs a milk stall, one of the few businesses allowed to stay open under India’s coronavirus lockdown, said, “Fear is staring at us, from everywhere.’’

“People need only a small reason to beat us or to lynch us,’’ he said. “Because of corona.’’

Muslim leaders are afraid. They see the intensifying attacks against Muslims and remember what happened in February, when [*Hindu mobs rampaged in a* ***working-class*** *neighborhood in Delhi*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/world/asia/india-police-muslims.html), killing dozens, and the police mostly stood aside — or sometimes even helped the Hindu mobs. In many villages now, Muslim traders are barred from entering simply because of their faith.

“The government should not have played the blame game,” said Khalid Rasheed, the chairman of [*Islamic Center of India*](http://islamiccentreofindia.com/). “If you present the cases based on somebody’s religion in your media briefings,’’ he said, “it creates a big divide.”

“Coronavirus may die,” he added, “but the virus of communal disharmony will be hard to kill when this is over.”

Tahir Iqbal, a recent university graduate from Kashmir, was among the 4,000 or so gathered at the Tablighi Jamaat headquarters in early March for missionary training. He said people slept, ate and prayed in close quarters, with little fear of the coronavirus. “We didn’t take it seriously at the time,” he said.

On March 16, the Delhi government [*banned gatherings*](https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-govt-bars-assembly-of-over-50-people-orders-shutdown-of-weekly-markets-gyms-clubs/story-OOddakgdnYeKRofgYatXFN.html)of more than 50 people. Several days later, Mr. Modi announced [*a nationwide lockdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/24/world/asia/india-coronavirus-lockdown.html).

But instead of dispersing, more than 1,000 people stayed put at the center. During a March 19 sermon, Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, a Tablighi Jamaat leader, told followers that coronavirus was “God’s punishment’’ and not to fear it.

About a week later, health inspectors found around 1,300 people still sheltering at the center without masks or other protective gear. Many Muslim leaders criticized the group’s center for not closing down.

But by that point, hundreds of congregants had already left. They wended their way across India by car, bus, train and plane, [*spreading the coronavirus to more than half of India’s states*](https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/trends/coronavirus-1023-positive-cases-related-to-tablighi-jamat-reported-in-17-states/story/400188.html), from beach towns in the Andaman Islands to the hot, farming cities in the country’s northern plains.

On March 31, the Delhi authorities [*filed a criminal case*](https://www.ibtimes.co.in/nizamuddin-markaz-chief-maulana-saad-6-others-booked-full-text-fir-816565) against Maulana Kandhalvi for “deliberately, willfully, negligently and malignantly” putting the public’s health at risk. Tablighi Jamaat’s center was sealed. The maulana, a title for a Muslim scholar, disappeared.

Indian authorities have been tightening the lockdown on hot spots across the country, shutting down all movement in areas where coronavirus cases have been detected. Though the nationwide total remains relatively low, many fear the highly contagious virus could rip through crowded urban areas, overwhelming India’s already beleaguered public hospitals.

Indian authorities have used cellphone [*data to track Tablighi Jamaat congregants*](https://www.thestatesman.com/india/police-using-cell-phone-data-to-trace-people-who-attended-tablighi-jamaat-event-in-delhi-1502873974.html) and [*intercepted Malaysian missionaries*](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/coronavirus-10-malaysians-who-attended-tablighi-jamaat-event-nabbed-by-ccb-officials-at-chennai-airport/article31263055.ece) at an airport before they could board an evacuation flight out of India.

At a public briefing last week, [*Lav Agarwal, a health ministry spokesman*](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/rate-of-doubling-of-covid-19-cases-4-1-days-without-tablighi-jamaat-incident-it-would-have-been-7-4-government/articleshow/74994181.cms), said that the number of days it would have taken India’s coronavirus cases to double would have been 7.4 — not the more alarming 4.1 days it hit this past week — had the gathering not happened.

Since then, more than 25,000 people who came in contact with Tablighi members have been quarantined. Some nurses have complained that [*Tablighi members*](https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/six-quarantined-tablighi-jamaat-members-booked-for-misbehaviour-with-hospital-staff-in-ghaziabad-120040300114_1.html) put in isolation wards acted lewdly. One Muslim man who tested positive for coronavirus [*slit his throat in a central Indian hospital*](https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/tablighi-jamaat-member-commits-suicide-at-maharashtra-hospital-after-testing-positive-for-covid-19-1665822-2020-04-11) on Saturday.

Some Hindu nationalist politicians and their supporters seized on the situation, eagerly piling on the anti-Muslim sentiments that have been building in recent years under Mr. Modi’s government.

Raj Thackeray, the leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, a far-right nationalist party, told local news outlets that Tablighi Jamaat members “should be shot.”

Rajeev Bindal, a leader within Mr. Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party, said Tablighi members were moving through the population “like [*human bombs*](https://www.deccanherald.com/national/national-politics/tablighi-members-moving-like-human-bombs-himachal-bjp-chief-821495.html).”

In the village of Harewali, near Delhi, [*a mob beat Mehboob Ali*](https://newsd.in/delhi-amid-coronavirus-scare-youth-who-returned-from-jamaat-mob-lynched-in-bawana/), a young Muslim man, for attending Tablighi Jamaat events, and filmed the beating.

“Tell us your plan!” someone shouts in the video. “Was your plan to spread corona?”

Mr. Ali, bloodied and crouching in a field, shakes his head.

Sensing the backlash against Muslims, India’s health ministry has stopped blaming Tablighi Jamaat at public briefings.

“Certain communities and areas are being labeled purely based on false reports,” the health ministry said in [*a statement*](https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/AddressingSocialStigmaAssociatedwithCOVID19.pdf) a few days ago. “There is an urgent need to counter such prejudices.”

Sameer Yasir and Hari Kumar contributed reporting from New Delhi, and Iqbal Kirmani from Srinagar, Kashmir.

PHOTOS: Left, men leaving an Islamic seminary in India last week to enter quarantine. Right, crowds at a mosque in New Delhi last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY YAWAR NAZIR/GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** September 15, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Georgia Democrats Find Toehold as Population Spikes and Suburbs Shift***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6157-DXY1-DXY4-X2NN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 27, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1643 words

**Byline:** By Richard Fausset

**Body**

Joe Biden could win the state because Republicans have failed to keep up with its diverse population and shifting suburban politics.

WATKINSVILLE, Ga. -- For years, state House District 119 was a safely Republican seat in the Georgia Legislature, having been carved out of conservative suburbs along the south side of Athens, a liberal college town, to maximize Republican votes. This year, Jonathan Wallace, a Democrat, could win it.

In fact, Mr. Wallace already has: In 2017, he won the northeast Georgia seat in a shocker of a special election, only to lose it, a year later, to a Republican challenger.

Before all of this dramatic back-and-forth -- before Mr. Wallace, 42, a software developer, decided to leap into politics after Donald J. Trump's 2016 victory -- Democrats had not even bothered to run candidates in the district. But these days, much that was once settled in Georgia seems suddenly up for grabs. The Peach State, a Republican stronghold for nearly two decades, is growing fast and changing in profound ways, giving Democrats big hopes for 2020.

With just a week left before the Nov. 3 election, polls show Mr. Trump, who won Georgia by five points in 2016, locked in a virtual tie with his Democratic opponent, Joseph R. Biden Jr., who plans to visit the state on Tuesday.

At the same time, a pair of well-funded Democratic candidates, Jon Ossoff and the Rev. Raphael Warnock, are running competitive races for the state's two Senate seats. Representative Lucy McBath, a Democrat, is favored to win re-election to her suburban Atlanta House seat against Karen Handel, whom she beat in 2018. The suburban Atlanta House seat of a retiring Republican is expected to flip to the Democrats.

Some Democrats even dream of capturing the state House.

All this is happening in a state exploding with diversity, whose new politics are defined by young voters, suburban women alienated by President Trump, and minorities energized by Stacey Abrams and her near miss bid in 2018 to become the country's first African-American woman governor.

Georgia Democrats -- stung in the past by premature talk of a Peach State realignment -- are careful to temper their optimism. The Republican Party remains well-organized, popular and powerful here. Republicans hold every elected statewide office, control both chambers of the state Legislature, still command a majority among college-educated white voters, and maintain a dominance in rural counties.

Jason Carter, the grandson of President Jimmy Carter and a Democrat who was soundly defeated in the 2014 race for governor, joked, ''Frankly, I think it would be impossible for Trump to win -- and I haven't been this confident since 2016,'' when Hillary Clinton's campaign dared to dream of a Georgia victory.

Yet there is a bipartisan consensus that the state is not exactly what it was, even just a few years ago. Its population surged from 7.9 million to 10.6 million people from 2000 to 2019, and its foreign-born population now exceeds 10 percent. While Republicans remain formidable in rural areas, an accurate portrait of 21st Century Georgia would have to include not only peach and peanut farms, but also Your DeKalb Farmers Market, a global culinary bazaar in the Atlanta suburbs staffed by workers from 40 countries that attracts both immigrants and native-born bourgeois bohemians.

And while Mr. Trump leads Mr. Biden by 12 percentage points among college-educated whites, that is down significantly from 2016, when he won the same group by 20 percentage points.

''There's been so much migration from the North and other parts of the country,'' said Eric J. Tanenblatt, global chairman of the public policy and regulation practice at Dentons, a law firm, and the former chief of staff to former Gov. Sonny Perdue, a Republican and now Mr. Trump's agriculture secretary. ''And so you're starting to see a turn in the suburbs more toward the Democrats.''

Charles S. Bullock III, a political scientist at the University of Georgia, puts his state in a category with Virginia, North and South Carolina, Florida and Texas that he calls the ''Growth South,'' as opposed to the ''Stagnant South,'' represented by states like Mississippi and Arkansas. He argues that this may be a better way to think about the changing region, and the Democrats' growing strength in parts of it, than the old dichotomy between ''Deep South'' and ''Rim South'' states.

Growth South states, he said, ''are attracting a racially and ethnically diverse population. So more Hispanics are moving into them, as well as a variety of Asians -- Koreans, Indians, Chinese. These groups are all more Democratic than not.''

Dr. Bullock noted that in 1996, when the Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole bested the saxophone-tooting son of the South Bill Clinton in Georgia, about 77 percent of the people who cast ballots in Georgia were white.

In the 2018 governor's race, he said, that number was around 60 percent.

As the demographics have changed, Georgia politics have also been transformed by the stories of two recent Republican winners -- Mr. Trump and Gov. Brian Kemp -- and two Democratic losers, Mr. Ossoff and Ms. Abrams.

Though Mr. Trump won Georgia in 2016, he lost to Mrs. Clinton in the Atlanta suburbs of Cobb and Gwinnett counties, which had for years been crucial and reliable bases of Republican support. A year later, Mr. Ossoff mounted a high-profile but unsuccessful campaign to take a House seat in some of those same suburbs, drawing support from college-educated women who came out of the shadows to create powerful new volunteer networks. Ms. McBath won the seat in the wave election of 2018.

The 2017 Ossoff race ''flipped a light switch -- we were in the dark and suddenly we would see each other,'' said State Senator Jen Jordan, a lawyer who jumped into politics that year, winning a formerly Republican-held Atlanta seat.

The next year Ms. Abrams, a former minority leader in the state House, electrified Democrats with a race that gave the party a fresh plan for taking advantage of the changing electorate. Four years earlier, Mr. Carter, an Atlanta lawyer, had endeavored, with centrist policy and a pair of cowboy boots, to win back some of the white ***working-class*** and rural Southerners who had over the decades abandoned the Democratic Party.

Ms. Abrams focused instead on turning out minority and intermittent voters, while embracing an unapologetically liberal platform.

She was narrowly bested by Mr. Kemp, a white, drawling, deep-voiced Georgia native with an agriculture degree who liked to talk about football, his guns and how he would personally round up ''criminal illegals'' in his pickup.

His victory underscored the enduring power of rural voters, yet Ms. Abrams lost by just 55,000 votes out of four million cast, and she said Mr. Kemp, who had also overseen the election as secretary of state, had engaged in voter suppression.

Echoes of both the Ossoff and the Abrams races reverberate in 2020.

The New Georgia Project, a nonprofit organization founded by Ms. Abrams to boost minority and youth voter registration, has signed up thousands of new voters, said Nse Ufot, the group's chief executive, including in the streets of Atlanta as protests raged over the police killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Rayshard Brooks, a Black man in Atlanta.

''The 2020 numbers of youth registration in Georgia blow previous election cycles out of the water -- and 2018 was a high-water mark for us,'' Ms. Ufot said. According to a Tufts University study, the percentage of Georgians ages 18 to 24 who were registered to vote as of last month was 34 percent higher than in November 2016 -- the biggest gain in the country.

Pallavi Purkayastha, a political strategist from Johns Creek, in the Atlanta suburbs, ran a successful campaign in 2018 for State Representative Angelika Kausche, a German immigrant and a Democrat who flipped a Republican seat after running on a promise to fund public education and expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

This year, Ms. Purkayastha said her candidates are being helped not only by changing demographics but also by the escalating conservatism of the Republican Party.

''Republicans, on their own without any kind of provocation, are moving more and more to the far right,'' she said.

She mentioned the policies of Mr. Kemp, who signed a ''fetal heartbeat'' bill seeking to restrict abortions last year, and allowed businesses to open early on in the Covid-19 crisis, a move that even Mr. Trump criticized.

Though the Republican message remains popular in the countryside, the party may face a reckoning, either this year or in the future, if it fails to find a way to reconnect in the suburbs, where population growth is more robust than in rural areas.

The enduring, same-as-it-ever-was Georgia lives on in places like rural Crawford County, near Macon, where population growth is stagnant, the foreign-born population hovers around 1 percent, and Mr. Trump won handily in 2016. Robert L. Dickey, III, a Republican and veteran state representative, is running unopposed this year in Crawford County.

But even Mr. Dickey, who runs a family peach farm founded during the McKinley administration, is aware that Georgia has changed, and that Republicans have struggled to keep up. ''I don't think Republicans have messaged as well as they could have,'' he said.

Somehow, in the Trump era, he said, the Republican story became too clotted with ''personalities.'' To win over the newcomers, he said, Republicans need to go back to basics with a low-tax, business-friendly message. Whatever the outcome of the 2020 election, though, it seems unlikely that even the best Republican messaging can stand in the way of Georgia's rapid demographic shifts -- and their profound implications for its politics.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A show of support for Joe Biden this month in Macon, Ga., ahead of a Trump rally in the city. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Jonathan Wallace, a former Georgia state representative, is running to win back his seat, which he lost in 2018. Previously, Democrats had not bothered to field candidates in his district. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA L. JONES/ATHENS BANNER-HERALD, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** October 28, 2020

**End of Document**



[***‘What Rhymes With Purell?’ Franglais Rappers Push Language Boundaries in Quebec; Montreal dispatch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YM1-1G11-JBG3-635W-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Dan Bilefsky

**Highlight:** Critics in Montreal say hip-hop artists mixing French and English are threatening the future of the French language in the majority Francophone province.

**Body**

Critics in Montreal say hip-hop artists mixing French and English are threatening the future of the French language in the majority Francophone province.

MONTREAL — As pungent pot smoke filled the air in a bunkerlike, dimly lit basement recording studio in Montreal, the Quebec rapper [*Snail Kid*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) pondered a question befitting these pandemic times: What word rhymes with Purell?

Mulling how to fit the hand sanitizer into his latest rap lyric, he considered the English words “well,” “smell” and “toaster strudel” before toying with the French words “pluriel” and “ruelle.”

Then, Snail Kid, 30, a member of the popular Quebec hip-hop group [*Dead Obies*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) began to rap:

Le monde ici est cruel

On n’est plus well

(The world here is cruel. We are no longer well.)

“Now everyone is going to be competing to find the best rhyme for ‘quarantine’ or ‘corona,’” mused Snail Kid, whose real name is Gregory Beaudin. Mr. Beaudin grew up speaking the native English of his Jamaican-born father, a reggae singer, as well as the French of his Montreal-born mother, a French teacher.

The bilingual wordplay in the cavernous recording studio reflected how the coronavirus has changed not only how we live, but popular culture. It was also notable for another reason particular to [*Montreal*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/): The group was rapping in Franglais or “Frenglish,” mixing English and French with artistic abandon that irks some purists.

The Dead Obies are part of a new generation of young Quebec hip-hop artists who meld the language of Shakespeare and Voltaire with the urban poetry of Montreal’s street life and the bling-bling, drug-fueled themes of some American hip-hop.

Other artists of this generation are Loud and FouKi.

To their legions of fans, the groups give voice to the bilingual vernacular of a multicultural city, marinated by its past French and British rulers, the forces of globalization and successive waves of immigration.

“Franglais rappers reflect that the younger generation in Quebec don’t care about old orthodoxies and are open to the world,” said [*Sugar Sammy*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/), a Quebec comedian with Punjabi roots who became a global sensation after pioneering a bilingual comedy show.

But they have also spawned a backlash in Quebec, a majority French-speaking province, where critics have castigated them as self-colonizers who are “creolizing” the French language and threatening its future.

And they have lost out on lucrative federal government funding for Francophone artists because their content wasn’t French enough.

[*Mathieu Bock-Côté,*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) a sociologist and influential columnist at [*Le Journal de Montréal*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/), said Franglais rappers were a worrying sign that the younger generation in Quebec had lost sight of the fragility of the French language in the city and were turning to English as a default to show emotion and express themselves.

“Franglais is a slippery slope toward Anglicization,” he said. “These bourgeois-bohemian adolescents who think speaking English or Franglais will make Montreal into a New York are deluded because it is the French language that gives the city its cachet.”

“Without French, Montreal would be Pittsburgh,” he added.

Questions of language are inextricably bound up with identity in Quebec, a province of about 8.5 million people where the British minority exerted its language and culture after Quebec was ceded to Britain in 1763 following [*France’s defeat*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) in the Seven Years’ War.

French-speakers of a certain age can still recall being admonished by members of the Anglophone minority at factories to “speak white,” or speak English.

Today, language laws require that French be the official language of government, business and the courts.

Concerned that the Franglais greeting of [*“Bonjour-hi”*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) was becoming too ubiquitous in Montreal shops and restaurants, the Quebec government in late 2017 passed a nonbinding resolution calling for shopkeepers to say only “Bonjour” instead.

[*A French citizen*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) was recently denied a certificate she needed to settle permanently in Quebec. Her offense? Writing a chapter of her doctoral thesis in English rather than in French. After an outcry, the right-leaning Quebec government granted her the document.

Yet in recent years, [*Quebec’s influential language watchdog*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) has shown some flexibility, alluding to the [*evolving nature*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) of language.

It ruled that using [*“grilled-cheese”*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) on menus instead of the more long-winded “sandwich au fromage fondant” would not breach Quebec’s language rules, while [*cocktail*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/), [*drag queen*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/), and [*haggis*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/)were also deemed acceptable in French.

At the same time, the watchdog has been successful at encouraging Quebecers to say “courriel” instead of the pervasive English word “email” used by many in France.

Mr. Beaudin, who grew up in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the eastern part of Montreal, said the Dead Obies hadn’t set out to make a political statement. Rather, they were merely mimicking the language and sounds of Québécois French, where words and expressions like “c’est le fun” (it’s fun) and “mon chum” (my boyfriend) were commonplace.

Brought up on English video games and Facebook, he said he and his friends didn’t have neuroses about language. Moreover, he argued, a society that attacked its artists was ​discriminatory, insecure and misguided.

“You can be more creative when you are rapping in two languages,” he added.

To make his point, he rapped a few lines from a Dead Obies song that switches midsentence from French to English:

Je te jure que Billie Jean is not my lover

Nope, nope

C’est juste une fille que je meet sur le “E” dans le after hours

(I swear to you that Billie Jean is not my lover. Nope, nope. It’s just a girl I meet on E at the after-hours.)

As a biracial teenager in Montreal, Mr. Beaudin said he had been attracted to rappers like [*Eminem*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) and[*Jay-Z*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) and had turned to Franglais rap for cultural affirmation. Rapping in two languages spliced with street slang was also a way to revolt against a Québécois cultural elite dominated by white Francophone artists.

But he said rapping in Franglais has come at a heavy cost. The group [*lost subsidies*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) of about $18,000 on their second album from a national government fund for Francophone artists because it was 55 percent French and 45 percent English.

The funding was predicated on an album having at least 70 percent French content.

The equivalent Anglophone fund stipulated that French content on an album be no more than 50 percent, making them ineligible for that, too.

“Now we count how many words we say in French or in English,” he said. “In a small domestic market like Quebec, artists need subsidies to survive.”

[*Nicolas Ouellet*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/), host of a popular music show on [*Radio-Canada,*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) Canada’s leading French-language radio station, said Franglais rappers were largely omitted from commercial radio stations and sneered at for not being part of Quebec’s “folklore.”

But, he said, “rather than bastardizing Québécois French, they are acting as a bridge between Quebec and the rest of North America.”

Montreal has become among the most bilingual cities in North America, alongside Miami and Los Angeles. According to [*2016 national census figures*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/), about 18 percent of Canadians speak both English and French, with Quebec driving the bilingualism.

While some guardians of the French language fear creeping bilingualism, the resistance to Franglais rap is more than just a question of language.

[*FouKi,*](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeaudin/) a popular Quebec rapper whose real name is Léo Fougères, observed that Franglais rapping didn’t just irritate those determined to preserve French.

“My father will hear my raps and say to me, ‘Isn’t there a word for that in French?’” he said. “But other older people say to me, I don’t understand anything you say.”

Nasuna Stuart-Ulin contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Snail Kid, second from right, with his hip-hop group Dead Obies at work in a Montreal studio. The group is known for its blended English and French lyrics.; Signs in Franglais, or Frenglish, are common in Montreal, above. Groups like Dead Obies are popular with bilingual youths in Quebec, but often criticized by the region’s French purists, who accuse them of “creolizing” the language. Below, group member Joe Rocca preparing some dinner at the studio. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NASUNA STUART-ULIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Pushing Deep Into G.O.P. Turf, Democrats Are Poised to Expand House Majority***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6159-F021-DXY4-X41B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Emily Cochrane and Catie Edmondson

**Highlight:** House Democrats are training their resources on once-solid Republican footholds in affluent suburban districts where voters feel alienated by President Trump.

**Body**

House Democrats are training their resources on once-solid Republican footholds in affluent suburban districts where voters feel alienated by President Trump.

VERONA, N.Y. — Pushing further into Republican territory one week before Election Day, Democrats are poised to expand their majority in the House while Republicans, weighed down by President Trump’s low standing in crucial battlegrounds, are scrambling to offset losses.

Bolstered by an enormous cash-on-hand advantage, a series of critical Republican recruitment failures and a wave of liberal enthusiasm, Democrats have [*fortified their grip on hard-fought seats won in 2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/us/elections/democrats-house-election.html) that allowed them to seize control of the House. They have trained their firepower and huge campaign coffers on once-solid Republican footholds in affluent suburban districts, where many voters have become disillusioned with Mr. Trump.

That has left Republicans, who started the cycle hoping to retake the House by clawing back a number of the competitive districts they lost to Democrats in 2018, straining to meet a bleaker goal: limiting the reach of another Democratic sweep by winning largely rural, white ***working-class*** districts like this one in central New York where Mr. Trump is still popular. Depending on how successful those efforts are, Republican strategists, citing a national environment that has turned against them, privately forecast losing anywhere from a handful of seats to as many as 20.

That is starkly at odds with Mr. Trump’s own prediction just days ago that Republicans would win back control of the House, which Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared “delusional,” echoing the private assessments of many in the president’s own party.

“The Democrats’ green wave in 2018 has turned into a green tsunami in 2020, which combined with ongoing struggles with college-educated suburban voters, makes for an extremely challenging environment,” said Corry Bliss, a Republican strategist who helped lead the party’s failed effort in 2018 to protect its House majority, referring to the torrent of Democratic campaign cash. “There are about a dozen 50-50 races across the country, and the most important factor in each is if the president can close strong in the final stretch.”

The terrain for House Republicans was not supposed to be this grim. But Mr. Trump’s stumbling response to the pandemic and inflammatory brand of politics have alienated critical segments of the electorate, particularly suburban voters and women, dragging down congressional Republicans and [*opening inroads for Democrats in districts that once would have been unfathomable*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/us/elections/democrats-house-election.html).

“I don’t think too many people would have thought that at the beginning of this cycle, but we are playing deep into Trump country,” Representative Cheri Bustos of Illinois, the chairwoman of House Democrats’ campaign arm, said, noting that “a third of a billion dollars” and strong recruits had yielded “a good secret sauce.”

Eyeing new opportunities in districts that have traditionally been conservative strongholds, Democrats have charged into suburbs across the country. In the Midwest, they are targeting Representatives Don Bacon of Nebraska, Ann Wagner of Missouri, and Rodney Davis of Illinois. They are also storming once ruby-red parts of Texas, positioning themselves in striking distance of picking up as many as five seats on the outskirts of Houston and Dallas.

Perhaps nowhere is the dynamic on starker display than outside Indianapolis, in a sea horse-shaped district held by Representative Susan W. Brooks, Republican of Indiana, who is retiring. The district, one of the state’s wealthiest and most educated, has been reliably conservative, sending Republicans to the House since the early 1990s and supporting Mr. Trump in 2016 by eight points.

But this year, Democrats view the district as one of their best opportunities to flip a seat, betting that distaste for Mr. Trump will buoy support for their candidate, Christina Hale, a former member of the Indiana General Assembly who boasts of having worked to pass legislation with Vice President Mike Pence when he was the state’s governor.

“People here are just so fatigued of all the drama and the constant news cycle,” Ms. Hale said in an interview. “They’re just really looking for practical, competent, empathetic people to represent them in Washington and people that will collaborate across the aisle.”

Two years ago, armed with similar brands and messages, Democrats won 31 districts where Mr. Trump had prevailed in 2016. Most of them are expected to cruise to re-election, capitalizing on their huge fund-raising hauls and weak Republican challengers.

If Republicans have any reason for optimism, it is in largely rural areas like New York’s 22nd District, populated by mostly white voters who still strongly support the president. They are bullish about their chances in this race, where Claudia Tenney is seeking to reclaim her seat from Representative Anthony Brindisi, the Democrat who ousted her in 2018 after winning by[*fewer than 4,500 votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/us/elections/democrats-house-election.html).

While Ms. Tenney described herself in an interview as independent, her campaign is gambling that Mr. Trump’s presence on the ballot this year could help her edge past Mr. Brindisi on Election Day. All through the district, along roads that wind through farmland and tucked among elaborate Halloween displays, yard signs paid for by the Tenney campaign blare, in all capital letters, “Trump Tenney” — a clear indication of how their fortunes are intertwined. (Mr. Trump on Tuesday [*also tweeted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/us/elections/democrats-house-election.html) in support of Ms. Tenney.)

“I just find it really hard to believe that he’s not going to win this district by double digits, and I think his policies have done really well for our region,” Ms. Tenney said of Mr. Trump. “They would rather have a president and a leader who’s going to stand up for them than get hung up on personality issues.”

But Mr. Brindisi, who has sought to build a platform rooted in health care and local constituency work and legislation, argued that Ms. Tenney lost in 2018 because she had failed to deliver on her promises to the district.

“People don’t want to turn back the clock. They want to continue to go forward,” Mr. Brindisi said. “At the end of the day, if I meet with people on the street in this district, what they’ll tell me is, ‘Anthony, I don’t care if you’re a Democrat or Republican, just get things done.’”

Elsewhere around the country, some challengers whom Republicans had promoted as strong recruits, like Nancy Mace, the first woman to graduate from the Citadel who is running against Representative Joe Cunningham of South Carolina, have found themselves stunted by a dismal national environment and unable to get their attacks against centrist lawmakers to stick.

“When you try and paint somebody that’s clearly a moderate as super extreme, I just don’t think it works,” said A.J. Lenar, a Democratic ad maker and strategist who works with Mr. Cunningham and cut an ad [*poking fun at attempts to brand him a socialist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/us/elections/democrats-house-election.html).

Making matters worse for Republicans is the state of their fund-raising. Democrats in the most competitive races are sitting on a 5-to-1 cash-on-hand advantage over their Republican challengers, and Democratic candidates overall were poised to spend nearly twice as much on television ads from Labor Day to Election Day, according to strategists tracking the buys. In New York, Democrats are outspending Republicans by $9 million on television in support of Representative Max Rose, who holds a Staten Island seat that Republicans believe is one of their best opportunities.

Some Republican candidates, including Ms. Tenney, were out-raised so handily that outside groups, like the Congressional Leadership Fund, a House Republican super PAC, have been forced to step in to carry out campaign fundamentals like advertising and phone calls, as well as get-out-the-vote programs. Ms. Tenney is among a group of Republican candidates this cycle who have run almost no ads themselves, leaving the super PAC to carry their entire television campaign.

Democrats’ giant cash advantage also means they can afford to play in longer-shot races in Alaska and Montana, forcing Republicans to sink millions into those at-large seats in an effort to build a firewall against a potential wave.

Even though his party appeared to be playing more defense than offense, Representative Tom Emmer of Minnesota, the chairman of the National Republican Campaign Committee, argued in an interview that Republicans could still take back the House. Democrats in districts like New York’s 22nd, which Mr. Brindisi flipped two years ago, appear to be on stronger footing than they actually are, he said, because of national polls that undercount conservatives — an assertion few of his peers share.

But he acknowledged his prediction assumed Mr. Trump was as popular with voters in those districts as he was four years ago.

“It really depends on if the president performs at or near 2016 levels,” Mr. Emmer said. “If not, it becomes a lot more difficult.”

That is also the challenge for Victoria Spartz, the Republican state senator who is running against Ms. Hale in the suburbs of Indiana, where internal polls show support for Mr. Trump eroding. She has used her rags-to-riches story of emigrating from the Soviet Ukraine to emphasize her strong belief in limited government.

But Ms. Spartz is facing the same headwinds buffeting her party in districts around the nation. After prevailing in a crowded primary by flaunting her conservative credentials, she must now convince voters of her independence from Mr. Trump and Republicans.

“I wish people would pay more attention and actually vote for the candidate,” she said in an interview, “not for the party.”

Emily Cochrane reported from Verona, N.Y., and Catie Edmondson from Washington. Luke Broadwater contributed reporting from Washington.

PHOTO: The Democrat Christina Hale sees opportunity in an Indiana district President Trump won in 2016. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN P. CLEARY/THE HERALD-BULLETIN, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** October 28, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Trump's Legacy On Economy Goes Beyond Numbers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:614V-DG41-JBG3-626Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

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**Byline:** By Patricia Cohen

**Body**

The president has shifted the way both parties talk about trade, immigration and deficits -- and despite dismal economic news, many voters still reward him for it.

BETHLEHEM, Pa. -- To understand how much President Trump has altered the conversation around the economy, just listen to Bruce Haines, who spent decades as an executive at U.S. Steel before becoming a managing partner of the elegant Historic Hotel Bethlehem.

The steel mills that still dominate Bethlehem's skyline have long been empty. And now, so are the tables in the Tap Room, the hotel's restaurant, a sign of the economic hardship caused by the coronavirus pandemic. ''It's been very difficult,'' Mr. Haines said.

The president's management of the pandemic is a prime reason many voters cite for backing his opponent. But Mr. Haines, who lives in a swing county in a swing state, is struck most by a different aspect of Mr. Trump's record.

''I spent 35 years in the steel business and I can tell you unfair trade deals were done by Republicans and Democrats,'' Mr. Haines said. Both parties, he complained, had given up on manufacturing -- once a wellspring of stable middle-class jobs. ''Trump has been the savior of American industry. He got it. He's the only one.''

In perhaps the greatest reversal of fortune of the Trump presidency, a microscopically tiny virus upended the outsize economic legacy that Mr. Trump had planned to run on for re-election. Instead of record-low unemployment rates, supercharged confidence levels and broad-based gains in personal income, Mr. Trump will end his term with rising poverty, wounded growth and a higher jobless rate than when he took office.

Still, despite one of the worst years in recent American history, the issue on which Mr. Trump gets his highest approval ratings remains the economy. It points to the resilience of his reputation as a savvy businessman and hard-nosed negotiator. And it is evidence that his most enduring economic legacy may not rest in any statistical almanac, but in how much he has shifted the conversation around the economy.

Long before Mr. Trump appeared on the political stage, powerful forces were reshaping the economy and inciting deep-rooted anxieties about secure middle-income jobs and America's economic pre-eminence in the world. Mr. Trump recognized, stoked and channeled those currents in ways that are likely to persist whether he wins or loses the election.

By ignoring economic and political orthodoxies, he at times successfully married seemingly contradictory or inconsistent positions to win over both hard-core capitalists and the ***working class***. There would be large tax breaks and deregulation for business owners and investors, and trade protection and aid for manufacturers, miners and farmers.

In the process, he scrambled party positions on key issues like immigration and globalization, and helped topple sacred verities about government debt. He took a Republican Party that preached free trade, low spending and debt reduction and transformed it into one that picked trade wars even with allies, ran up record-level peacetime deficits and shielded critical social programs from cuts.

''He completely moved the Republican Party away from reducing Social Security and Medicare spending,'' said Michael R. Strain, an economist at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

On immigration, Mr. Trump remade the political landscape in a different way. He has accused immigrants of stealing jobs or committing crimes and -- as he did in Thursday night's debate -- continued to disparage their intelligence. In doing so, he rallied hard-line sentiments that could be found in each party and turned them into a mostly Republican cri de coeur.

The Democrats changed in turn. Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. has positioned himself as the champion of immigrants, pledging to reverse Mr. Trump's most restrictive policies, while rejecting more radical proposals like eliminating the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

He has also been pushed to finesse his position on fracking and the oil industry, promising not to ban the controversial drilling method on private lands, and trying -- with mixed success -- to walk back comments he had made during the presidential debate about transitioning away from fossil fuels.

Shifts on trade were more momentous. Mr. Biden and other party leaders who had once promoted the benefits of globalization found themselves playing defense against a Republican who outflanked them on issues like industrial flight and foreign competition. They responded by embracing elements of protectionism that they had previously abandoned.

No matter who spends the next four years in the White House, economic policy is likely to pay more attention to American jobs and industries threatened by China and other foreign competition and less attention to worries about deficits caused by government efforts to stimulate the economy.

The reshuffling is clear to Charles Jefferson, the managing owner of Montage Mountain Ski Resort near Scranton, Pa.

''Those were not conversations we were having five years ago,'' he said. ''The exodus of manufacturing jobs, that was considered a fait accompli.''

Mr. Jefferson, 55, grew up in North Philadelphia in a blue-collar union family and remembers the hemorrhaging of jobs that many Democratic leaders said was unstoppable in a globalized world -- even though such positions were deeply unpopular with many rank-and-file Democrats.

Manufacturing revived after bottoming out during the Great Recession but floundered during President Barack Obama's second term. Mr. Jefferson, who said he voted for Mr. Obama, supported Mr. Trump in 2016. He plans to do so again.

The sector still represents a relatively small slice of the economy, accounting for 11 percent of the country's total output and employing less than 9 percent of American workers. But Mr. Trump has been a relentless cheerleader. While he often took credit for manufacturing jobs at companies like General Motors and Foxconn that later disappeared or never materialized, the pace of hiring in the sector sped up considerably in 2018 before stalling out last year.

As a result, in this election, unlike the last, the significance of manufacturing and the need for a more skeptical approach to free trade are not contested.

Mr. Biden, after decades of supporting trade pacts, is now running on a ''made in all of America'' program that promises to ''use full power of the federal government to bolster American industrial and technological strength.'' He has also vowed to use the tax code to encourage businesses to keep or create jobs on American soil.

Even voters who don't particularly like Mr. Trump credit him with re-energizing the U.S. economy.

Walter Dealtrey Jr., who runs a tire service, sales and retreading business in Bethlehem that his father started 65 years ago, said he voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, but he was never a big fan of the president.

''He talks too much,'' said Mr. Dealtrey, who's been around long enough to distinguish a new Goodyear or Michelin tire by its smell. ''And his tone is terrible.'' A year ago, he had considered the possibility of supporting a moderate Democrat like Mr. Biden or Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

But with Election Day just over a week away, Mr. Dealtrey plans to once again support the president. Even after a few unnervingly slow months in the spring and some layoffs among the 960 people he employed at his company, Service Tire Truck Centers, he still trusts Mr. Trump on the economy.

Mr. Dealtrey talked as he walked around stacks of giant tires that towered above his own six-foot frame, a Stonehenge-size monument to wheeled transport. He likes the president's focus on ''big manufacturing'' and the way he ''instills confidence in businesses to invest in this country.''

Just how much responsibility Mr. Trump deserves for reframing some key economic issues is up for debate. Frustration about job losses in the United States has been brewing for decades; the parties were diverging on immigration; and antagonism toward China over trade practices, suspicions of technology theft and its authoritarian tactics extends beyond the United States.

''I don't think he really has pushed the boundaries of any of those policy issues beyond where they already were,'' said Mr. Strain of the American Enterprise Institute.

Similarly, Jason Furman, a chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers during the Obama administration, argues that Mr. Trump was pushed along by the same trends and forces that spurred his supporters. And on some issues, like immigration, he caused public opinion to move in the opposite direction.

In the end, it may turn out that the president's most significant impact on economic policy is not one that he intended: overturning the conventional wisdom about the impact of government deficits.

By simultaneously pursuing steep tax cuts for businesses and wealthy individuals, raising military spending and ruling out Medicare and Social Security reductions, Mr. Trump presided over unprecedented trillion-dollar deficits. Emergency pandemic relief added to the bill. Such sums were supposed to cause interest rates and inflation to spike and crowd out private investment. They didn't.

''Trump has done a lot to legitimize deficit spending,'' Mr. Furman said.

Mr. Furman is one of a growing circle of economists and bankers who have called for Washington to let go of its debt obsession. Investing in infrastructure, health care, education and job creation are worth borrowing for, they argue, particularly in an era of low interest rates.

That doesn't mean the issue has disappeared. Republicans will undoubtedly oppose deficits resulting from proposals put forward by a Democratic White House -- and vice versa. But warnings about the calamitous consequences of federal borrowing are unlikely to have the same resonance as before the Trump presidency.

Back in his office, Mr. Dealtrey remembers how disturbed he once was about the size of the deficit. ''I used to care about my kids and grandkids being stuck with it,'' he said, leaning back in his chair. ''But nobody cares anymore.''

''Maybe I don't care anymore,'' he said, momentarily surprised at his own words. ''We've got bigger problems than that.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/24/business/economy/trump-economy-manufacturing.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/24/business/economy/trump-economy-manufacturing.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Many in Bethlehem, Pa., a steel industry town, believe the president has been good for the manufacturing sector and the economy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Walter Dealtrey Jr., who runs a tire service in Bethlehem, Pa., said he was never a big fan of the president though he voted for him.

Companies like Service Tire Truck Centers saw business drop at the start of the pandemic, but for many it has since come back. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A31)

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**End of Document**



[***Could Economic Downturn Produce Lasting Change?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6076-W101-DXY4-X187-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Eduardo Porter

**Body**

Economic downturns have often led to political moves to lift the most vulnerable. But recoveries tend to reverse the effect.

The United States faces an economic downturn without precedent. Is it also a moment that could produce lasting change?

The official unemployment rate was 13.3 percent in May, compared with 3.5 percent in February, and even the Labor Department thinks the recent figures are a substantial undercount. Covid-19 cases, which prompted the crisis, are surging in many states. And the burdens have landed disproportionately on people of color, just as crowds have protested the justice system's treatment of African-Americans.

''You have three crises compounding each other: a 100-year pandemic, a 75-year depression and 50-year civil unrest,'' said Rahm Emanuel, President Barack Obama's first chief of staff and later Chicago's mayor. This, he believes, opens political space for bold action.

The political system has already responded in ways unimaginable a few years ago. It took only a smidgen of negotiation in March for Congress to pass a $2 trillion stimulus program by an overwhelming majority, including a temporary supplement to unemployment insurance payments and direct payments to low- and middle-income families.

To some in the economic and political arenas, that should be only a start.

Scholars are brimming with ideas to construct a more generous safety net on a permanent basis, bolstering everything from Medicaid to child care support. Timothy Smeeding, a professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, suggests that the federal government pick up the entire tab for Medicaid, which it now shares with the states.

This would save struggling states nearly $250 billion a year and allow the federal government to establish a uniform set of benefits covering things like mental health and reproductive health, which some states have balked at. With an additional $44 billion, Mr. Smeeding added, the government could extend the $2,000 child tax credit to families with no income, subsidize child care and expand the earned-income tax credit.

Mr. Emanuel is thinking in similar terms. He and his brother Ezekiel, a medical ethicist who also worked in the Obama administration, have put together a plan in which the federal government would take over states' responsibility for Medicaid and unemployment insurance, in exchange for state commitments to fund universal prekindergarten, expand spending on public colleges and invest in infrastructure.

''This offers both parties policy accomplishments and political benefits,'' Rahm Emanuel said. ''There is a grand bargain that has more winners than losers. That is in the tradition of American politics and policymaking.''

This would not be the first time an economic crisis opened the door for an expansion of government assistance. Indeed, much of the American social safety net was built during the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration in response to the Great Depression.

More recently, the Great Recession offered an opportunity for the Obama administration to build on it. In 2009, government redistribution efforts, including food stamps, tax provisions and other social programs, shifted 5.3 percent of the nation's income that year to the poorest 40 percent of households. This was the biggest such transfer in at least three decades, raising the incomes of that contingent to 18.6 percent of the total.

By the end of his presidency, Mr. Obama had not only extended health insurance to millions of ***working-class*** Americans. According to the Congressional Budget Office, in 2016 government programs transferred 6.1 percent of national income to the poorest 40 percent, increasing their slice to 18.8 percent, the largest in almost a quarter-century.

Mr. Obama's chief economic adviser, Jason Furman, highlighted the ''historic achievement'' of the administration in mitigating the nation's income inequality.

Mr. Emanuel, who in the depths of the crisis argued that ''you never want a serious crisis to go to waste,'' acknowledged that the administration might not have achieved all its policy goals, but said, ''It wasn't a swing in the wind.''

In the coronavirus crisis, however, not everybody shares this sense of political opportunity.

Walter Scheidel, an economic historian at Stanford University, has written exhaustively about the power of crises -- wars, famines, natural disasters, pestilence -- to shift societies onto a more egalitarian path. As far back as the Roman Empire and even beyond, he writes, the equalizing moments in history ''shared one common root: massive and violent disruptions of the established order.''

While the current emergency might seem like a big deal, Mr. Scheidel argues, it probably won't be damaging enough. ''If the crisis is bad enough, it might shape preferences enough to shift where the majorities are,'' he said. ''But it's not something I see happening any time soon. We are too stable.''

And that reveals one important effect of the country's social safety net: Though too weak to mitigate deepening inequality, it is generous enough to prevent Americans from pushing for more radical policies.

As Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution points out, inequality declined by some measures during the nation's recent recessions. The share of income going to the poorest fifth of the population increased slightly in 1990, 2001, 2008 and 2009, even as incomes at the top fell sharply. Expanded unemployment insurance and other programs shielded the poorest Americans from the full brunt of the downturns.

The flip side is that inequality surges during economic expansions. And the tax and transfer system has been powerless to offset it. For instance, despite the Obama administration's push against inequality, during the expansion from 2009 to 2016 the share of the nation's income accruing to the richest 10 percent of the population jumped to 33.5 percent from 32.1 percent after considering taxes and transfers, according to a Congressional Budget Office analysis. This vastly outpaced the growth in the share accruing to the poorest 40 percent.

Government in the United States spends less on social programs to benefit the less fortunate than most other advanced nations, even though -- by international standards -- the poverty rate is the highest among the 35 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

And in important respects, the American safety net has been getting weaker.

Despite the large increase in spending on unemployment insurance and food stamps, the safety net was less effective in the Great Recession than during the recession of the early 1980s in protecting those at half the poverty line or less, according to an analysis by Hilary Hoynes of the University of California, Berkeley, and Marianne Bitler of the University of California, Davis.

The main reason, Ms. Hoynes noted, was the increase in the conditionality of government benefits. Unconditional cash assistance for poor families was largely replaced after the 1996 welfare law with programs that usually require people to work, such as the earned-income tax credit and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The tax credit ''is great for a number of things,'' Ms. Hoynes said, but losing your job means losing the credit.

Since the Great Recession, work requirements have been attached to more bits of the safety net, including food stamps and Medicaid. And for all the support for #BlackLivesMatter evident on the streets, racial animus remains a strong political constraint in developing more generous assistance programs.

Research has found that after the welfare overhaul of 1996 empowered states to set rules for benefit entitlement, those with larger African-American populations provided less cash assistance to poor families. Moreover, welfare officers are more likely to punish African-American families for violations of program rules.

Martin Gilens of Yale has written extensively about the power of racism to stunt the American safety net, concluding that ''racial attitudes are in fact the most important source of opposition to welfare among whites.''

Racial divisions show no sign of dissipating. ''I have reviewed nearly every academic article containing the name 'Donald Trump,''' wrote Matt Grossmann, a political scientist at Michigan State University. ''This huge literature has plenty of disagreements -- but the dominant findings are clear: Attitudes about race, gender and cultural change played outsized roles in the 2016 Republican primaries and general election.''

While the images of young protesters in the streets of American cities after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis last month might suggest political support for expanding the safety net to lift the most vulnerable, research suggests that such protests can motivate a backlash.

As Mr. Emanuel noted, one consequence of Mr. Obama's efforts to expand government assistance after the Great Recession was a movement against government spending more widely: the Tea Party.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/economy/coronavirus-inequality.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/economy/coronavirus-inequality.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Georgia, Once Reliably Red, Is Suddenly a Battleground. What Happened?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6153-RV81-DXY4-X1JM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Richard Fausset

**Highlight:** Joe Biden could win the state because Republicans have failed to keep up with its diverse population and shifting suburban politics.

**Body**

Joe Biden could win the state because Republicans have failed to keep up with its diverse population and shifting suburban politics.

WATKINSVILLE, Ga. — For years, state House District 119 was a safely Republican seat in the Georgia Legislature, having been carved out of conservative suburbs along the south side of Athens, a liberal college town, to maximize Republican votes. This year, Jonathan Wallace, a Democrat, could win it.

In fact, Mr. Wallace already has: In 2017, he won the northeast Georgia seat in [*a shocker*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) of a special election, only to lose it, a year later, to a Republican challenger.

Before all of this dramatic back-and-forth — before Mr. Wallace, 42, a software developer, decided to leap into politics after Donald J. Trump’s 2016 victory — Democrats [*had not even bothered*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) to run candidates in the district. But these days, much that was once settled in [*Georgia*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) seems suddenly up for grabs. The Peach State, a Republican stronghold for nearly two decades, is growing fast and changing in profound ways, giving Democrats big hopes for 2020.

With just a week left before the Nov. 3 election, polls show Mr. Trump, who won Georgia by five points in 2016, [*locked in a virtual tie*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) with his Democratic opponent, Joseph R. Biden Jr., who plans to visit the state on Tuesday.

At the same time, a pair of well-funded Democratic candidates, Jon Ossoff and the Rev. Raphael Warnock, are running competitive races for the state’s two Senate seats. Representative Lucy McBath, a Democrat, is favored to win re-election to her suburban Atlanta House seat against Karen Handel, whom she beat in 2018. The suburban Atlanta House seat of a retiring Republican is expected to flip to the Democrats.

Some Democrats even [*dream of capturing*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) the state House.

All this is happening in a state exploding with diversity, whose new politics are defined by young voters, suburban women alienated by President Trump, and minorities energized by Stacey Abrams and her near miss bid in 2018 to become the country’s first African-American woman governor.

Georgia Democrats — stung in the past by [*premature talk*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) of a Peach State realignment — are careful to temper their optimism. The Republican Party remains well-organized, popular and powerful here. Republicans hold every elected statewide office, control both chambers of the state Legislature, still command a majority [*among college-educated white voters*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0), and maintain a dominance in rural counties.

Jason Carter, the grandson of President Jimmy Carter and a Democrat who was soundly defeated in the 2014 race for governor, joked, “Frankly, I think it would be impossible for Trump to win — and I haven’t been this confident since 2016,” when Hillary Clinton’s campaign dared to dream of a Georgia victory.

Yet there is a bipartisan consensus that the state is not exactly what it was, even just a few years ago. Its population surged from 7.9 million to 10.6 million people from 2000 to 2019, and its [*foreign-born population*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0)now exceeds 10 percent. While Republicans remain formidable in rural areas, an accurate portrait of 21st Century Georgia would have to include not only peach and peanut farms, but also Your DeKalb Farmers Market, a global culinary bazaar in the Atlanta suburbs staffed by workers from 40 countries that attracts both immigrants and native-born bourgeois bohemians.

And while Mr. Trump leads Mr. Biden by 12 percentage points among college-educated whites, that is down significantly from 2016, when he won the same group by 20 percentage points.

“There’s been so much migration from the North and other parts of the country,” said Eric J. Tanenblatt, global chairman of the public policy and regulation practice at Dentons, a law firm, and the former chief of staff to former Gov. Sonny Perdue, a Republican and now Mr. Trump’s agriculture secretary. “And so you’re starting to see a turn in the suburbs more toward the Democrats.”

Charles S. Bullock III, a political scientist at the University of Georgia, puts his state in a category with Virginia, North and South Carolina, Florida and Texas that he calls the “Growth South,” as opposed to the “Stagnant South,” represented by states like Mississippi and Arkansas. He argues that this may be a better way to think about the changing region, and the Democrats’ growing strength in parts of it, than the old dichotomy between “Deep South” and “Rim South” states.

Growth South states, he said, “are attracting a racially and ethnically diverse population. So more Hispanics are moving into them, as well as a variety of Asians — Koreans, Indians, Chinese. These groups are all more Democratic than not.”

Dr. Bullock noted that in 1996, when the Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole bested the saxophone-tooting son of the South Bill Clinton in Georgia, about 77 percent of the people who cast ballots in Georgia were white.

In the 2018 governor’s race, he said, that number was around 60 percent.

As the demographics have changed, Georgia politics have also been transformed by the stories of two recent Republican winners — Mr. Trump and Gov. Brian Kemp — and two Democratic losers, Mr. Ossoff and Ms. Abrams.

Though Mr. Trump won Georgia in 2016, he lost to Mrs. Clinton in the Atlanta suburbs of Cobb and Gwinnett counties, which had for years been crucial and reliable bases of Republican support. A year later, Mr. Ossoff mounted a high-profile but unsuccessful campaign to take a House seat in some of those same suburbs, drawing support from college-educated women who came out of the shadows to create powerful new volunteer networks. Ms. McBath won the seat in the wave election of 2018.

The 2017 Ossoff race “flipped a light switch — we were in the dark and suddenly we would see each other,” said State Senator Jen Jordan, a lawyer who jumped into politics that year, winning a formerly Republican-held Atlanta seat.

The next year Ms. Abrams, a former minority leader in the state House, electrified Democrats with a race that gave the party a fresh plan for taking advantage of the changing electorate. Four years earlier, Mr. Carter, an Atlanta lawyer, had endeavored, with centrist policy and a pair of cowboy boots, to win back some of the white ***working-class*** and rural Southerners who had over the decades abandoned the Democratic Party.

Ms. Abrams focused instead on turning out minority and intermittent voters, while embracing an unapologetically liberal platform.

She was narrowly bested by Mr. Kemp, a white, drawling, deep-voiced Georgia native with an agriculture degree who liked to talk about football, his guns and how he would personally round up “criminal illegals” in his pickup.

His victory underscored the enduring power of rural voters, yet Ms. Abrams lost by just 55,000 votes out of four million cast, and she said Mr. Kemp, who had also overseen the election as secretary of state, had engaged in voter suppression.

Echoes of both the Ossoff and the Abrams races reverberate in 2020.

The New Georgia Project, a nonprofit organization founded by Ms. Abrams to boost minority and youth voter registration, has signed up thousands of new voters, said Nse Ufot, the group’s chief executive, including in the streets of Atlanta as protests raged over the police killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Rayshard Brooks, a Black man in Atlanta.

“The 2020 numbers of youth registration in Georgia blow previous election cycles out of the water — and 2018 was a high-water mark for us,” Ms. Ufot said. According to a Tufts University [*study*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0), the percentage of Georgians ages 18 to 24 who were registered to vote as of last month was 34 percent higher than in November 2016 — the biggest gain in the country.

Pallavi Purkayastha, a political strategist from Johns Creek, in the Atlanta suburbs, ran a successful campaign in 2018 for State Representative Angelika Kausche, a German immigrant and a Democrat who flipped a Republican seat after running on a promise to fund public education and expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

This year, Ms. Purkayastha said her candidates are being helped not only by changing demographics but also by the escalating conservatism of the Republican Party.

“Republicans, on their own without any kind of provocation, are moving more and more to the far right,” she said.

She mentioned the policies of Mr. Kemp, who [*signed*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) a “fetal heartbeat” bill seeking to restrict abortions last year, and allowed businesses to open early on in the Covid-19 crisis, a move that [*even Mr. Trump*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) criticized.

Though the Republican message remains popular in the countryside, the party may face a reckoning, either this year or in the future, if it fails to find a way to reconnect in the suburbs, where population growth is [*more robust*](https://www.wuga.org/post/athens-area-democrats-celebrating-wins-house-district-117-119-seats#stream/0) than in rural areas.

The enduring, same-as-it-ever-was Georgia lives on in places like rural Crawford County, near Macon, where population growth is stagnant, the foreign-born population hovers around 1 percent, and Mr. Trump won handily in 2016. Robert L. Dickey, III, a Republican and veteran state representative, is running unopposed this year in Crawford County.

But even Mr. Dickey, who runs a family peach farm founded during the McKinley administration, is aware that Georgia has changed, and that Republicans have struggled to keep up. “I don’t think Republicans have messaged as well as they could have,” he said.

Somehow, in the Trump era, he said, the Republican story became too clotted with “personalities.” To win over the newcomers, he said, Republicans need to go back to basics with a low-tax, business-friendly message. Whatever the outcome of the 2020 election, though, it seems unlikely that even the best Republican messaging can stand in the way of Georgia’s rapid demographic shifts — and their profound implications for its politics.

PHOTOS: A show of support for Joe Biden this month in Macon, Ga., ahead of a Trump rally in the city. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Jonathan Wallace, a former Georgia state representative, is running to win back his seat, which he lost in 2018. Previously, Democrats had not bothered to field candidates in his district. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA L. JONES/ATHENS BANNER-HERALD, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2020

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[***Bringing Both Mother Tongues to the Mic***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YM5-BKN1-DXY4-X4KD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Dan Bilefsky

**Body**

Critics in Montreal say hip-hop artists mixing French and English are threatening the future of the French language in the majority Francophone province.

MONTREAL -- As pungent pot smoke filled the air in a bunkerlike, dimly lit basement recording studio in Montreal, the Quebec rapper Snail Kid pondered a question befitting these pandemic times: What word rhymes with Purell?

Mulling how to fit the hand sanitizer into his latest rap lyric, he considered the English words ''well,'' ''smell'' and ''toaster strudel'' before toying with the French words ''pluriel'' and ''ruelle.''

Then, Snail Kid, 30, a member of the popular Quebec hip-hop group Dead Obies began to rap:

Le monde ici est cruel

On n'est plus well

(The world here is cruel. We are no longer well.)

''Now everyone is going to be competing to find the best rhyme for 'quarantine' or 'corona,''' mused Snail Kid, whose real name is Gregory Beaudin. Mr. Beaudin grew up speaking the native English of his Jamaican-born father, a reggae singer, as well as the French of his Montreal-born mother, a French teacher.

The bilingual wordplay in the cavernous recording studio reflected how the coronavirus has changed not only how we live, but popular culture. It was also notable for another reason particular to Montreal: The group was rapping in Franglais or ''Frenglish,'' mixing English and French with artistic abandon that irks some purists.

The Dead Obies are part of a new generation of young Quebec hip-hop artists who meld the language of Shakespeare and Voltaire with the urban poetry of Montreal's street life and the bling-bling, drug-fueled themes of some American hip-hop.

Other artists of this generation are Loud and FouKi.

To their legions of fans, the groups give voice to the bilingual vernacular of a multicultural city, marinated by its past French and British rulers, the forces of globalization and successive waves of immigration.

''Franglais rappers reflect that the younger generation in Quebec don't care about old orthodoxies and are open to the world,'' said Sugar Sammy, a Quebec comedian with Punjabi roots who became a global sensation after pioneering a bilingual comedy show.

But they have also spawned a backlash in Quebec, a majority French-speaking province, where critics have castigated them as self-colonizers who are ''creolizing'' the French language and threatening its future.

And they have lost out on lucrative federal government funding for Francophone artists because their content wasn't French enough.

Mathieu Bock-Côté, a sociologist and influential columnist at Le Journal de Montréal, said Franglais rappers were a worrying sign that the younger generation in Quebec had lost sight of the fragility of the French language in the city and were turning to English as a default to show emotion and express themselves.

''Franglais is a slippery slope toward Anglicization,'' he said. ''These bourgeois-bohemian adolescents who think speaking English or Franglais will make Montreal into a New York are deluded because it is the French language that gives the city its cachet.''

''Without French, Montreal would be Pittsburgh,'' he added.

Questions of language are inextricably bound up with identity in Quebec, a province of about 8.5 million people where the British minority exerted its language and culture after Quebec was ceded to Britain in 1763 following France's defeat in the Seven Years' War.

French-speakers of a certain age can still recall being admonished by members of the Anglophone minority at factories to ''speak white,'' or speak English.

Today, language laws require that French be the official language of government, business and the courts.

Concerned that the Franglais greeting of ''Bonjour-hi'' was becoming too ubiquitous in Montreal shops and restaurants, the Quebec government in late 2017 passed a nonbinding resolution calling for shopkeepers to say only ''Bonjour'' instead.

A French citizen was recently denied a certificate she needed to settle permanently in Quebec. Her offense? Writing a chapter of her doctoral thesis in English rather than in French. After an outcry, the right-leaning Quebec government granted her the document.

Yet in recent years, Quebec's influential language watchdog has shown some flexibility, alluding to the evolving nature of language.

It ruled that using ''grilled-cheese'' on menus instead of the more long-winded ''sandwich au fromage fondant'' would not breach Quebec's language rules, while cocktail, drag queen, and haggis were also deemed acceptable in French.

At the same time, the watchdog has been successful at encouraging Quebecers to say ''courriel'' instead of the pervasive English word ''email'' used by many in France.

Mr. Beaudin, who grew up in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the eastern part of Montreal, said the Dead Obies hadn't set out to make a political statement. Rather, they were merely mimicking the language and sounds of Québécois French, where words and expressions like ''c'est le fun'' (it's fun) and ''mon chum'' (my boyfriend) were commonplace.

Brought up on English video games and Facebook, he said he and his friends didn't have neuroses about language. Moreover, he argued, a society that attacked its artists was discriminatory, insecure and misguided.

''You can be more creative when you are rapping in two languages,'' he added.

To make his point, he rapped a few lines from a Dead Obies song that switches midsentence from French to English:

Je te jure que Billie Jean is not my lover

Nope, nope

C'est juste une fille que je meet sur le ''E'' dans le after hours

(I swear to you that Billie Jean is not my lover. Nope, nope. It's just a girl I meet on E at the after-hours.)

As a biracial teenager in Montreal, Mr. Beaudin said he had been attracted to rappers like Eminem and Jay-Z and had turned to Franglais rap for cultural affirmation. Rapping in two languages spliced with street slang was also a way to revolt against a Québécois cultural elite dominated by white Francophone artists.

But he said rapping in Franglais has come at a heavy cost. The group lost subsidies of about $18,000 on their second album from a national government fund for Francophone artists because it was 55 percent French and 45 percent English.

The funding was predicated on an album having at least 70 percent French content.

The equivalent Anglophone fund stipulated that French content on an album be no more than 50 percent, making them ineligible for that, too.

''Now we count how many words we say in French or in English,'' he said. ''In a small domestic market like Quebec, artists need subsidies to survive.''

Nicolas Ouellet, host of a popular music show on Radio-Canada, Canada's leading French-language radio station, said Franglais rappers were largely omitted from commercial radio stations and sneered at for not being part of Quebec's ''folklore.''

But, he said, ''rather than bastardizing Québécois French, they are acting as a bridge between Quebec and the rest of North America.''

Montreal has become among the most bilingual cities in North America, alongside Miami and Los Angeles. According to 2016 national census figures, about 18 percent of Canadians speak both English and French, with Quebec driving the bilingualism.

While some guardians of the French language fear creeping bilingualism, the resistance to Franglais rap is more than just a question of language.

FouKi, a popular Quebec rapper whose real name is Léo Fougères, observed that Franglais rapping didn't just irritate those determined to preserve French.

''My father will hear my raps and say to me, 'Isn't there a word for that in French?''' he said. ''But other older people say to me, I don't understand anything you say.''

Nasuna Stuart-Ulin contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/world/canada/quebec-montreal-hip-hop-rapping-franglais.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/world/canada/quebec-montreal-hip-hop-rapping-franglais.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Snail Kid, second from right, with his hip-hop group Dead Obies at work in a Montreal studio. The group is known for its blended English and French lyrics.

Signs in Franglais, or Frenglish, are common in Montreal, above. Groups like Dead Obies are popular with bilingual youths in Quebec, but often criticized by the region's French purists, who accuse them of ''creolizing'' the language. Below, group member Joe Rocca preparing some dinner at the studio. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NASUNA STUART-ULIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Coronavirus Is a Crisis. Might It Also Narrow Inequality?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:606T-D7X1-DXY4-X24F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Eduardo Porter

**Highlight:** Economic downturns have often led to political moves to lift the most vulnerable. But recoveries tend to reverse the effect.

**Body**

Economic downturns have often led to political moves to lift the most vulnerable. But recoveries tend to reverse the effect.

The United States faces an economic downturn without precedent. Is it also a moment that could produce lasting change?

The official unemployment rate was 13.3 percent in May, compared with 3.5 percent in February, and even the Labor Department thinks the recent figures are a substantial undercount. Covid-19 cases, which prompted the crisis, are surging in many states. And the burdens have landed disproportionately on people of color, just as crowds have protested the justice system’s treatment of African-Americans.

“You have three crises compounding each other: a 100-year pandemic, a 75-year depression and 50-year civil unrest,” said Rahm Emanuel, President Barack Obama’s first chief of staff and later Chicago’s mayor. This, he believes, opens political space for bold action.

The political system has already responded in ways unimaginable a few years ago. It took only a smidgen of negotiation in March for Congress to pass a $2 trillion stimulus program by an overwhelming majority, including a temporary supplement to unemployment insurance payments and direct payments to low- and middle-income families.

To some in the economic and political arenas, that should be only a start.

Scholars are brimming with ideas to construct a more generous safety net on a permanent basis, bolstering everything from Medicaid to child care support. Timothy Smeeding, a professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, suggests that the federal government pick up the entire tab for Medicaid, which it now shares with the states.

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“This offers both parties policy accomplishments and political benefits,” Rahm Emanuel said. “There is a grand bargain that has more winners than losers. That is in the tradition of American politics and policymaking.”

This would not be the first time an economic crisis opened the door for an expansion of government assistance. Indeed, much of the American social safety net was built during the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration in response to the Great Depression.

More recently, the Great Recession offered an opportunity for the Obama administration to build on it. In 2009, government redistribution efforts, including food stamps, tax provisions and other social programs, shifted 5.3 percent of the nation’s income that year to the poorest 40 percent of households. This was the biggest such transfer in at least three decades, raising the incomes of that contingent to 18.6 percent of the total.

By the end of his presidency, Mr. Obama had not only extended health insurance to millions of ***working-class*** Americans. [*According to the Congressional Budget Office*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage), in 2016 government programs transferred 6.1 percent of national income to the poorest 40 percent, increasing their slice to 18.8 percent, the largest in almost a quarter-century.

Mr. Obama’s chief economic adviser, Jason Furman, highlighted the “[*historic achievement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage)” of the administration in mitigating the nation’s income inequality.

Mr. Emanuel, who in the depths of the crisis argued that “you never want a serious crisis to go to waste,” acknowledged that the administration might not have achieved all its policy goals, but said, “It wasn’t a swing in the wind.”

In the coronavirus crisis, however, not everybody shares this sense of political opportunity.

Walter Scheidel, an economic historian at Stanford University, has [*written exhaustively*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage) about the power of crises — wars, famines, natural disasters, pestilence — to shift societies onto a more egalitarian path. As far back as the Roman Empire and even beyond, he writes, the equalizing moments in history “shared one common root: massive and violent disruptions of the established order.”

While the current emergency might seem like a big deal, Mr. Scheidel argues, it probably won’t be damaging enough. “If the crisis is bad enough, it might shape preferences enough to shift where the majorities are,” he said. “But it’s not something I see happening any time soon. We are too stable.”

And that reveals one important effect of the country’s social safety net: Though too weak to mitigate deepening inequality, it is generous enough to prevent Americans from pushing for more radical policies.

As Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution points out, inequality declined by some measures during the nation’s recent recessions. The share of income going to the poorest fifth of the population increased slightly in 1990, 2001, 2008 and 2009, even as incomes at the top fell sharply. Expanded unemployment insurance and other programs shielded the poorest Americans from the full brunt of the downturns.

The flip side is that inequality surges during economic expansions. And the tax and transfer system has been powerless to offset it. For instance, despite the Obama administration’s push against inequality, during the expansion from 2009 to 2016 the share of the nation’s income accruing to the richest 10 percent of the population jumped to 33.5 percent from 32.1 percent after considering taxes and transfers, according to a Congressional Budget Office analysis. This vastly outpaced the growth in the share accruing to the poorest 40 percent.

Government in the United States [*spends less on social programs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage) to benefit the less fortunate than most other advanced nations, even though — by international standards — [*the poverty rate is the highest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage) among the 35 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

And in important respects, the American safety net has been getting weaker.

Despite the large increase in spending on unemployment insurance and food stamps, the safety net was less effective in the Great Recession than during the recession of the early 1980s in protecting those at half the poverty line or less, according to an analysis by Hilary Hoynes of the University of California, Berkeley, and Marianne Bitler of the University of California, Davis.

The main reason, Ms. Hoynes noted, was the increase in the conditionality of government benefits. Unconditional cash assistance for poor families was largely replaced after the 1996 welfare law with programs that usually require people to work, such as the earned-income tax credit and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The tax credit “is great for a number of things,” Ms. Hoynes said, but losing your job means losing the credit.

Since the Great Recession, work requirements have been attached to more bits of the safety net, including food stamps and Medicaid. And for all the support for #BlackLivesMatter evident on the streets, racial animus remains a strong political constraint in developing more generous assistance programs.

Research has found that after the welfare overhaul of 1996 empowered states to set rules for benefit entitlement, those with larger African-American populations provided [*less cash assistance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage) to poor families. Moreover, welfare officers [*are more likely to punish*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage) African-American families for violations of program rules.

Martin Gilens of Yale has [*written extensively*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage) about the power of racism to stunt the American safety net, concluding that “racial attitudes are in fact the most important source of opposition to welfare among whites.”

Racial divisions show no sign of dissipating. “I have reviewed nearly every academic article containing the name ‘Donald Trump,’” [*wrote Matt Grossmann*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage), a political scientist at Michigan State University. “This huge literature has plenty of disagreements — but the dominant findings are clear: Attitudes about race, gender and cultural change played outsized roles in the 2016 Republican primaries and general election.”

While the images of young protesters in the streets of American cities after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis last month might suggest political support for expanding the safety net to lift the most vulnerable, research suggests that such protests [*can motivate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage)a [*backlash*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/opinion/medicaid-unemployment-insurance.html?action=click&amp;module=Opinion&amp;pgtype=Homepage).

As Mr. Emanuel noted, one consequence of Mr. Obama’s efforts to expand government assistance after the Great Recession was a movement against government spending more widely: the Tea Party.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Second-Guessing Our Poll? First, Take a Look at How It Works***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:606F-2N91-DXY4-X463-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 24, 2020 Wednesday 10:00 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1427 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** One small favor: If you have a problem with how we did the survey, say so now, before we show the results.

**Body**

One small favor: If you have a problem with how we did the survey, say so now, before we show the results.

On Wednesday morning, The New York Times/Siena College will release its first national survey of the 2020 cycle, followed on Thursday by polls of the six states likeliest to decide the presidency: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, Arizona and North Carolina.

Today, we release one element of the data: the methodology and composition of the sample. This offers a detailed look at how the poll was conducted.

In exchange, we ask one small favor. If you have a problem with how we did the poll, say so now; we will have little sympathy if you criticize the poll only after you find out you don’t like the results.

Don’t read this to mean anything about our results tomorrow. We’ve had the idea for a while of publishing our methodology before releasing the results, and [*indicated our intention to do so*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598) a few weeks ago. The results may be exactly what you expect. Or not.

We’ll also take it as an opportunity to discuss how the poll works and our methodological choices, and why you should trust it [*despite all that happened*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598) [*four years ago*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598).

What is the Times/Siena poll?

It’s a telephone survey of registered voters, which starts with a data set known as the voter file: a list of everyone registered to vote in a state. This contains rich data on every voter, like age and party registration. We get our voter files from L2, a nonpartisan voter data vendor (L2 has worked with the Trump campaign as well as with progressive organizations like Latino Decisions and HaystaqDNA).

These files also include a telephone number for most, though not all, registered voters. Many voters provide their number on their voter registration forms. In other cases, the telephone numbers have been matched from commercial records, based on a person’s name and address. We draw a sample of these numbers, and our friends at Siena College and at a variety of call centers across the country dial away.

And yes, we call cellphone numbers. Over all, about two-thirds of our interviews are usually completed on cellphones, including nearly all of our interviews among respondents under age 40.

Why should we care about your polls after 2016?

This may be hard to believe, but we felt pretty good about our polling in 2016.

The final Times/Siena polls, [*in Florida*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598) and [*North Carolina*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598), had the president ahead or tied over the last 10 days of the race. Only one other live-interview pollster (the highly regarded Ann Selzer poll) found Mr. Trump leading in top-tier battleground states over the final stretch. Other surveys showing President Trump ahead appeared to do so because they did not contact voters via cellphone, and as a consequence would have tended to lean toward the G.O.P.

Other high-quality polls also performed solidly in 2016. Most national polls, for instance, fared very well, including the final New York Times/CBS News survey that had Hillary Clinton ahead by three points nationwide, less than a percentage point from her final popular vote margin.

When we analyzed our data after the election, we assessed that we were right for the right reasons, like showing Mr. Trump with a wide lead among white ***working-class*** voters, and that there were opportunities to refine our approach. We reached a different conclusion than you might expect: If we could go back, we would have wanted more of our own polling in 2016, not less.

In [*2018*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598), we conducted a greater number of political surveys. We had an average error of around three points over nearly 50 polls of House races over the final three weeks, with virtually no bias toward either party. Over the final 10 days, the average error was just over two points. Out of more than 400 pollsters, the Times/Siena poll is one of six to earn an A-plus rating [*from FiveThirtyEight*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598).

Why do you think these polls are good?

There are three major advantages that we think help explain our track record and offer cause for confidence:

* Partisanship. Perhaps our most important advantage over even other high-quality pollsters is that we can adjust for the partisan makeup of the electorate, using data available on voter registration files.For instance, we can make sure we have the right number of registered Republicans or Democrats, the right number of people who voted in the 2020 Democratic primary, the right number of precincts that voted heavily for Mr. Trump. This works best in states with party registration, like Pennsylvania or Florida, and is harder in the states without it, like Wisconsin or Michigan, but even in the worst cases it’s a lot better than nothing.This is possible only because we start our poll with a voter registration file (not all pollsters do). It doesn’t ensure our results are perfect (and a poll can still be top-notch without this step), but it gives us extra confidence that we’re not fundamentally missing Democrats or Republicans, who may at times become more or less likely to respond to surveys.And we go even further: We complete not just the right number of interviews with Democrats and Republicans, but also the right number by race and region. So, for instance, we have the right number of Hispanic registered Republicans in Miami-Dade County. To our knowledge, that’s an assurance that no other public pollster can make.

1. Education. Our samples are adjusted to properly represent voters without a college degree, based on census data. Many state pollsters still don’t adjust their samples by education, and this is considered one of the major reasons that state polls overestimated Mrs. Clinton’s standing in 2016.
2. Contacting hard-to-reach groups. We spend a lot of money to complete interviews with groups that all pollsters struggle to reach: low-turnout voters like younger people or Hispanics. These groups are always important, but properly representing low-turnout voters — especially low-turnout registered Democrats, who are often surprisingly favorable to Mr. Trump — was an essential part of why our polls were closer to the mark than most other polls in our postelection analysis of 2016 surveys.

Does anyone pick up the phone anymore?

Some people do. Just not many. We usually complete interviews with about 1 or 2 percent of the voters we try to reach. Low response rates undoubtedly pose a serious challenge to survey research, and there are some known response biases. For instance, people who take telephone surveys are likelier to volunteer in their community than demographically similar individuals who do not take telephone surveys. But for now, it does not appear that the people who take telephone surveys are vastly different politically from those who do not, after accounting for their demographic characteristics.

Why not online?

Online polling is almost certainly the future of polling and, in many ways, it’s also the present. There are some online polls that are fairly or even favorably comparable to many telephone surveys. But as a whole, online polls continue to have a weaker track record in election polling than telephone polls, and real challenges remain.

There’s a simple reason: There’s no way to conduct a random sample of everyone who uses the internet in the same way that you can conduct a random sample of everyone who has a telephone (or, in our case, a sample of the 60-plus-percent of people with telephone records on a voter file). This doesn’t preclude high-quality survey research. It just makes it a lot harder, and there’s no consensus on the best approach.

What about turnout?

The Times/Siena poll is a poll of registered voters at this stage of the cycle — not of likely voters. It’s hard to predict turnout the day before the election, let alone months ahead or in the midst of a pandemic with uncertain effects on access to voting. So for now estimated turnout won’t affect the survey result: We’ll report the result for all registered voters.

That said, turnout is undoubtedly an important question, and we will report findings among likely voters — as if the election were held tomorrow — even if it won’t be the lead result and even if there’s plenty of reason to wonder whether patterns evident today will hold in November.

Where can I learn more?

You can find a detailed methodology and a description of the composition of the electorate [*here (PDF*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598)). You can find our first presidential national poll results tomorrow at 5 a.m. Eastern. [Update: [*Here are those results*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1270771853695598598).]

PHOTO: Outside a polling place in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn on primary day Tuesday.  (PHOTOGRAPH BY Amr Alfiky/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Trump’s Biggest Economic Legacy Isn’t About the Numbers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:614K-WHJ1-JBG3-64M0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

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**Byline:** Patricia Cohen

**Highlight:** The president has shifted the way both parties talk about trade, immigration and deficits — and despite dismal economic news, many voters still reward him for it.

**Body**

The president has shifted the way both parties talk about trade, immigration and deficits — and despite dismal economic news, many voters still reward him for it.

BETHLEHEM, Pa. — To understand how much [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) has altered the conversation around the economy, just listen to Bruce Haines, who spent decades as an executive at U.S. Steel before becoming a managing partner of the elegant Historic Hotel Bethlehem.

The steel mills that still dominate Bethlehem’s skyline have long been empty. And now, so are the tables in the Tap Room, the hotel’s restaurant, a sign of the economic hardship caused by the coronavirus pandemic. “It’s been very difficult,” Mr. Haines said.

The president’s management of the pandemic is a prime reason many voters cite for backing his opponent. But Mr. Haines, who lives in a swing county in a swing state, is struck most by a different aspect of Mr. Trump’s record.

“I spent 35 years in the steel business and I can tell you unfair trade deals were done by Republicans and Democrats,” Mr. Haines said. Both parties, he complained, had given up on manufacturing — once a wellspring of stable middle-class jobs. “Trump has been the savior of American industry. He got it. He’s the only one.”

In perhaps the greatest reversal of fortune of the Trump presidency, a microscopically tiny virus upended the outsize economic legacy that Mr. Trump had planned to run on for re-election. Instead of record-low unemployment rates, supercharged confidence levels and broad-based gains in personal income, Mr. Trump will end his term with rising poverty, wounded growth and a higher jobless rate than when he took office.

Still, despite one of the worst years in recent American history, the issue on which Mr. Trump gets [*his highest approval ratings remains the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html). It points to the resilience of his reputation as a savvy businessman and hard-nosed negotiator. And it is evidence that his most enduring economic legacy may not rest in any statistical almanac, but in how much he has shifted the conversation around the economy.

Long before Mr. Trump appeared on the political stage, powerful forces were reshaping the economy and inciting deep-rooted anxieties about secure middle-income jobs and America’s economic pre-eminence in the world. Mr. Trump recognized, stoked and channeled those currents in ways that are likely to persist whether he wins or loses the election.

By ignoring economic and political orthodoxies, he at times successfully married seemingly contradictory or inconsistent positions to win over both hard-core capitalists and the ***working class***. There would be large tax breaks and deregulation for business owners and investors, and trade protection and aid for manufacturers, miners and farmers.

In the process, he scrambled party positions on key issues like immigration and globalization, and helped [*topple sacred verities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) about [*government debt*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html). He took a Republican Party that preached free trade, low spending and debt reduction and transformed it into one that picked trade wars even with allies, ran up [*record-level peacetime deficits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) and shielded critical social programs from cuts.

“He completely moved the Republican Party away from reducing Social Security and Medicare spending,” said Michael R. Strain, an economist at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

On immigration, Mr. Trump remade the political landscape in a different way. He has accused immigrants of stealing jobs or committing crimes and — as he did in Thursday night’s debate — continued to disparage their intelligence. In doing so, he rallied hard-line sentiments that could be found in each party and turned them into a mostly Republican cri de coeur.

The Democrats [*changed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) in turn. Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. has [*positioned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) himself as the champion of immigrants, pledging to reverse Mr. Trump’s most restrictive policies, while rejecting more radical proposals like eliminating the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

He has also been pushed to finesse his position on [*fracking and the oil industry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html), promising not to ban the controversial drilling method on private lands, and trying — with mixed success — to walk back comments he had made during the presidential debate about transitioning away from fossil fuels.

Shifts on trade were more momentous. Mr. Biden and other party leaders who had once promoted the benefits of globalization found themselves playing defense against a Republican who outflanked them on issues like industrial flight and foreign competition. They responded by embracing elements of protectionism that they had previously abandoned.

No matter who spends the next four years in the White House, economic policy is likely to pay more attention to American jobs and industries threatened by China and other foreign competition and [*less attention to worries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) about deficits caused by government efforts to stimulate the economy.

The reshuffling is clear to Charles Jefferson, the managing owner of Montage Mountain Ski Resort near Scranton, Pa.

“Those were not conversations we were having five years ago,” he said. “The exodus of manufacturing jobs, that was considered a fait accompli.”

Mr. Jefferson, 55, grew up in North Philadelphia in a blue-collar union family and remembers the hemorrhaging of jobs that many Democratic leaders said was unstoppable in a globalized world — even though such positions were deeply unpopular with many rank-and-file Democrats.

Manufacturing revived after bottoming out during the Great Recession but floundered during President Barack Obama’s second term. Mr. Jefferson, who said he voted for Mr. Obama, supported Mr. Trump in 2016. He plans to do so again.

The sector still represents a relatively small slice of the economy, accounting for 11 percent of the country’s total output and employing less than 9 percent of American workers. But Mr. Trump has been a relentless cheerleader. While he often took credit for manufacturing jobs at companies like [*General Motors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) and [*Foxconn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) that later disappeared or never materialized, the pace of hiring in the sector sped up considerably in 2018 before stalling out last year.

As a result, in this election, unlike the last, the significance of manufacturing and the need for a more skeptical approach to free trade are not contested.

Mr. Biden, after decades of supporting trade pacts, is now running on a [*“made in all of America” program*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) that promises to “use full power of the federal government to bolster American industrial and technological strength.” He has also vowed to use the tax code to encourage businesses to [*keep or create jobs on American soil*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html).

Even voters who don’t particularly like Mr. Trump credit him with re-energizing the U.S. economy.

Walter Dealtrey Jr., who runs a tire service, sales and retreading business in Bethlehem that his father started 65 years ago, said he voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, but he was never a big fan of the president.

“He talks too much,” said Mr. Dealtrey, who’s been around long enough to distinguish a new Goodyear or Michelin tire by its smell. “And his tone is terrible.” A year ago, he had considered the possibility of supporting a moderate Democrat like Mr. Biden or Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

But with Election Day just over a week away, Mr. Dealtrey plans to once again support the president. Even after a few unnervingly slow months in the spring and some layoffs among the 960 people he employed at his company, Service Tire Truck Centers, he still trusts Mr. Trump on the economy.

Mr. Dealtrey talked as he walked around stacks of giant tires that towered above his own six-foot frame, a Stonehenge-size monument to wheeled transport. He likes the president’s focus on “big manufacturing” and the way he “instills confidence in businesses to invest in this country.”

Just how much responsibility Mr. Trump deserves for reframing some key economic issues is up for debate. Frustration about job losses in the United States has been brewing for decades; the parties were diverging on immigration; and antagonism toward China over trade practices, suspicions of technology theft and its authoritarian tactics extends beyond the United States.

“I don’t think he really has pushed the boundaries of any of those policy issues beyond where they already were,” said Mr. Strain of the American Enterprise Institute.

Similarly, Jason Furman, a chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers during the Obama administration, argues that Mr. Trump was pushed along by the same trends and forces that spurred his supporters. And on some issues, like [*immigration,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) he caused public opinion to move in the opposite direction.

In the end, it may turn out that the president’s most significant impact on economic policy is not one that he intended: overturning the conventional wisdom about the impact of government deficits.

By simultaneously pursuing steep tax cuts for businesses and wealthy individuals, raising military spending and ruling out Medicare and Social Security reductions, Mr. Trump presided over unprecedented trillion-dollar deficits. Emergency pandemic relief added to the bill. Such sums were supposed to cause interest rates and inflation to spike and crowd out private investment. They didn’t.

“Trump has done a lot to legitimize deficit spending,” Mr. Furman said.

Mr. Furman is one of a [*growing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html) circle of economists and bankers who have called for Washington to let go of its [*debt obsession*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/science/trump-covid-19-genome.html). Investing in infrastructure, health care, education and job creation are worth borrowing for, they argue, particularly in an era of low interest rates.

That doesn’t mean the issue has disappeared. Republicans will undoubtedly oppose deficits resulting from proposals put forward by a Democratic White House — and vice versa. But warnings about the calamitous consequences of federal borrowing are unlikely to have the same resonance as before the Trump presidency.

Back in his office, Mr. Dealtrey remembers how disturbed he once was about the size of the deficit. “I used to care about my kids and grandkids being stuck with it,” he said, leaning back in his chair. “But nobody cares anymore.”

“Maybe I don’t care anymore,” he said, momentarily surprised at his own words. “We’ve got bigger problems than that.”

PHOTOS: Many in Bethlehem, Pa., a steel industry town, believe the president has been good for the manufacturing sector and the economy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Walter Dealtrey Jr., who runs a tire service in Bethlehem, Pa., said he was never a big fan of the president though he voted for him.; Companies like Service Tire Truck Centers saw business drop at the start of the pandemic, but for many it has since come back. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A31)

**Load-Date:** November 1, 2020

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[***R.N.C.'s Video Leaves Tenants Feeling Tricked***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60PN-NJC1-JBG3-607J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 29, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1519 words

**Byline:** By Matthew Haag

**Body**

''I am not a Trump supporter,'' one of the tenants said, adding that she was furious that her interview with a government official was used for the convention.

It started with an unexpected call last week from Lynne Patton, a longtime Trump associate who oversees federal housing programs in New York.

Ms. Patton told a leader of a tenants' group at the New York City Housing Authority, the nation's largest, that she was interested in speaking with residents about conditions in the authority's buildings, which have long been in poor repair.

Four tenants soon assembled in front of a video camera and were interviewed for more than four hours by Ms. Patton herself. Three of the tenants were never told that their interviews would be edited into a two-minute video clip that would air prominently on Thursday night at the Republican National Convention and be used to bash Mayor Bill de Blasio, the three tenants said in interviews on Friday.

''I am not a Trump supporter,'' said one of the tenants, Claudia Perez. ''I am not a supporter of his racist policies on immigration. I am a first-generation Honduran. It was my people he was sending back.''

The episode represents another stark example of how President Trump has deployed government resources to further his political ambitions. Ms. Patton is head of the New York office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and under the Hatch Act is barred from using her government position to engage in political activities.

Throughout the convention, Mr. Trump has shattered the traditional boundaries between government and politics, and the video was aired on a night when the campaign took over the South Lawn of the White House, the first time that a major political convention has occurred there.

The public housing clip was the second instance of the Trump campaign's misleading participants in an event involving the federal government that was filmed for the Republican National Convention. On Tuesday, the convention showed a video of five new American citizens being sworn in at a naturalization ceremony by Mr. Trump. Some of the five said they did not know that they were being filmed for a political event.

The four tenants in the public housing video were all interviewed on Friday by The New York Times. Three said they opposed President Trump and were misled about the video. The fourth, reached late Friday night, said she was a Trump backer and knew the purpose of the video.

In the video, the tenants raised concerns about conditions in the housing authority's buildings, praised Mr. Trump's record on public housing and attacked Mr. de Blasio's. Ms. Perez, one of the tenants, said in an interview on Friday afternoon that she stood by her criticism of the authority but was furious about being tricked into appearing in a video shown at the R.N.C.

Ms. Perez said she had been called last week by another tenant leader, Carmen Quiñones, who said Ms. Patton was with her at the Frederick Douglass Houses in Manhattan and wanted to talk to residents about the housing authority's performance.

Only after the questioning ended were the four tenants told that the interview was for the Republican Party, Ms. Perez said. But she said she was never told that it was for the convention.

Ms. Perez said she demanded to see the edited version of the clip, but no one ever showed it to her. She added that Ms. Quiñones called her minutes before the clip aired on Thursday night to say that it was about to be shown.

During the pandemic, Ms. Perez and Ms. Quiñones have helped to provide hundreds of thousands of meals to residents who would not have had food otherwise. One of the vendors who provided the food, a farming company owned by Muslims, called an associate of Ms. Perez on Friday and asked why she appeared in a video supporting Mr. Trump, Ms. Perez said.

Tim Murtagh, a spokesman for the Trump campaign, defended the handling of the video. ''All interview subjects were fully aware of the purpose of the interviews,'' he said. ''Lynne Patton was acting in her own personal capacity.''

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Ms. Patton said that she had spoken with all four tenants on Friday and that they were upset with the way The Times was ''twisting their words.''

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Ms. Perez and a third tenant, Manny Martinez, said they had not spoken with Ms. Patton on Friday and did not know what she was talking about.

Ms. Patton is a Trump family loyalist who before the president's election organized tournaments on his golf courses and planned his son Eric's wedding. She had little experience in housing policy before her appointment to HUD.

In 2019, a federal agency found that she had violated the Hatch Act by displaying a Trump campaign hat in her office and ''liking'' political tweets, though the agency did not recommend that she be disciplined.

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But over the years, the buildings have deteriorated and have been plagued by poor maintenance.

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The one Trump supporter among the four tenants was Judy Smith, who is quoted in the video saying, ''I'm grateful for the spotlight that President Trump is putting on New York City public housing.''

In the video, Ms. Smith also contended, without providing any evidence, that the de Blasio administration gave public housing preferences to undocumented immigrants.

In an interview on Friday night, Ms. Smith said she was pleased with the video. ''The Republicans gave people in public housing a platform to express their grievances,'' she said.

Explaining how the video came about, Ms. Quiñones, the leader of the tenants' group, confirmed that Ms. Patton had reached out to her about assembling tenants to talk about the authority.

But Ms. Quiñones said she did not realize until the cameras started and the questions began that Ms. Patton had actually recruited the tenants for interviews for the party.

Ms. Quiñones said she wished that she had been told in advance that the clip would be shown at the convention. She said she was a lifelong Democrat who plans to vote for Joseph R. Biden Jr. in November. She was interviewed on Friday as she marched in Washington at the Get Your Knee Off Our Necks rally, sponsored by another Trump target, the Rev. Al Sharpton.

When asked whether she was concerned about being misled, Ms. Quiñones said, ''It is what it is.''

She added that she decided to use the opportunity to highlight what she said were extensive problems at the housing authority under Mr. de Blasio.

''For me, this was not about party, but for us to make the national stage,'' Ms. Quiñones said. ''They were the only ones that offered. My own party didn't offer.''

Ms. Quiñones said Ms. Patton had been a strong advocate for the housing authority.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

She said she supports the Democratic Party except for one person, Mr. de Blasio, whom she blamed for what she said were worsening conditions at the Douglass Houses in Manhattan and across the housing authority, which has 400,000 tenants.

The third tenant, Mr. Martinez, said he was asked to take part in the meeting with Ms. Patton with little notice, but took up the opportunity to air his concerns about public housing. ''This was not an endorsement of Trump,'' he said.

Mr. de Blasio did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

But on Thursday night, his press secretary, Bill Neidhardt, called the video a ''cynical attempt to pit Black Americans against immigrants,'' a reference to the assertion in the video by Ms. Smith that undocumented immigrants had been allowed to cut in line to get housing before American citizens.

''It's wrong,'' Mr. Neidhardt wrote on Twitter. ''After decades of disinvestment, Mayor de Blasio has made historic investments in NYCHA. But at least this much is true: The Mayor lives rent free in Trump's head."

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/28/nyregion/nyc-tenants-rnc-video-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/28/nyregion/nyc-tenants-rnc-video-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Claudia Perez, far left, and Carmen Quiñones said they were unaware that they were being interviewed for a segment to be aired at the Republican National Convention. (PHOTOGRAPH BY REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION) (A17)

**Load-Date:** August 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***N.Y.C. Tenants Say They Were Tricked Into Appearing in R.N.C. Video***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60PH-V9F1-JBG3-6490-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 28, 2020 Friday 16:20 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1543 words

**Byline:** Matthew Haag

**Highlight:** “I am not a Trump supporter,” one of the tenants said, adding that she was furious that her interview with a government official was used for the convention.

**Body**

“I am not a Trump supporter,” one of the tenants said, adding that she was furious that her interview with a government official was used for the convention.

It started with an unexpected call last week from [*Lynne Patton*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/nyregion/lynne-patton-rnc-video-trump.html), a longtime [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/nyregion/lynne-patton-rnc-video-trump.html) associate who oversees federal housing programs in New York.

Ms. Patton told a leader of a tenants’ group at the New York City Housing Authority, the nation’s largest, that she was interested in speaking with residents about conditions in the authority’s buildings, which have long been in poor repair.

Four tenants soon assembled in front of a video camera and were interviewed for more than four hours by Ms. Patton herself. Three of the tenants were never told that their interviews would be edited into a two-minute video clip that would air prominently on Thursday night at the Republican National Convention and be used to bash Mayor Bill de Blasio, the three tenants said in interviews on Friday.

“I am not a Trump supporter,” said one of the tenants, Claudia Perez. “I am not a supporter of his racist policies on immigration. I am a first-generation Honduran. It was my people he was sending back.”

The episode represents another stark example of how President Trump has deployed government resources to further his political ambitions. Ms. Patton is head of the New York office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and under the Hatch Act is barred from using her government position to engage in political activities.

Throughout the convention, Mr. Trump has [*shattered the traditional boundaries between government and politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/nyregion/lynne-patton-rnc-video-trump.html), and the video was aired on a night when the campaign took over the South Lawn of the White House, the first time that a major political convention has occurred there.

The public housing clip was the second instance of the Trump campaign’s misleading participants in an event involving the federal government that was filmed for the Republican National Convention. On Tuesday, the [*convention showed a video of five new American citizens*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/nyregion/lynne-patton-rnc-video-trump.html) being sworn in at a naturalization ceremony by Mr. Trump. Some of the five said they did not know that they were being filmed for a political event.

The four tenants in the public housing video were all interviewed on Friday by The New York Times. Three said they opposed President Trump and were misled about the video. The fourth, reached late Friday night, said she was a Trump backer and knew the purpose of the video.

In the video, the tenants raised concerns about conditions in the housing authority’s buildings, praised Mr. Trump’s record on public housing and attacked Mr. de Blasio’s. Ms. Perez, one of the tenants, said in an interview on Friday afternoon that she stood by her criticism of the authority but was furious about being tricked into appearing in a video shown at the R.N.C.

Ms. Perez said she had been called last week by another tenant leader, Carmen Quiñones, who said Ms. Patton was with her at the Frederick Douglass Houses in Manhattan and wanted to talk to residents about the housing authority’s performance.

Only after the questioning ended were the four tenants told that the interview was for the Republican Party, Ms. Perez said. But she said she was never told that it was for the convention.

Ms. Perez said she demanded to see the edited version of the clip, but no one ever showed it to her. She added that Ms. Quiñones called her minutes before the clip aired on Thursday night to say that it was about to be shown.

During the pandemic, Ms. Perez and Ms. Quiñones have [*helped to provide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/nyregion/lynne-patton-rnc-video-trump.html)hundreds of thousands of meals to residents who would not have had food otherwise. One of the vendors who provided the food, a farming company owned by Muslims, called an associate of Ms. Perez on Friday and asked why she appeared in a video supporting Mr. Trump, Ms. Perez said.

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In 2019, a [*federal agency found that she had violated the Hatch Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/nyregion/lynne-patton-rnc-video-trump.html) by displaying a Trump campaign hat in her office and “liking” political tweets, though the agency did not recommend that she be disciplined.

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Sheelagh McNeill contributed research.

PHOTOS: Claudia Perez, far left, and Carmen Quiñones said they were unaware that they were being interviewed for a segment to be aired at the Republican National Convention. (PHOTOGRAPH BY REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION) (A17)

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Can Biden Finally Fix America’s Broken Immigration System?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61TN-HYB1-JBG3-627S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 21, 2021 Thursday 19:24 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2029 words

**Byline:** Spencer Bokat-Lindell

**Highlight:** He called part of Obama’s legacy “a big mistake.” Here’s how he plans to remedy it.

**Body**

He called part of Obama’s legacy “a big mistake.” Here’s how he plans to remedy it.

This article is part of the Debatable newsletter. You can [*sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to receive it on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Last February, back when the fate of the Democratic presidential primary was still uncertain, the journalist Jorge Ramos coaxed from Joe Biden a sentiment he was not in the habit of expressing: regret for the actions of his former boss Barack Obama.

Mr. Ramos [*was questioning*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) Mr. Biden about the Obama administration’s immigration legacy, which includes the deportation of more than three million undocumented immigrants, an estimated 1.7 million of whom had no criminal record. “We took far too long to get it right,” Mr. Biden [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) of the administration’s early failure to focus only on those who had committed crimes. “I think it was a big mistake.”

On his first day as president, Mr. Biden took an extraordinary step toward remedying that mistake: Mere hours after he was sworn in on Wednesday, he not only [*revoked*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) a Trump executive order that [*aggressively targeted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) undocumented immigrants for arrest, but also [*sent a sweeping proposal*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to Congress that promised, after four years of an explicitly anti-immigration administration, “to restore humanity and American values to our immigration system.” What would this restoration look like, and can it succeed? Here’s what people are saying.

Inside Biden’s plan

Named the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021, Mr. Biden’s plan, if made law, would be the most comprehensive immigration reform since the Reagan administration. Here are [*some of its key provisions*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable):

* An eight-year pathway to citizenship: The bill would allow the estimated 10.5 million undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States on or before Jan. 1, 2021, to immediately apply for temporary legal status. (Current holders of temporary protected status, farmworkers and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients would be able to apply for green cards immediately.) After five years, provided they pass background checks and pay their taxes, those with temporary status would be eligible for green cards, and after another three years, citizenship.

1. An overhaul of the family- and jobs-based immigration system: The bill promises to make it easier for family-based immigration — which was [*drastically curtailed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) under the Trump administration — by clearing backlogs, increasing per-country visa quotas and eliminating the so-called three- and 10-year bars that prohibit undocumented immigrants who [*leave the country from returning.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) At the same time, the plan promises to make it easier for high-skilled foreign workers to immigrate to and stay in the country.
2. Labor protections: The bill calls for the establishment of a commission involving labor, employer and civil rights organizations to strengthen protections from deportation for undocumented workers who face workplace retaliation and labor violations.
3. A plan to address the underlying causes of immigration from Central America: ​The bill would establish a $4 billion program to assist El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in mitigating poverty, crime and other conditions that drive people to flee their home countries, [*as thousands are now doing*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable).
4. A reformed immigration court system: The bill promises to reduce immigration court backlogs — which number some [*1.3 million cases*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) — expand family case management programs and improve technology for immigration courts.
5. More investment in border security: Mr. Biden would build on his predecessor’s funding for immigration enforcement by authorizing record budget allocations to the Department of Homeland Security, with an emphasis on investing in screening technologies for drug smuggling and other forms of criminal activity instead of a physical border wall.
6. An improved asylum system: Throughout his presidency, Mr. Trump drew attention to the [*frequent mobilization*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) of large groups of Central American migrants seeking refuge in the United States to [*restrict the right of foreigners to claim asylum*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). Mr. Biden’s plan would ease these restrictions while expediting and improving the asylum application process at ports of entry.

The case for and against Biden’s plan

The path to citizenship is arguably the most significant component of Mr. Biden’s plan, and may draw broad support. [*According*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to the Pew Research Center, 75 percent of Americans, including 57 percent of Republicans, say there should be a way for undocumented immigrants already living here to stay in the country legally if certain conditions are met, even as a large majority support [*increased border security*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) (though not in the form of a border wall).

“Legalizing all unauthorized immigrants, not just DREAMers, was once considered the ‘third rail’ in Democratic immigration politics,” Tara Golshan [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) at Vox. “Republicans decried it as amnesty, and even moderate Democrats worried it would send the wrong message to people living unlawfully in the United States. Now it’s uncontroversial.”

The proposal has also earned praise from immigration activists. “We are truly in the cusp of a new day, and I could not be more thrilled,” Lorella Praeli, the president of Community Change Action, [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) The Times. “The new administration and Congress will face a political mandate to deliver on the vision for a more just and free country.”

Still others argue that Mr. Biden’s plan is too lenient and will invite more illegal immigration. “Amnesties have always created an incentive for more migrants to enter the United States illegally, as new migrants enter illegally hoping that they will be able to take advantage of the next amnesty,” Andrew R. Arthur [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) at the Center for Immigration Studies. “Any amnesty that is not accompanied by a reform of the legal immigration system will have a ‘multiplier’ effect on the number of foreign nationals who ultimately remain in and enter the United States legally.”

Objections to Mr. Biden’s plan will not pertain strictly to law or demographics. While there is broad consensus that immigration [*benefits the economy overall*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), debate persists about whether and to what extent an increase of so-called [*low-skilled*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), undocumented immigrants [*depresses the wages*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) of similar workers already in the country, especially those without high school degrees.

“Allowing a massive flow of new immigrants — the inevitable result of any amnesty plan — will also help Republicans complete their transformation from being the party of Wall Street (which has abandoned them in recent election cycles) to that of the ***working class***,” Jonathan Tobin [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in Newsweek. “Such voters rightly understand that such a measure at a time of high unemployment is a gift to large corporations, but a cruel blow to Americans — both whites and minorities — who are sinking further into poverty as a result of pandemic.”

Similar concerns have been raised about the plan’s implications for high-skilled workers already in the country. “The above executive-based proposals will apparently provide domestic employers with more skilled labor options, but also will pose a challenge to the domestic labor market by increasing the competitiveness of the pool of potential skilled employees,” Ediberto Román [*argues*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in Bloomberg Law. “In fact, some of the Biden proposals actually expand the pool of domestic workers, i.e., his DACA and DAPA reinstatement plans.”

How we got here: Why does the United States have so many undocumented immigrants?

The population of undocumented immigrants in the United States began to grow with the overhaul of immigration policy in 1965, which imposed the [*first limits on immigration*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) from countries in the Western Hemisphere. That overhaul coincided with the end of the [*Bracero program*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), which was designed to fill labor shortages for low-paying agricultural jobs during World War II by allowing farmworkers from Mexico to work legally in the United States on a temporary basis and travel back and forth between the two countries.

When avenues for legal migration were suddenly restricted after 1965, enforcement efforts had the opposite of their intended effect: Since 1996, as Dara Lind [*explains*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) at Vox, most undocumented immigrants have had [*no way of applying for legal status*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) — even if they marry a U.S. citizen.

In recent years, illegal immigration has decreased from Mexico but increased from Central America and Asia, with the majority occurring [*because of visa overstays*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) rather than border crossings. As of 2017, about 4.95 million of the 10.5 million undocumented immigrants in the United States were from Mexico, 1.9 million were from Central America, 1.45 million were from Asia, and 500,000 were from Europe and Canada, [*according*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to the Pew Research Center.

Can Biden’s plan pass?

Senator Charles Schumer of New York, the majority leader, vowed to take up Mr. Biden’s immigration proposal, calling it “one of the most important things a Democratic Congress can do.” While Mr. Obama campaigned on the promise of bringing undocumented immigrants “[*out of the shadows*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable),” he didn’t follow through when Democrats had control of both congressional chambers, and [*the promise died*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in 2013 in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

Nine years later, Mr. Biden’s plan is likely to face fierce opposition from Senate Republicans. “The political wrangling over Biden’s plan is going to be significant, and getting Congress to act will take nothing short of a miracle,” Scott Martelle [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in The Los Angeles Times. “Few issues in contemporary American politics are as thorny as immigration, pitting those who believe in living up to our history as a nation built on immigration against folks who would prefer to keep the door only slightly ajar.”

For example, Senator Marco Rubio, Republican of Florida, has already called the proposal a “nonstarter,” adding that “there are many issues I think we can work cooperatively with President-elect Biden, but a blanket amnesty for people who are here unlawfully isn’t going to be one of them.”

Confronted with such opposition, immigration advocates are mulling alternative ways of passing parts of Mr. Biden’s proposal, as Nicole Narea [*reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) for Vox. For example, the advocacy group FWD.us [*has estimated*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) that about 5 million of the 10.5 million undocumented immigrants in the country are essential pandemic workers, so some congressional Democrats [*are planning*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to draft a stand-alone bill to give them access to green cards.

“I would be surprised if anything big could get through,” Sarah Pierce, a policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, told Ms. Narea. “The bandwidth couldn’t be more limited. The pandemic is going to be that the big focus, and it’s going to be hard to draw people’s attention away from that. So I think it’s probably going to be something more piecemeal.”

Mr. Biden already took steps to undo some of the Trump administration’s immigration policies on Wednesday by [*issuing a suite of executive orders*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) that fortified DACA, halted construction of the border wall with Mexico and rescinded the so-called Muslim ban.

But reversing his predecessor’s legacy entirely so that he can forge his own — even with Congress’s help, and especially without it — will not be easy. “There’s so much change that has happened in the last four years,” Ms. Pierce [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) the Times editorial board. “There’s no way a new administration could reverse things in four or even eight years.”

Do you have a point of view we missed? Email us at [*debatable@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). Please note your name, age and location in your response, which may be included in the next newsletter.

MORE ON BIDEN’S IMMIGRATION AGENDA

[*“Biden Will Try to Unmake Trump’s Immigration Agenda. It Won’t Be Easy.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The Marshall Project]

[*“Tech rallies behind Biden’s immigration plans”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The Verge]

[*“The Good and Bad of Biden’s Plan to Legalize Illegal Immigrants”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The Cato Institute]

[*“‘I was crying but out of joy:’ Bay Area residents applaud Biden’s immigration plan”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable)[The San Francisco Chronicle]

[*“Obama’s Failed Promise to Immigrant Families”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The New Yorker]

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; photographs by Chang W. Lee/The New York Times, Adriana Zehbrauskas and Alyssa Schukar for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 21, 2021

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[***American Airstrikes Stir Anger From the Iraqis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XW8-C2P1-DXY4-X3DC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 1, 2020 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1263 words

**Byline:** By Alan Yuhas

**Body**

Months of antigovernment protests had centered on Iran's influence in the country. A rocket attack and a series of airstrikes changed all that.

For months, furious protests have battered Iraq, driven by frustration at a dysfunctional economy, corruption and the pervasive influence of a foreign power: Iran.

Then a rocket attack killed an American contractor in Iraq, American airstrikes hit an Iranian-backed Iraqi militia, and Iraqis' anger turned back on the United States, culminating with a break-in at its embassy compound in Baghdad on Tuesday.

The airstrikes and the embassy break-in brought the United States to its most serious crisis in the country in years -- and pulled it deeper into the volatile problems engulfing Iraq and its neighbor Iran.

Complicated at the best of times, the relations between Iraq, Iran and the United States are now even more fraught.

What happened in the last few days?

On Friday, more than 30 rockets were fired at an Iraqi military base near Kirkuk, in northern Iraq, killing an American civilian contractor and wounding four American and two Iraqi servicemen.

The United States accused an Iranian-backed militia, Kataib Hezbollah, of carrying out the attack. A spokesman for the militia denied its involvement. President Trump blamed Iran for the attack, writing Tuesday on Twitter, ''Iran killed an American contractor, wounding many.''

The American military launched airstrikes against the militia over the weekend, killing 24 members in what Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called ''a decisive response.'' He said the United States would ''not stand for the Islamic Republic of Iran to take actions that put American men and women in jeopardy.''

The United States and Iran are at longstanding odds -- over influence in Iraq, Iran's nuclear program and other issues -- and tensions have spiked under the Trump administration, which pulled out of the 2015 nuclear accord and imposed punishing sanctions on Tehran.

But the American airstrikes came at a particularly combustible moment in Iraq, where anger at foreign meddling was already running high. The country's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, warned that Iraq must not become ''a field for settling regional and international scores,'' and Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi called the airstrikes a violation of Iraqi sovereignty.

On Tuesday, protesters stormed the sprawling American Embassy compound in Baghdad. They did not enter the main embassy buildings, and eventually joined thousands of others nearby -- many of them members of the fighting groups technically overseen by the Iraqi military, and many chanting ''Death to America.''

Mr. Trump accused Iran of ''orchestrating'' the break-in, adding ''they will be held fully responsible.''

Many of the protesters who broke into the compound were members of Kataib Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed militias. While Iran remains deeply influential in Iraq, it has also been the recent target of anger, and sometimes violence, by Iraqi protesters.

Why has Iraq been so volatile recently?

Huge, sometimes violent protests began erupting across Iraq in October, as people angry about unemployment, corruption and shambolic public services poured into the streets. For 12 weeks, the government flailed for a solution, variously promising reform and cracking down.

More than 500 people were killed and 19,000 injured in the unrest, according to the United Nations special envoy to Iraq.

The brutal government response hardened protesters' resolve, and the protests gradually expanded to include complaints about Iran's widespread influence in Iraq's government. (An Iranian general, Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, had brokered the deal creating the current government.) Many protesters link Iranian influence to corruption in the government and among Shiite militias.

In November, protesters burned down the Iranian Consulate in the southern city of Najaf, and for weeks, protesters camped outside the heavily guarded Green Zone of Baghdad, the seat of Parliament and the prime minister. By the end of the month, Prime Minister Abdul Mahdi said he would resign.

Iraq's government has been in limbo ever since, unable to pick his successor.

How is Iran involved in Iraq's militias?

After years of competing with the United States for influence over Iraq, Iran has emerged as an aggressive and powerful force in Iraqi life.

Iran wields powerful influence in the government, business and religion. Iranian-linked parties have gained significant strength in Parliament, especially since the American military withdrawal in 2009. And when the Islamic State invaded Iraq in 2014, Iran helped form Shiite militias to fight it, giving it leverage in Iraq's security.

As the militias and the United States -- effectively fighting on the same side -- drove the Islamic State out of territory it controlled in Iraq, the militias gained influence. They control powerful factions in Parliament and the military, and some have turned into mafia-like groups that use extortion rackets to profit from Iraqis.

Some militias have attacked Iraqi bases where Americans are stationed, too. The populist cleric Moktada al-Sadr, who has called for the United States and Iran to leave Iraq, urged the militias to stop ''irresponsible actions.''

The group accused in Friday's rocket attack, Kataib Hezbollah, has close ties to Iran, but many Iraqis consider it a primarily Iraqi force. It is separate from the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon, though both groups have Iran's backing and oppose the United States. The State Department has designated both groups as terrorist organizations.

Kataib Hezbollah promised ''retaliation'' for the airstrikes, without providing details. Iran's Foreign Ministry said the United States ''must accept full responsibility for the consequences of this illegal action.''

What is the United States presence in Iraq?

The United States has about 5,200 troops in Iraq, and a fluctuating number of civilian contractors. Most of the soldiers are stationed at a base northwest of Baghdad and at a base in the Kurdish-controlled north.

The embassy compound in Baghdad opened in 2009 and, at 104 acres, is nearly as large as Vatican City. The compound and the American Consulate in Erbil, in northern Iraq, have a combined staff of 486, most in Baghdad.

After the storming on Tuesday, the Pentagon sent 120 additional Marines to Baghdad. Late Tuesday, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper announced that about 750 troops would deploy to the region.

The American presence in Iraq has declined sharply from its height during and immediately after the Iraq war. There were nearly 16,000 people in the embassy compound in 2012, and 170,000 troops in Iraq in 2007. Amid rising tensions with Iran this year, the State Department ordered some diplomats to leave the embassy.

What's happening in Iran?

Adding to the regional turmoil, Iran has also been reckoning with its worst unrest in decades.

These protests began in November with a sudden increase in gasoline prices, and grew into demonstrations against Iran's leaders and how they have handled American sanctions, a staggering economy and anger from neighbors in Iraq and Lebanon.

Thousands of people demonstrated, many from cities with large low-income and ***working-class*** populations, but Iran's security forces crushed the protest, killing up to 450 people, according to human rights groups. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, justified the crackdown by calling the protests a plot by Iran's enemies at home and abroad.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/31/world/middleeast/iraq-embassy-iran.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/31/world/middleeast/iraq-embassy-iran.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The base of an Iranian-backed militia, Kataib Hezbollah, on Monday in Iraq after U.S. airstrikes. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** January 1, 2020

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[***Covid-19’s Economic Pain Is Universal. But Relief? Depends on Where You Live***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YGT-4J41-DXY4-X07N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 5, 2020 Sunday 21:16 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1313 words

**Byline:** Matt Apuzzo and Monika Pronczuk

**Highlight:** In some countries, workers will have 90 percent of lost wages covered. In others, residents fear eviction. Nation to nation, rescue plans reflect conflicting ideas of government’s role in a crisis.

**Body**

In some countries, workers will have 90 percent of lost wages covered. In others, residents fear eviction. Nation to nation, rescue plans reflect conflicting ideas of government’s role in a crisis.

In a Queens apartment, a laid-off busboy has no idea if he will make next month’s rent or feed his family. An out-of-work waitress in Amsterdam, though, can count on the government to cover 90 percent of her wages. As a Malaysian florist anxiously burns through her savings, cafe owners in Brussels receive about $4,300 to make up for lost revenue.

Weeks of layoffs and lockdowns have made clear that poor and ***working-class*** people will bear a disproportionate share of the pain from the coronavirus pandemic. In cities around the world, work has stopped. Bills have not. And no end is in sight. But the first wave of government rescue packages has exposed another reality: The pain will depend largely on where people live.

The disparity reflects not only the world’s differing safety nets, but also the contrasting views of a government’s role in a crisis. Should it pump cash into the economy? Bail out businesses? Replace lost income for workers? Those questions are at the heart of a protracted debate over a nearly $2 trillion rescue package being negotiated in Washington.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do. Oh my God,” said Jose Luis Candia, 34, who lost his two jobs busing tables at high-end Manhattan restaurants. His wife gave birth to their third daughter a month ago. Friends have donated money for groceries. He does not know how he will pay rent or what will happen if he cannot.

Half a world away, in Copenhagen, workers in Mr. Candia’s situation face a different reality. The Danish government has promised to cover 75 percent to 90 percent of salaries if businesses do not lay off their employees. Better to pay to keep people employed than to pay for the disruption caused by mass layoffs and unemployment, the government has said.

“I live from paycheck to paycheck,” said Sebastian Lassen, 25, a coffee shop manager in Copenhagen. He feared the uncertainty, he added, but never considered that the government would allow so many workers to fall into poverty. “We didn’t come to the thought that, ‘OK, maybe we’ll be on the street,’” he said.

The Netherlands will pay up to 90 percent of wages for companies hit hard by the pandemic, with extra provisions being developed for restaurants. “Everybody here believes that the government will take responsibility for the situation, and I believe that too,” said Athina Ainali, a 25-year-old waitress for one of Amsterdam’s many shuttered restaurants.

Washington is divided over how to dole out recovery aid. Proposals have included one-time $1,200 payments. The biggest chunk of money, about $425 billion, [*is set aside for central bankers to use largely as they see fit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/22/business/economy/fed-bailout-congress.html). Economists say they expect that will include buying corporate debt and stabilizing financial markets. Democrats say the proposals do not do enough to expand unemployment benefits, provide food assistance or relieve student debt.

New York restaurant owners and workers are [*calling for aggressive action*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/22/business/economy/fed-bailout-congress.html), including doubling unemployment benefits (which currently cover [*only about 50 percent of wages*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/22/business/economy/fed-bailout-congress.html), even for minimum-wage employees) and providing rent abatement for displaced employees.

What distinguishes the United States from other countries “is not the nature of the bailouts. It’s the underlying structure,” said Carol Graham, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who studies safety nets. “People are more vulnerable from the get-go, even in normal times. You throw a shock like this at the system? It’s about as bad as it could get.”

American workers face extra anxiety over medical costs. The United States, unlike most of the developed world, does not guarantee health care.

While countries like Denmark have famously robust safety nets, even the Conservative government in Britain has, after years of austerity, adopted a similar approach. “For the first time in our history, the government is going to step in and pay people’s wages,” the British chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said last week. The plan, which is still being developed, will pay up to about $2,900 a month to workers who have lost hours but are not laid off.

[Update: [*Boris Johnson, U.K. Prime Minister, has the coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/22/business/economy/fed-bailout-congress.html).]

The center-right government in Germany will spend more than $40 billion to help small businesses cover basic needs to stay afloat during the crisis. That is in addition to a program aimed at larger companies, called “kurzarbeit,” or “short-time working,” that covers lost wages for employees who are sent home, to avoid laying them off. Economists expect about two million workers to receive aid under the program, more than during the financial crisis a decade ago.

“We have a security net, and people don’t fall below the security net,” said Dierk Hirschel, the chief economist of ver.di, one of Germany’s largest trade unions. “But people are going to lose income, and in a traumatic way.”

The German development bank, KfW, has promised an all-but-unlimited supply of business loans. “There will be no upper limits for the amount of credit that the KfW can give out,” Peter Altmaier, the minister of the economy, said.

Even with the rush to save jobs, uncertainty remains. Britain’s plan may come too late for workers who have already been laid off. If they cannot find jobs soon, they will most likely fall into the nation’s welfare system, which can pay as little as $300 a month. “I do not know where to go from here,” said Delphine Thomas, 20, who was laid off from a movie theater in Liverpool.

South Korea’s employee-retention program covers 70 percent of wages or more, and the government recently loosened the rules to make more businesses eligible. But part-time workers, contractors and the self-employed receive fewer protections. Some may be eligible for one-time cash payments. Labor advocates want those workers to have the same benefits as full-time employees.

Business owners, too, face uneven support depending on the country. Elias Calcoen and his partner opened a cafe in Brussels eight months ago. It has been closed for more than a week, but the city’s government is offering small businesses immediate $4,300 payments, plus $1,300 a month in federal aid for displaced self-employed workers.

“We have no kids, we are in good health and the Belgian government is not leaving us by ourselves,” Mr. Calcoen said. “There are many people who are in a much worse position.”

Brenda James-Leong, a florist in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, says she has been burning through savings while her store is closed. The Malaysian government has offered monthly assistance to the unemployed and lump payments to workers in certain sectors. “If the government is doing anything for small businesses like mine, it has not been communicated as of now,” she said.

Such apprehension is common, even in countries with generous aid programs. Ursula Waltemath, who owns Restaurant Brace in Copenhagen with her husband, has converted from fine dining to takeout. With schools closed, their 3-year-old daughter shadows them everywhere. At this rate, she figures they can survive three months, even with the government paying a portion of salaries.

“It sounds amazing, and it is, to have this help,” she said. “But even 25 percent of all employee salaries, and rent and basic expenses, is a fortune if you have zero income.”

Reporting was contributed by Anna Schaverien, Su-Hyun Lee, Jack Ewing and Melissa Eddy.

PHOTOS: Ursula Waltemath, above left, and Nicola Fanetti have no choice but to bring their daughter, Sophia, to their Copenhagen restaurant. Brenda James-Leong, left, a florist in Malaysia, is burning through savings while her store is closed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETINA GARCIA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ALEXANDRA RADU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Trumpism Without Borders; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62XR-2T81-JBG3-62HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 16, 2021 Wednesday 09:59 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2736 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall, Thomas B. Edsall has been a contributor to the Times Opinion section since 2011. His column on strategic and demographic trends in American politics appears every Tuesday. He previously covered politics for The Washington Post.

**Highlight:** The forces that brought the former president to power are exerting pressure all over the world.

**Body**

America is embedded in a world that is troubled by insidious parallel variants of the same structural problems — anti-immigrant fervor, political tribalism, racism, ethnic tension, authoritarianism and inequality — that led to a right-wing takeover of the federal government by Donald Trump.

The peculiarly American characteristics of the Trump years have blinded us to the spread of this radical disorder worldwide — even as some prescient scholars and analysts have seen the connections all along and have been trying to make the public aware of them.

According to the Stanford sociologists [*Michelle Jackson*](https://sociology.stanford.edu/people/michelle-jackson) and [*David Grusky*](https://sociology.stanford.edu/people/david-grusky), there is a common thread to these seemingly disparate developments — what they call “the ubiquity of loss” — a condition the authors describe as a “late industrial experience, in short, increasingly one of omnipresent loss and decline.”

The authors elaborate in their paper, “[*A post-liberal theory of stratification*](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-4446.12505).” Loss like this, they write, can be

experienced by children as a dramatic decline in their chances of achieving a standard of living as high as that of their parents. It is experienced by men as a decline in the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, and other types of loss relative to women. It is experienced by manufacturing workers as a sharp loss in the number of high-paying union jobs. It is experienced by “rust belt” families as a loss of employment and earnings to China and other countries.

The commonality of loss has fostered the emergence of politicians and political strategists whom Jackson and Grusky call “norm entrepreneurs” — Trump, Steve Bannon, Jeremy Corbyn, Marine Le Pen, Nigel Farage — who

politicize loss by representing other groups as benefiting from it. It is immaterial from this point of view whether that zero-sum formulation has any scientific merit. If a loss of income or employment is successfully represented as a zero-sum transfer from one’s own group (e.g., natives) to another group (e.g., immigrants), then the benefiting group is more likely to be treated as a competitor, especially when there is pre-existing antipathy between the groups.

The politics of loss have, in turn, empowered the populist right by encouraging the view “that disadvantaged groups have unfairly benefited from legal protections, egalitarian social movements and government and charitable assistance. These initiatives, far from facilitating fair and open competition, are instead seen as overshooting the mark and providing unfair advantage,” ushering in “a new era of high grievance, high conflict, and high ideology.”

The “ubiquity of loss” is not the sole factor.

There are “trends across countries, including growing nationalism, erosion of democratic norms and growth of authoritarianism,” [*Daron Acemoglu*](https://economics.mit.edu/faculty/acemoglu), an economist at M.I.T., wrote in response to my inquiry: “The two trends affecting all of these countries are globalization and technological changes, both of which are fueling inequality and perhaps also aspirations that are going unmet.”

Acemoglu continued:

It is imperative that we build better international/supranational institutions, but I do not see us going in that direction. On the contrary, I think whatever institutions we have (which are highly dysfunctional, including the WHO) are getting weaker and more captured.

[*Jack Goldstone*](https://schar.gmu.edu/profiles/jgoldsto), a professor of public policy at George Mason University, emailed me to say:

Globalization, concentration of capital, rapid population growth in poor countries, technological change (robots and digitization) and climate instability have all produced higher inequality, surges of international migration, and put stress on farmers, workers, craftsmen, and rural/small-town populations while concentrating growth and opportunity in the major metro areas of O.E.C.D. countries plus China.

These trends, Goldstone wrote, have

left hundreds of millions of people in countries from India and Brazil to the U.K. and the U.S. resentful that the stable, prosperous life they expected has been taken from them. As a result, many have turned their anger against foreigners, minorities, and elites who they blame (with elites, rightly), for promoting changes that benefited themselves and neglected them.

While most of the challenges “are best handled by international cooperation,” Goldstone argued,

unfortunately, global governance has been a great disappointment. Russia has basically pissed on it; Trump repudiated it, and China sought to benefit from it by seeking to call the shots in old and new multinational organizations in which it has sought a leading role.

Three recent reports explore stresses within the international order: “[*Global Trends 2040*](https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends_2040.pdf),” a March publication of the National Intelligence Council; “[*2021 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*](https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/reports-publications/reports-publications-2021/item/2204-2021-annual-threat-assessment-of-the-u-s-intelligence-community),” issued by the director of national intelligence; and “[*Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020*](https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity)” from the World Bank.

The Global Trends report found that multinational “superstar” firms are driving economic globalization:

These firms captured approximately 80 percent of economic profit among companies with annual revenues greater than $1 billion in 2017 and earned approximately 1.6 times more economic profit than they did in 1997.

In addition,

the economic factors that support the rise of global superstar firms, including high fixed costs, low marginal costs, network and platform effects, and machine learning, are likely to persist through the next two decades.

Perhaps most important, Global Trends notes an intensification of international resource competition:

Climate change and environmental degradation will contribute to and reflect a more contested geopolitical environment. Countries and other actors are likely to compete over food, minerals, water, and energy sources made more accessible, more valuable, or scarcer.

Losers in the competition over resources are shifting rapidly: “The two regions with the most poor people in 1990 were East Asia and Pacific and South Asia, which were home to 80 percent of the poor,” according to the World Bank. By 2015, however, “more than half of the global poor resided in sub-Saharan Africa and more than 85 percent of the poor resided in either sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia.”

Elaborating on the Jackson-Grusky argument, [*Pieter Vanhuysse*](https://portal.findresearcher.sdu.dk/en/persons/vanhuysse), a political scientist at the University of Southern Denmark, wrote by email that a major strain on democracy is

the rise of unequal life chances along multiple dimensions. Take education/human capital: as automation and digitization will also be major forces perturbing the world economy, it is likely that new divides will sharpen between human capital haves and have-nots at the level of both nations and persons.

These inequalities, Vanhuysse argued,

may be exacerbated by seemingly unfair practices. For instance, richer nations are likely to engage still more in poorer-to-richer nation brain drain practices, coming from the lower- or middle-income countries that invested massive public resources in producing these skills.

One of the most important setbacks to the cause of democratic governance, in Vanhuysse’s view, is

The advent, then [*weaponization by the Trump movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/14/us/politics/democracy-in-peril.html?searchResultPosition=5) in the past 4-5 years, of populism combined with post-truth/fake facts culture in an already not so representative electoral system. This, in turn, has been aided by the seemingly unhindered Russian interference. Over the same period, powerful global actors such as Russia, China, and even countries such as Turkey, Brazil, and the Philippines have become much less cooperative and are likely to remain so.

This trend toward autocracy, Vanhuysse continues, is evident

within the European Union, notably in Poland and, very much, Hungary. Both these countries have started to consciously devise demographic scare tactics (Muslims vs. “true” Polish and Hungarian Christians; true Hungarians vs. foreign cultures, anti-LGBT campaigns, anti-foreign NGOs) to serve incumbents’ power purposes.

The Global Trends report supports Vanhuysse’s point:

In some Western democracies, public distrust of the capabilities and policies of established parties and elites, as well as anxieties about economic dislocations, status reversals, and immigration, have fueled the rise of illiberal leaders who are undermining democratic norms and institutions and civil liberties. In newer democracies that transitioned from authoritarian rule in the 1980s and 1990s, a mix of factors has led to democratic stagnation or backsliding, including weak state capacity, tenuous rule of law, fragile traditions of tolerance for opposition, high inequality, corruption, and militaries with a strong role in politics.

There are explicitly anti-democratic forces working to encourage the developments Vanhuysse describes, according to the most recent [*Annual Threat Assessment*](file:///C:/Users/Thomas%20Edsall/Desktop/2021%20Annual%20Threat%20Assessment%20of%20the%20U.S.%20Intelligence%20Community).

Authoritarian and illiberal regimes around the world will increasingly exploit digital tools to surveil their citizens, control free expression, and censor and manipulate information to maintain control over their populations. Such regimes are increasingly conducting cyber intrusions that affect citizens beyond their borders — such as hacking journalists and religious minorities or attacking tools that allow free speech online — as part of their broader efforts to surveil and influence foreign populations.

A key factor undermining the willingness to cooperate both locally and globally is the growing threat of scarcity in jobs, basic resources and security. [*Ronald Inglehart*](https://lsa.umich.edu/polisci/people/emeriti/rfi.html) of the University of Michigan, who died in May, warned of the increasingly pervasive threat of job loss in his 2018 book, “[*Cultural Evolution*](https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cultural-evolution/34F637928AB1AA87B6409C28B4DFC9F5)”:

In this Artificial Intelligence Society, virtually anyone’s job can be automated. In the early stages of the Knowledge Society, there is growing demand for people with high levels of education and skills and they can get secure, well-paid jobs. But the transition to Artificial Intelligence society changes this: computers begin to replace even highly-educated professionals. In the Artificial Intelligence Society, the key economic conflict is no longer between a ***working class*** and a middle class, but between the top one percent and the remaining 99 percent.

Looking at the United States as a micro case study with global implications, [*David Autor*](https://economics.mit.edu/faculty/dautor/policy), an economist at M.I.T., found that among white voters, those who lost jobs because of trade with China moved toward the political right.

“Trade-exposed districts with an initial majority white population or initially in Republican hands became substantially more likely to elect a conservative Republican,” Autor and three colleagues wrote in a 2020 paper, “[*Importing Political Polarization? The Electoral Consequences of Rising Trade Exposure*](https://economics.mit.edu/files/11499).” The results support “a political economy literature that connects adverse economic conditions to support for nativist or extreme politicians.”

[*Daniel Esty*](https://law.yale.edu/daniel-c-esty), a professor of environmental law at Yale, described in an email how tribalism, hostility toward outsiders, notably immigrants, and the emergence of what some call “exclusionary nationalism” all serve to undermine prospects for global cooperation:

Global collaboration on concerns such as climate change has become more difficult even as the urgency of the issue and the inescapability of global-scale action with no nation free-riding off the efforts of others become ever more clear. The broad-based rise of tribalism/nationalism sharpens “us” versus “them” thinking and makes cooperative responses to any realm of international policymaking — pandemic response, climate change, and trade — more challenging.

In other words, the world’s democracies are ill equipped to take on the immediate dangers cited in the Annual Threat Assessment:

In the coming year, the United States and its allies will face a diverse array of threats that are playing out amidst the global disruption resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and against the backdrop of great power competition, the disruptive effects of ecological degradation and a changing climate, an increasing number of empowered nonstate actors, and rapidly evolving technology. The complexity of the threats, their intersections, and the potential for cascading events in an increasingly interconnected and mobile world create new challenges for the intelligence community.

An additional global development is the simultaneous aging of the populations in developed nations while the share of young people in developing countries rapidly expands. [*Mark Haas*](https://www.duq.edu/academics/faculty/mark-haas), a political scientist at Duquesne University, argues that “aging will create powerful forces for international peace on the one hand and increased domestic polarization on the other.”

Haas wrote by email:

Countries with large numbers of young people (ages 15 to 24) as a percentage of the total adult population (“youth bulges”) are more likely to engage in international hostilities than ones with older populations. With a surplus of military-aged citizens, soldiers are cheaper and easier to recruit and replace. Younger populations are also more easily radicalized, especially when the country is poorer with fewer economic opportunities.

The reverse dynamics, Haas continued,

occur in older societies. Aging tends to reduce both states’ capacity and willingness to go to war. As societies age, governments are likely to dedicate an increasing percentage of their budgets to spending on elderly welfare, which is likely to reduce expenditures in all other areas, including on the military.

A similar pattern, Haas wrote, exists at the societal level:

Data from multistate, multigenerational surveys reveal that the fewer children parents have, the more that highly valued and non-substitutable psychological and emotional goals (such as having someone to love and care for, enjoyment, self-esteem, gender balance, and carrying on the family name) are tied to each individual child. The greater the “value” of any one child, the greater the loss that the child’s death creates, thereby increasing casualty sensitivity as fertility levels shrink.

What role will the United States play in addressing global tensions?

Goldstone, the professor of public policy at George Mason, sees some hope in the Biden presidency:

Joe Biden literally has the weight of the world on his shoulders. If he succeeds (success meaning carries out a program that improves the living standards and earns the support and respect of a large and stable majority of the population), he can advance global cooperation on key problems, restore trust in democracy at home and abroad and help turn around the global trend to ethnonationalist authoritarian governance.

[*Jeffrey Sachs*](https://www.jeffsachs.org/), an economist at Columbia, has a darker view: “The multiple challenges can be addressed through public action at all scales, from global to local,” he wrote by email:

Unfortunately, the U.S. is not a constructive problem-solving actor in this drama. At the national level, we are torn apart by race and class. The U.S. system is at danger of coming completely unhinged over the corruption of our political system (sheer plutocracy with a democratic veneer) and rear-guard racism.

Nor is Sachs upbeat about Biden’s chances:

At the global level, the U.S. is a disruptive force as well, because instead of focusing on global problem solving, we are far more focused on trying to maintain hegemonic prerogatives that are past their due date. Hence, the utterly stupid new Cold War with China, which is a U.S. concoction. How absurd to be focused on mobilizing the G7 to compete with China, rather than on mobilizing the world to solve shared, massive, and urgent challenges. But the early Biden foreign policy is deeply flawed. It’s almost farcical to see the “West” (itself a funny idea at this point) deciding today to have its own Belt and Road program to compete with China. “Children, play nicely in the sandbox.”

Let’s let Goldstone have the last word:

If Biden fails, God help us, we are headed back to the world of the 1930s, with steep political polarization, ethnic hatreds and cleansings, powerful anti-immigration sentiments and spreading fascism.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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**Load-Date:** May 7, 2025

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[***Surviving the Siege of Kharkiv***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65H7-NXS1-DXY4-X0X5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 22

**Length:** 10046 words

**Byline:** By James Verini

**Body**

How Ukrainians in a city 25 miles from the Russian border have forged a new wartime culture.

The residents of Kharkiv were required by emergency decree to darken their homes at night, so as not to provide Russian planes or artillerists with targets. If they had to keep a light on -- if they were lucky enough to have electricity -- they covered their windows with blankets or plastic tarps or shards of broken furniture. Though Kharkivites may have known to do this anyway, without the decree, and not only because the war had knocked out their windowpanes, along with their power, and heating, and water. They just seemed to have an instinct for how to act under siege.

So when the rocket struck Lesia Serdiuka Street after sunset, in the last week of March, a month into the war, the sky above the city was not like an urban night sky, but more rural, the ambient light absent. The starlight was obscured by the sodden cloud cover of early spring. The rocket hit a gas main, and the blast reverberated through the city. It shook the panes of my hotel-room windows two miles away. The flames rose and were reflected in the clouds, turning the sky a hellish scarlet.

The gas was still burning the next morning when the photographer Paolo Pellegrin and I arrived at the site of the explosion, in the Saltivka district. Fire licked the lip of the rocket's crater. The trees along Serdiuka Street were branchless and blackened. On one side of the street, faintly visible through the sooty mist, was the steeple of an Orthodox church, its brass onion dome pierced by shrapnel. On the other, residential towers stood charred from shelling. Many were in flames. Whole exteriors had been shorn off, leaving the homes smears of plaster and flooring and wallpaper.

I took in this scene from the parking lot of a small shopping center that was now a pitch of craters and shattered glass and shop-front gates and pieces torn from cars. Shops burned on the lot's north side. Serdiuka Street was littered with rubble and downed wires and, lying there in all their lazy menace, the remains of Russian rockets -- cylinders, fins, motors.

People were still living in Saltivka, some by choice, most because they had no choice. They tried to go outside as little as possible. But in the early mornings, when there were lulls in the shelling, they ventured out for groceries or to walk their dogs. They stepped around the craters and through the debris. If the lull was long enough, they stopped to talk. And what was there to talk of but the war?

''Ninety percent of these rockets go into residential areas,'' a man said as he watched the flames. He had with him an attentive Doberman pinscher pup, her ears bound in white medical tape. ''Look at Druzhby Narodiv Street. Obliterated. The whole area, destroyed. There is nothing military there. The closest thing is a firehouse. There is no sense in it. Fuck the Russians. I'm not leaving.''

''Many people are living in shelters,'' said Marian, the interpreter with whom Pellegrin and I were working.

''We don't have shelters,'' the man said. ''We have basements.''

One of the burning shops contained beauty products. Aerosol cans ignited with cracks and hisses. The Doberman whined and circled the man's feet. She clearly wanted to leave.

Another man arrived. ''I had an intuition they would bomb here,'' he said. ''Kharkiv is the heart of Ukraine. So many intelligent people here. Professors. Go to Pushkin Cemetery, you'll see how many professors. Very clever people. We're just meat for the Russians. You never know if you'll be bombed or not. Who would have thought Putin was such a bastard?''

Kharkiv is 25 miles from the Russian border. Like many Kharkivites, he had family in Russia. The distinction between the two countries meant little to him before the war. His father's people lived near Moscow. ''I visited in 1990,'' he said. That was the year before Ukraine split from the Soviet Union. ''I went to Red Square. I saw Lenin.'' He also saw a cousin, a onetime pilot in the Russian Air Force. They kept in touch, or did until a month ago. They spoke on the phone when the invasion began. His cousin refused to believe there was an invasion. ''Do you know what he told me? He said, 'You're bombing yourselves.' I said: 'Are you listening to yourself? What nonsense. We're bombing ourselves?' He told me this at the beginning of the war. He does something in insurance. They don't know how to analyze information, Russians.''

''Grads, every five minutes,'' he added. He mimicked a succession of impacts. ''Dum. Dum. Dum.''

A Grad is a truck-mounted battery that fires a few to a few dozen rockets onto a target in a matter of seconds. It is a Russian favorite. The Russians were loosing a lot of Grads onto Kharkiv, but many other things as well, and ''Grad,'' which translates literally as ''hail,'' had come to mean any series of projectiles of sufficient violence.

The pets of Kharkiv often had a keener sense of danger than the humans. The Doberman had been right to want to leave. Minutes after the man mimicked the rockets, a fusillade of them sailed into a residential area next to the stores. Whether they were Grads, I didn't know, but I knew at once I'd never been on the business end of a munition like this. Or rather I felt it -- a series of blasts like an atmospheric drum fill. The ground shook. The skin seemed to lift from my frame and the air to suck from my lungs.

I ran for the pickup truck we were using. Something, probably a piece of a rocket, struck the parking lot behind the truck, spraying bits of pavement in the air and pelting the truck's tailgate.

Not remembering how I got in the truck, I was in the truck. The driver hit the gas. Marian was getting in the other side. I looked over at him, and as I did, he decided the rockets called for harder cover and leaped from the truck.

The driver slammed the brakes. I jumped out and ran toward Marian. He was about 30 feet behind us, lying on his side, facing the low wall of an electronics store, perfectly still. He'd found very good cover, I thought, before thinking he might be maimed or dead.

Then he got up. From behind the store, Pellegrin appeared. We piled into the truck and sped down Serdiuka Street toward a checkpoint. Marian was scratched up but otherwise uninjured. The Territorial Defense Forces soldiers manning the checkpoint waved us through with familiar smiles, cigarettes dangling from their lips.

Kharkiv has been under continuous attack for nearly three months. The second-most-populous city in Ukraine and the gateway to the country's east, Kharkiv is strategically important. It is also symbolically important. The historian Volodymyr Kravchenko calls it a ''borderland city'' not just because it is so near the border. As long as Ukraine has been independent, it has been a place of divided loyalties, partly a forward-looking nation, partly a backward-looking onetime Soviet republic. Kharkiv has lived this divide like no other Ukrainian city. That is why I went to see the war as it was experienced there.

On Feb. 24, armored columns poured over Ukraine's northern border toward Kyiv, while others pushed out from Crimea and Donbas. As they did, troops in the Belgorod province of Russia made for Kharkiv. The last time anyone had seen this many tanks around Kharkiv, the Red Army was battling German forces for control of the city. Within days, advance units reached Tsyrkuny to Kharkiv's northeast and Chuhuiv to its southeast. By the end of February, Kharkiv was very nearly flanked on three sides. Tanks, aircraft and artillery fired on the city. It looked as though Russian infantry would roll into central Kharkiv at any moment. On March 1, Freedom Square, in the historic center, was bombed, shattering the main government building. Tens of thousands of Kharkivites fled. Those who didn't -- or couldn't -- watched their city burn.

''The sky turned red'' is how a woman who lived in Saltivka described those first days. ''I saw a 12-story building on fire. The fire reflected in the windows of the other buildings. It was dark, but it was like day. Like fireworks. I just froze.'' She panicked but did not know what to do. She lay down on her floor and covered herself with cushions. The rockets kept falling. She kept panicking. She got up and returned to the window. She didn't sleep for the next week. ''I'd never seen a rocket before,'' she said.

But Ukrainian forces retaliated with a ferocity that Moscow hadn't anticipated, and in the first weeks of March, they halted the Russian advance. To the south of Kharkiv, they blocked tanks at Malaya Rohan. At Tsyrkuny, they kept the enemy from getting into Saltivka. And by the time we arrived, in mid-March, the Russians had ceased trying to penetrate metropolitan Kharkiv. There was no longer a battle for the city, strictly speaking. This was now a siege.

In the city center and neighborhoods south of the Kharkiv River, some normal life persisted. There was power and heating and internet. Supermarkets and gas stations were open. You could stand outside without fear of immediate death. It was the city's north, and in particular Saltivka, that was bearing the brunt of the siege.

Comprising the northeastern corner of metropolitan Kharkiv, Saltivka is what's known as a ''sleeping district,'' the sort of immense housing development popularized by Nikita Khrushchev. Though parts of Saltivka date from the 1960s, most of its residential towers were built at the end of the Soviet period and the years since. Stretching up to 16 stories, they are on high ground and loom over Kharkiv. The towers are clustered around plazas on a network of winding streets and footpaths that is bound by Serdiuka Street to the west, the city ring road to the east, the Rodnychok Pond to the south and marshland to the north. Interspersed throughout are parks, playgrounds, schools and small shopping centers. Saltivka is so sprawling that it is sometimes called Saltivka Masyv, and before February it was home to a large share of Kharkiv's million and a half residents. They were a mix of middle and ***working class***. Many of them managed to escape, if not to western Ukraine or the wider world, then at least to southern Kharkiv. Poorer and older people remained.

The towers made for easy targets and were reliable producers of shrapnel. If staying inside was a gamble, being outside was worse. You could walk for long stretches without seeing a soul. If you met someone, they were probably fleeing.

As explosions and rifle fire echoed through the plazas one afternoon, we came upon a woman and her son, who was in his 20s. They carried hand luggage and plastic bags. She was beside herself and midsob.

''May they burn in hell,'' she said. ''This is not a war. This is even worse. People shouldn't do such things.''

They had held out as long as they could. They were fleeing for the Heroes of Labor Metro station on Serdiuka Street. This was the first of several trips they would make, moving what clothing and provisions they could.

''What can I take with me? All the things of our life? Nothing. What can I take with just my hands? Nothing,'' she said. ''Our life is erased.''

They'd chosen not to move into a basement, not yet. But as I would find, many of their neighbors in Saltivka had.

From a snowy plaza near Dzherelna Street rose the twin smokestacks of a shattered power station. Nearby was a playground, and near that a grocery shop through whose window something sizable had flown. Outside the shop, by a heavy metal door, stood three men, one old and two young, talking and checking their cellphones.

The older man, Oleksandr, confided right off that he was descended from a Don Cossack line. Trueborn Ukrainian warrior stock. A squat and jovial man with pitted cheeks and a smoker's rasp, he could trace his family back to the 17th century.

''We've never lost a battle,'' he said.

With him was his similarly jovial son and their friend Nikita, a tall, sturdy, pale young man. At 17, Nikita was just below the conscription age that President Volodymyr Zelensky had announced, but he already had a bushy beard. He walked with a limp and wore tied around his waist a red tartan blanket.

''We didn't think Putin would take the risk,'' Oleksandr said in Russian, the language of everyday life in Kharkiv. Nearly everyone we met spoke it, not Ukrainian. ''When they struck the airport, we thought, OK, that's it. We didn't think they'd attack the city.''

''I was like, what the fuck is this?'' Nikita said in English. He explained that he supplemented his schoolroom English lessons with mixed-martial-arts videos.

We went inside and walked down an oil-stained ramp. The metal door clanged shut behind us and blocked the sunlight. The blasts faded into thuds. I could see nothing until a feeble orange glow emerged. It was a space heater. We were in a basement parking garage. A few cars remained in the parking spaces. In the rest were people.

They had started gathering here the night of the 24th. At first they brought only blankets. They thought the war would end in a few days. As the fighting went on, they realized that if they were to stay alive, this garage would have to become their new home. Neighbors and friends were being killed every day. Now the spaces were full of the stuff of ruptured lives: cots and bedrolls and chipped mugs and folding chairs and spare end tables and plastic bags stretched taut with musty clothing. The space heater stood on a card table along with a stockpot and second-string flatware. A hot plate was powered by a car battery. The people had tacked up plastic sheeting in an effort to create some privacy and warmth. But the cold was bitter. They wore the sweaters and overcoats they would sleep in.

Oleksandr and his family had been among the first to arrive. No one told them to come. He called it ''self-organization.'' The 40 or so people who now lived in the garage were getting no help from the Territorial Defense Forces or any other authority, though volunteers were bringing food and medicine. They had become a kind of local volunteer brigade in their own right, in fact, cooking for disabled people and pensioners trapped in their apartments.

''I have no place to go,'' Oleksandr said when I asked why he hadn't fled. ''Anyway, this is our home. We're not leaving. We will have to rebuild everything. And we want to. This is our neighborhood.''

Nikita's father, Igor, was a large man in his 50s with a cherubic face. He wore a shearling coat and spoke in a rushed baritone. He described how they came to be here.

''On Feb. 25, a rocket hit the third floor of our building. Just before that, I'd said, 'It's safe on the third floor.' And then, two days later, a rocket hit our neighbor's apartment. The girl living there, she ran away. But we stayed. The next day, the fourth floor was hit.'' They walked to the Metro. Already there were hundreds of people living in it. There was no space left on the platforms or in the train carriages. People had started wandering into the tunnels, falling over the tracks in the darkness. Igor and his family were returning home, ducking into doorways as the rockets fell, when they passed the garage. Someone standing outside waved them down, telling them, ''You can stay here.''

Igor had been a tanker in the Soviet Army during the occupation of Afghanistan. He served in East Germany and Poland. In the Ukrainian Army, he served with the United Nations. He knew war. And he knew wartime agitprop when he saw it: Just as the Ukrainian government was not doing much to help the people in the garage, it wasn't doing much to inform them. If the news from Moscow didn't merit the name, the news from Kyiv was short on detail and long on hoopla. Strategy, positions, troop numbers -- all classified. Casualty rates weren't discussed, except when they were Russian casualty rates, and those could seem suspiciously high. Ukrainian TV news had been consolidated into one media outlet under government supervision. What scant footage did come in from the battlefront was shot by soldiers and was vetted. Social media was monitored, and there were official attempts to restrict it. In Kharkiv, you were forbidden to name the locations of strikes online.

Saltivka was still getting cellular coverage in spots, however, including outside the garage, and with Nikita's help Igor could follow foreign news. He knew the Russians had taken Kherson and the nuclear plant in Zaporizhzhia but were stymied outside Kyiv. Mariupol was a massacre, and Odesa could be next. If they succeeded on the southern front, Ukraine would be flanked on three sides, like Kharkiv.

But Igor could also see that the invasion was botched. He knew from experience how much resupply and fuel tanks require, and it was obvious the Russian armor was spread much too thin. More, it was misallocated. While a 40-mile-long column descended on Kyiv, nothing like this was applied to Kharkiv.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia never said as much publicly, of course, but it could be that he expected his troops to face an easier time of it in Kharkiv. If he did, the expectation may have arisen from a certain historical rationale that was self-serving and deluded, or simply deceitful, but scrutable strategically, given Kharkiv's history. He claimed his ''special military operation'' was meant to ''demilitarize and denazify Ukraine'' and thus reunify Russia. ''Ukraine is not just a neighboring country for us,'' he said on the eve of the invasion, but ''an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space.'' Taking up the theme, his more sentimentally minded choristers made noises about the Ukrainian ''heartland,'' about returning Ukraine to the ''Motherland,'' about longing to be reunited with their Ukrainian ''brothers.'' A lot of humid familial analogy was dangled southward. Those of coarser purpose decided that Ukraine was a mere province of Russki Mir, the Russian World, wherever the Ukrainian people happened to think they lived.

Both lines of thought led to Kharkiv. Like all of Ukraine's east, it has long and knotty roots in Russia. The city, which is called Kharkov in Russian, was established as a garrison in the 1650s. It may have been built by Russia-favoring deserters from the armies of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, according to Volodymyr Kravchenko. Kharkiv was a way point between Moscow and Crimea and, Kravchenko writes, a ''fortress-protector of the Motherland and the Orthodox Church.'' It was an imperial stronghold before becoming the first capital of Soviet Ukraine. There are streets named for Alexander Pushkin and Peter Tchaikovsky and Mikhail Lermontov. Its main park is named for Maxim Gorky. Outside Saltivka is a Red Army cemetery.

Sentimental or coarse as the noise was, Russians alone didn't make it; Ukrainians did, too. Reporting in Donbas in the prelude to the war, I met Ukrainians who were openly admiring of Russia and contemptuous of the Ukrainian state. Some claimed they wanted Putin to take over all Ukraine. Their reasons were many and complex and mostly came back to a retrograde view of time that Putin seemed to share. They pined after the certainties and pride of Soviet life; or they were taken in by the Kremlin's yearslong drumbeat accusing Kyiv of attempting a ''genocide'' of ethnic Russians; or they simply considered themselves more Russian than Ukrainian, and indeed many were born or raised there. If they weren't, they spoke Russian, were immersed in Russian culture and media. And while these Ukrainians may have been credulous or nostalgic or even self-abnegating -- or all those things, as I often found -- that didn't make their history with Russia feel any less meaningful to them. Nor did it take the sting from the uncertainty and obscurity they'd suffered in the Soviet residuum. I sensed that, to them, the Russian president represented a restoration to a glorious vision of the past.

This sort of dark-brewed Russophilia was prominent in Kharkiv too. When Russia invaded Donbas in 2014, the political violence spread to the city. But not even the most Russophilic Kharkivite could ignore the hypocrisy of the siege. This felt less like conquest than punishment. Kharkiv was not being reclaimed by Russia, but savaged by it.

Nikita's elder brother had fought in Donbas, where he was injured. He was disabled and lived in a hospital. His mother, Irina, grew up in Kharkiv, where her grandfather was given an apartment after losing a leg to a mine in Germany. That was why she and Igor moved there after marrying in Russia. She remembered when what would become Saltivka was still the village of Saltivsky. ''This is was where we used to come to drink cow's milk,'' Irina said.

She was anxious and watchful. On her phone she brought up a picture of her grandfather. The sepia portrait showed a fresh-faced cadet, barely older than Nikita was now, in a Red Army tunic and wool cap. She went from that to a video of their chinchilla, leaping in and out of a straw hat. He was still in their apartment. They went back every few days to clean his cage and replace the food and water. They didn't want to bring him to the parking garage. Someone brought in a pair of parrots, and the birds died.

The family had claimed an enclosure at the back of the garage. They erected a wind barricade out of garbage cans and crates that also served as a kind of private entryway. Over the opening they hung plastic mattress wrapping. Irina was embarrassed by how they were living and at first wouldn't allow us beyond the plastic. Finally she did, but forbade pictures. Pointing to a cinder-block enclosure, she said, ''This is the toilet.''

Nikita, not to be outdone, pointed to a hole in the ceiling and said, ''This is my hole.'' Whatever had gone through the grocery shop above had finished its journey here, sending a piece of the concrete ceiling into Nikita's leg. That's why he limped. ''It wasn't that painful,'' he said, ''but it was unpleasant.''

''Nikita's hole!'' Oleksandr's son exclaimed. He was wearing a T-shirt printed with a Norse rune and the words ''Fuck Calm, Die in Battle and Go to Valhalla.''

''This basement is like a miniature Kharkiv, do you understand?'' Oleksandr said. ''We make food for everyone. We check on people. The war has united us.'' He quoted a Ukrainian proverb that translated as: You can see the real person only when something bad happens. ''The important thing,'' he said, ''is to stay human.''

Staying human was a challenge. At a tower near the garage, by a sedan pancaked by a chunk of facade, a man huddled in a hooded sweatshirt and a red parka, smoking a cigarette. ''I'm just out here warming up,'' he said, though it was very cold.

He dropped the butt and went down a precarious stairway. A pipe had burst, leaving a frozen cascade stretching down the wall and covering the steps with ice. He ducked into a basement that made the parking garage look luxurious. Really it was a warren of crawl spaces. He squeezed through holes in the cinder blocks and over pipes, until he arrived at a tiny boiler room lit by a single candle.

''This is where we live,'' he said as he settled into a lawn chair draped in a blanket. He first came down here on Feb. 24 with neighbors. He'd been returning to his apartment regularly until the day before, when it became too dangerous to leave the basement for more than a cigarette. On a small, low table were tea bags, condensed milk, a bag of salt and a box of kasha. His phone was charging on a car battery. From a cat carrying case came scratching sounds.

He was a taxi driver with no wife or children. He had been living with his mother, but, he said, ''the first thing I did, I sent her to western Ukraine. She's sick. She couldn't handle this.'' She had a psychological disorder and was now living in a hospital. ''I have nowhere to go,'' he said.

The cat was not his but his neighbor's. There were once several dozen neighbors living among the pipes with him, but they'd all gone except this neighbor, and she was leaving today.

She called out to him from the basement entryway. ''I can't get a mobile signal! What should I do?''

''What do you want from me?'' he called back.

''Come here!''

He frowned.

''She wants me to bring her cat. What can I do?''

He got up and took the cat to her. She left. He would now be living here alone. I asked how he passed his days. He laughed. ''I sleep. I smoke.''

He was enduring the siege with a patient resignation. Others approached it with cheek. We were heading back to Serdiuka Street when I looked up and saw a woman smiling from behind a pane of glass that was, somehow, not broken. She pushed open the window. Surprised to see unbroken glass, and what's more, someone behind it, I asked, ''What are you doing there?''

''Well, I live here!'' she answered. ''I'm staying here to save my home and my land.''

She led us into her apartment, saying, with a laugh, ''We didn't have time to clean.'' In fact, it would have been a model of tidiness even if it hadn't been near a front line. She lived with her husband, who joined us in the living room. The gas was out, and they were in heavy overcoats and hats. They settled on the sofa, beneath a glass-encased cabinet of books that inclined toward Chekhov.

''Look at these furry things; they're 20 years old,'' she said of the coats. She spoke in Ukrainian; she and her husband were one of only two couples we met who chose to converse in the language. ''We'll be sleeping in them.''

They were both retired engineers. They met at a laboratory where they designed rocket components for the Soviet government, which had given them this apartment. Like so many Kharkivites I met, they had family in Russia who refused to believe there was a war. Their children who lived abroad were urging them to flee, but, she said: ''We love our house. Something is holding us here. This is our motherland. I don't know how to explain it.''

I asked what they would do if the Russians entered Saltivka.

''We don't think about that,'' she said.

''Can I bring you anything when I return?'' I asked.

''A Stinger missile?'' she said, laughing.

I stepped outside, and blasts shook the courtyard. Glass fell around my head as I raced into a passageway.

She had managed to keep a sense of humor. Kharkivites generally had, somehow. In this, too, their response to the war had about it the sureness of instinct.

''This is our toilet,'' Irina had said. She was being both literal and figurative, it turned out. The phrase had become Saltivka shorthand for ''this is our life now.'' It wasn't puerile, or not emphatically so, but dankly lyrical and morbidly funny, in the Slavic fashion.

Near the garage, on Metrobudivnykiv Street, was a grade school, Gymnasium No.172. In its courtyard, by a dried pool of blood, a group of women had made a charcoal fire in a planter and were tossing chopped vegetables into a stockpot.

''This is our toilet,'' an elderly woman said, gesturing at a wall with her kitchen knife. She was on the carrots. ''This is the horror we live in. We are children of basements.''

Leaving the carrots but keeping the knife, she led us to see what had become of her home, warning, ''If they start in with the bombing, I'll run away.'' She went up a walkway. Pointing with the knife at a building, she said: ''Invalids are living here. Without doors. It's creepy.''

As if on cue came a cataract of explosions. She turned on her heel and scurried back to the courtyard and down into the school's basement. The dirt floor, low ceiling and unfinished stone walls were barely illuminated by candles and a dim string of green decorative lights. A nervous shepherd mix barked at me as a woman tried to calm it. When my eyes adjusted, I saw people in corners.

A man was talking about his father, who died here the day before of a heart attack. The ambulance didn't arrive until that morning. They'd spent 16 hours with the cadaver.

''Why couldn't they take the body right away?'' he said. ''I would like to know what's next. I asked the medics this morning. They told me there are too many people to bury. We'll have to wait to bury him.''

His brother was buried in a cemetery in Kharkiv, and he would have liked them to be together, but he'd heard the cemetery had been destroyed. Before any of that, he would have to find his father. The authorities couldn't tell him where the body had been taken.

''Have you tried calling?'' a companion said.

''They don't have time to pick up the phone. They just take the bodies,'' he said. ''I'll have to look for him at the morgue, like looking for a good potato in a pile of potatoes.''

''You'll find him,'' the companion said.

''I know I will, but it doesn't have to be this way,'' he said.

An elderly married couple sat on a bench. She read from a Russian Orthodox prayer book, her cheeks wet with tears. Her husband listened.

''I'm praying to you, Maria,'' she whispered. ''We pray we won't lose heart, that we will be forgiven our sins.''

A guitar was propped against a chair. The knife-wielder said, ''Arkady, come over here.'' From the shadows emerged a tiny, grizzled man. He picked up the guitar and ran his hand across the strings, not fingering notes, producing discordance. It was much too appropriate to the situation.

''That's enough,'' a teenager told him. And to me, in English: ''He has a style of his own.''

Ukraine maintained a combative humor in its public communications. Within hours of Russian troops' crossing the border, town militias had formed and set up roadblocks. Above them were roadside billboards showing a black Kremlin clock tower aboard a black ship, sinking into a blood red sea. ''Russia go fuck yourself,'' they read. ''Welcome to hell,'' read others. The most poetic: ''We are on our land. You'll be in it.''

In Kharkiv, as in the rest of the country, road signs were painted over to confuse Russian troops, which seemed daffy until the Russians proved that they were hapless enough to need road signs. On a sign before a roundabout south of Kharkiv, the town names had been spray-painted over and ''Putin is a dickhead'' written in the circle. Beyond that was a new sign, official and pristine, listing only one destination: ''Moscow -- 662 KM.''

After a Russian tanker was filmed rolling off his moving tank and then running to catch up with it, the news played the clip sped up and set to a Benny Hill-esque jig. On social media, the national meme game was on point: A doctored photo of Russian helicopters flying over a ruined city, washing machines dangling from their landing skids -- a reference to the pitiable looting Russian soldiers were doing. The caption: ''Special military operation.'' A real photo of a kitchen cabinet on the wall of an apartment that was otherwise dismembered and exposed to the elements: ''Be Strong Like This Kitchen Cabinet.'' Zelensky in one panel on the phone, and in the panel below him, Will Smith at the Oscars. ''Hello, Will Smith? Did you hear what Vladimir Putin said about your wife?''

Then there were the things Kharkivites said that may not have been humorous but were so perfectly elegiac in the circumstances that you had to appreciate them. I never broke myself of the stupid habit of asking people ''How are you?'' in basements, destroyed homes, hospital wards. But only once did someone answer, ''How do you think we are?'' Usually they said something wittier. A common reply was ''We're not starving.'' Another was ''Normal.'' Even in good times, this is a typical local response to the question of how one is. Normal. It's like saying, ''I can't complain,'' or ''Things could be worse.'' Though they had everything to complain about and life could hardly be worse, Ukrainians were still saying this. I fancied I detected a certain sarcastic twinkle when they said it now. I might have been imagining that.

Perhaps the most ghoulish sight of ruination in Kharkiv was the Barabashovo Market, the biggest outdoor market in the city, whose shops and kiosks and stalls were now bent metal and ash. As the fires still burned, a man stood in front of what had been his crockery shop, looking at the piles of cracked plates and bowls. ''Russki Mir,'' he sighed.

A woman left the basement at Gymnasium No.172 and made the short walk to her building. She climbed the six stories to her apartment. Outside it were the remnants of a child's bed, which her husband had collected so that he could barricade their windows.

She was going to boil water and check on her son. He was mentally ill and couldn't live in the basement. He couldn't bear it. When the rockets fell, he was uncontrollable. So they had to keep him locked in the apartment.

''Be careful, he can lash out,'' she said as we walked into a room where her son stood on a balcony, smoking.

''Come here,'' she said to him. ''These people are from the television. Tell them your name.''

''Serhii,'' he said.

''How old are you?'' she said.

''18,'' Serhii said.

''That's not true. You're 37,'' she said. ''Tell them goodbye.''

''Good morning, goodbye,'' Serhii said in English.

''Once he escaped and ran away,'' her husband said. ''We spent hours trying to find him.''

When she returned to the school, she stepped over the dried blood. Shrapnel had torn into a man's leg there. He'd bled out on the spot.

People were being killed like this every day in Saltivka, it went without saying. They were also dying in other needless ways.

When we went to the parking garage one morning, we found Oleksandr crossing the plaza toward his own building, where there'd been a fire.

Smoke billowed from the windows. On the landing between the third and fourth floors lay a dead man in sweatpants. He'd fallen down the stairs and appeared to have broken his neck.

The man's apartment was a carbonic black and noxious. I assumed the blaze had been started by a rocket until I heard the man's downstairs neighbor yelling.

''He was left here by his grandchildren, the idiots!'' she said. Water dripped through her ceiling and was flooding her floor. She was trying to bail it out with plastic food containers. ''Nobody cares. The body will just stay there.''

There'd been no rocket. With the gas out, the man couldn't heat his apartment. Neighbors had brought him a space heater. It had ignited something.

Oleksandr carried bottles of water up the stairs to the woman. She took them into the burned apartment, where she and another neighbor doused piles of smoking debris. When she got fed up with that, she went back to her place and bailed more. She cursed the firefighters for using so much water.

''And like an idiot, I was thanking them,'' she said.

''War,'' Oleksandr said, by way of general explanation. ''I kicked the door out. We couldn't do anything. The man died, and that's it.''

I asked who he was.

''Just a pensioner. I didn't know him. Just enough to say hi.''

''Everything is fucked,'' the woman said.

''Better flooded than burned,'' Oleksandr offered.

''Everyone tells me, 'Leave, leave,''' she said. ''Where should I go? Who needs us? Leave? Christ. Why can't the fucking Americans do anything? Fuck Putin. One Putin can be beat by the whole world.''

At the next building, a three-man bomb-removal squad arrived. They attached a metal wire to the remains of a rocket and, with a winch, dragged it from the dirt. They picked it up and put it in the back of their truck.

We told them there was a corpse that needed seeing to. One of them shrugged.

When I returned to the smoking apartment, the neighbor who was helping douse it emerged holding the dead man's papers. Among them was a 35-year-old Soviet military ID, handwritten in black ballpoint. The photo showed a gaunt, intense-looking young man.

''Soldier,'' he said.

These glimpses of history were everywhere. At Gymnasium No.172, I walked through the classrooms. The desks were coated with thick dust and the floors with glass and the shreds of plastic window shades. One classroom had been given over to a course on Russian wars, with a special focus on the Great Patriotic War, as World War II is known in Russia and Ukraine. On a desk were a W.W.II-era great coat, black leather knee boots and a visor cap.

Kharkiv was the site of not one battle between the Red Army and the Wehrmacht but four, between 1941 and 1943. The city was more battered than perhaps any other in the Soviet Union save Stalingrad. It saw some of the greatest acts of Russian courage and sacrifice of the war.

For all of Putin's talk of rectifying history, his troops bombed without regard to it -- without regard to Russia's own history. This hypocrisy was always in the background of Kharkivites' conversations about the war, when not in the foreground. Worse than hypocritical, worse than ironic, they pointed out, the siege was sadomasochistic. Suicidal. Russia claimed Ukraine was Russia, so in invading Ukraine, wasn't Russia invading itself? Was it trying to kill itself? What else could one conclude? The Russians were as indifferent to their own lives as they were to those of their victims. Just look at how they treated their troops, sending them into battle undertrained, underfed, uncommanded, leaving their corpses on the battlefield to rot -- to be ''eaten by dogs,'' as the phrase went.

The experience of war is always absurd, but Ukrainians were aware of a singular absurdity in this war. Putin claimed that Ukraine had been unjustly sundered from Russia before coming under the sway of Western stoolies. ''Since time immemorial, the people living in the southwest of what has historically been Russian land'' -- that is, Ukrainians -- ''have called themselves Russians,'' he said. It was a story line he pursued for a good decade by the time of the invasion, with increasing insistence, and with the help of increasingly tortured historical subplots, reaching further back into the centuries each time he brought the subject up, until it seemed that, in his historical calculations, Catherine the Great left strategy memorandums for Joseph Stalin and NATO was menacing the medieval Kievan Rus'. ''Modern Ukraine,'' he said, ''was entirely created by Russia.''

For someone who hadn't a nice word for Bolshevism -- Putin professed to blame Lenin for, among other things, creating the fictional state of Ukraine -- this former K.G.B. case officer did seem to enjoy Marxist-Leninist diagnoses of false consciousness. And the false consciousness he saw in Ukrainians? Being Ukrainian. He was telling them that their nation, sovereign these 30 years, was a mistake. That it didn't have the right to exist. In fact, that it didn't exist. That they didn't exist -- except perhaps as Russians.

When the rockets hit Freedom Square on March 1, they marked a shift in the war. Before that, Russia concentrated on strategic targets. The strikes on civilian areas could plausibly be written off as misfires. But at Freedom Square, it became clear that the Russian high command meant to kill ordinary Ukrainians, as well as humiliate them. That is, assuming the high command ordered the strike. Russian operations were from the start so haphazard, it's conceivable that some local commander took it upon himself.

Whoever ordered it, it apparently didn't matter to them that while the square commemorated Ukrainian independence, it long predated that. Almost every structure in and around it had been built under the czars or the Soviets. The rockets were damaging masterpieces of Russian imperial and Modernist architecture. The opera house was damaged. So was Kharkiv National University, the first university founded in Russia-controlled Ukraine, in 1804; and the Derzhprom state industry building, a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage status.

When I first went to Freedom Square, little had changed since the strikes. Craters lay unfilled, shattered shop windows uncovered. Rubble and flattened cars littered the cobblestones. Cornices hung from the walls of the handsome government building, built in the 1920s. In its assembly hall, the desk microphones cut the air at ungainly angles. The parking lot of the nearby rail station was full of cars abandoned by people who'd fled. In Constitution Square, the monumental bronze statue known as Flying Ukraine, a winged goddess holding aloft a wreath, was encased in white sandbags.

After Freedom Square was bombed, Kharkivites, expecting Russian ground troops at any moment, gathered in it to show their defiance. They brought food and supplies, erected a triage tent, ran Molotov-cocktail-making clinics. Now the square was empty, and the unused Molotov cocktails were packed away in plastic crates. ''We hope we won't have to use them,'' said the sole doctor at the tent, where there were no patients.

A recorded public announcement wafted every few minutes from tinny loudspeakers in the square. ''Russian soldier, put your weapon down,'' a woman's voice said. ''Raise your hands. We will spare your life and help you go home.''

One Soviet-era relic surviving the siege was the Heroes of Labor Metro station. Outside the glass-canopied stairwells on either side of Serdiuka Street, people who lived in the Metro stood around, getting air, smoking cigarettes. They looked north toward Saltivka, listening to the blasts.

Below, the underground passageway smelled of urine and body odor and the borscht being ladled out by volunteers. Families were spread out on cots and blankets and bedrolls among the turnstiles and on the marble tiles of the platform. Hundreds had been living here for a month. The platform was loud with coughing and sniffling and redolent with stale kitty litter. The train cars had become reminiscent of overstuffed Soviet apartments. The benches were beds and the windowsills shelves for toiletries and foodstuffs.

But the mood in the Metro was buoyant. Someone had transformed a cot into a lending library. There must have been a hundred books. A schoolteacher was encircled by small children. They traced their palms on copy paper and filled in the silhouettes in marker and crayon.

''So beautiful, these palms,'' the teacher said.

A man sat on a crate reading aloud from a thick hard-bound volume to his wife. It was a biography of Yemelyan Pugachev, a soldier in the Russian imperial army who led a revolt against the young monarch who would become Catherine the Great. He was reading a passage that did not have to do with the rebellion but recounted Pugachev's efforts to find a husband for a servant girl. She complains to Pugachev that her nose is ugly. No man will have her. Pugachev promises to find her a match. He tells her to go make herself presentable. She returns rouge-cheeked, in nice boots. A suitor is found and a marriage set.

As he read, his wife lay on her elbow on a blanket, laughing.

''I started reading about the rebellions in Russia, how it all started,'' said the man, who lived with his wife in Saltivka. ''Ukraine is mentioned in this book. Russia says Ukraine doesn't exist, but the name 'Ukraine' is written in this book.''

''Pugachev actually came from a Don Cossack family, a family of poor Christian peasants,'' his wife said.

They were nearly done with the second of the biography's two volumes. They'd read many books together over the years. They met in the university library in Volchansk, a town near the border now occupied by the Russians. They would soon celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. They had children in Berlin who were urging them to move there, but he said: ''We aren't going anywhere. It's my land. I was born here. I can't imagine my life without my land.''

A few days earlier, it was his 74th birthday. His wife ventured outside and bought a waffle cake. They celebrated with their platform neighbors.

One of those neighbors, a young woman, approached and asked, ''May I tell you a story?''

''Please,'' I said.

''About five days ago, a man came in here with four jars of honey. He heard people in the station were sick. His wife is at home. She can't leave, so he can't live in the basement. So he went around with these four jars of honey, asking who needed it. I offered him medicine in return, but he said no. We found some lemons. But he wouldn't even take the lemons. He wouldn't accept anything. He just wanted to give away his honey.''

I waited for more, but that was it. That was her story.

Such stories were accumulating into a wartime folklore. Hers was true, I had no doubt. Others were plainly apocryphal. Some were dire, others jaunty. For reasons I still don't know, the most memorable had to do with food.

There was the story of the humanitarian aid shipment that was brought to a shelter. In a bag of food was a Russian tracking device. The shelter was blown sky high. There was the story of the babushka whose home was invaded by Russian soldiers. They told her they were hungry. She served them a steaming platter of dumplings. They tucked in. Soon there were eight poisoned Russians expiring on her floor. There was the secret password supposedly being used to ferret out Russian saboteurs. If you were suspicious of someone, it was said that what you had to do was ask them to say palyanitsa, a traditional Ukrainian bread roll. Russians were incapable of pronouncing it correctly. The way they said it, it sounded like the word for strawberry. If the suspect person said ''strawberry,'' they were probably the enemy, and if you were armed, you were to seriously consider shooting them.

On the far end was occult rumor. Ukrainians were prey to it, as all besieged people are. The Territorial Defense Forces soldiers all went by code names. Like animists forbidding their picture be taken for fear that the process will steal their souls, they were deathly afraid of cameras. They were convinced that any photograph would find its way into the ether and the Russians would see it and zero in on the location and send a rocket. This meant they were also very distrustful of journalists, even though -- or because -- Ukraine was crawling with them.

Pellegrin was photographing a pummeled street in downtown Kharkiv when a man emerged from a storefront with a pistol. He brought up Google Translate on his phone and typed into it. ''Please no pictures,'' the translation read. ''We don't want an airstrike.''

I sensed that the paranoia derived at least in part from a disbelief that what was happening to them was actually happening to them. This is an unavoidable cognitive break in wartime, one of war's absurdities. But I also sensed Ukrainians worried that foreigners didn't believe them, didn't believe what was before our eyes, had been duped by the farcical Russian line that Ukraine was waging a war on itself. When one woman recounted escaping her home, she used phrases like ''This is true'' and ''I'm not inventing this.'' She was pleading with us to believe her. She repeated the Russian word klyanus, which is stronger than true. It is an oath of verity upon pain of damnation, like saying, ''I swear on my soul this is true.''

Soldiers were digging up no end of tracking devices in the rubble. Any gadget of uncertain provenance was suspect. When a unit took us around the northern edge of Saltivka, a soldier showed me a picture on his phone, saying, ''We got this just three minutes ago.'' I was fairly certain it was a garage-door opener. Predictably, rockets crashed in. We dashed for cover. He looked at me significantly.

The official paranoia extended to Ukrainian civilians, sometimes violently. I arrived at the site of a rocket strike at the Palace of Culture for the Railway Workers, a lovely Constructivist pile from 1932. It was no secret the building now housed something important to the war effort. It was sandbagged to the hilt, and soldiers could be seen outside it. And it came as no surprise, then, when the rocket crashed in, falling short of the building and leaving a swimming-pool-size hole in the dirt.

Pedestrians continued on their way through the chunks of dirt on Velyka Panasivska Street. The police set upon them. They suspected that some saboteur in the vicinity had directed the strike. This was routine. They pulled a man from his car at gunpoint and shoved him against it face-first. They stopped an old woman trying to cross the street and searched her purse and shopping bag. When a man in a laborer's jumpsuit slowly rode up the street on his bicycle, they yelled at him to dismount. He was petrified and confused. They rushed at him, rifles lifted. They threw him to the ground, and one policeman put a boot on the man's head. Another thumped him in the head with his rifle butt.

The church that I saw through the smoke the morning of the gas-main fire was St. George's. That it was still standing was, if not miraculous, then certainly extraordinary. The church was on an open grass plot with no cover to speak of. The streets around it and the grass were pitted from shelling. Its brick exterior wall had been shelled, as had an outbuilding and its parking lot. Yet the church itself was untouched save for the few small dings in the onion domes and a shattered steeple window.

Its congregants began arriving, bags in hand, on Feb. 24. Now there were several dozen of them living in the church basement, in a room hung with icons and portraits of the martyred saints of Kharkiv. They prayed from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. in the Orthodox fashion, standing, with arms outstretched, reciting aloud from a special prayer that the priest had written and photocopied for them. Written in a classical Russian Cyrillic, it was called ''The Prayer for Peace and Ceasefire.''

I asked what they would do if the Russians reached Saltivka.

''We'll pray,'' they replied in unison.

The priest's father had ascended to the pulpit at St. George's after Ukrainian independence. He'd married some of the people in the basement, christened their children, blessed their homes, buried their parents. Now his son was trying to keep them alive.

The priest and his wife were living in the church, too. Their house was in Tsyrkuny, the village northeast of Saltivka that the Russians entered in the first week of the war but never fully subdued. They had escaped, but their two young children had not. The kids were trapped in the village, hiding with her parents in their home, where there was no basement. Much of the fighting that could be heard in Saltivka was actually taking place in Tsyrkuny. They hadn't seen their children in a month.

''It's scary here, but I can't imagine how it is there,'' the priest said. ''The scariest thing is when children get used to gunfire. But we are getting used to it, and the children learn from us.''

When his congregants said they would pray if the Russians arrived, one woman added, ''We'll pray for everyone.'' She meant they would pray for Ukrainians and Russians alike. It was a sentiment I heard frequently.

The next day, the priest delivered food to people living in the basement of an apartment block near the church. A group of people in folding chairs greeted him gratefully.

''We are praying,'' a woman said. ''What else can we do? We pray for forgiveness. We pray for peace. We pray for an end to the war. We are brothers with Russians. I am speaking in Russian because that's my mother tongue, even though I speak Ukrainian too. And my children speak Russian. I have family in Russia. We are not very close, but still family. Of course, we are also worried. Why do we kill each other? We have no enemies. We are all from the same roots.''

At a hospital, the chief surgeon recalled a friend of his, a woman. She'd been a champion of Russia as long as he'd known her. They would argue about it but remained friendly. She ended up on his operating table. A rocket had sent a piece of glass into her spine. He couldn't save her. To her last breath, she refused to disown Russia. A younger surgeon who was listening said, ''It's a psychological problem, I think.''

Reporting in Donbas before the war, I met a lot of Ukrainians who may or may not have been devotees of Russia but who had no use for Volodymyr Zelensky. They called him ''the clown,'' a reference to his previous career as a comedic actor. Zelensky had since become a national and global hero, and you could be beat up for speaking ill of him, but there were still Kharkivites who did.

Near the hospital was St. Nicholas, an august 19th-century Orthodox church where the bishop of Kharkiv distributed aid. One afternoon, people lined up outside. Some checked their phones for news of the war. Mass graves were being discovered in Bucha, outside Kyiv. Four million Ukrainians had now fled the country. Russia was shifting its forces east and might soon increase its assault on Kharkiv. The good news was that Ukrainian troops were driving Russians from villages and cities to the south. They'd recaptured Chuhuiv and Malaya Rohan. Others waiting in the line commiserated, laughed, argued, yelled.

I listened to this exchange, as heartbreaking as it was absurd:

''They will kill us all!'' a woman of unsteady voice declared.

''I don't know who kills who,'' an older woman said.

''Why are you yelling?'' said a third, skeptical woman.

''Is it not right I should yell?'' the unsteady-voiced woman said. It became clear the unsteadiness was a slur. She'd been drinking. This was common. ''We don't know who's bombing who, Ukrainians or Russians. How can we know who's bombing us? They're making us all cripples.''

A man butted in.

''Everyone, be quiet. I'm going to say something, and 'Go fuck yourself' is what I will say to anyone who tries to interrupt me,'' he said. ''So listen. Tell me: Kids. Does Putin have kids?''

''Yes,'' the slurring woman said.

''Shut up,'' he said.

''Two daughters,'' she insisted.

''He has two kids,'' he agreed. ''And where are they now?''

''They are abroad!'' said a chorus.

''Don't fucking interrupt me! I have kids. I have a granddaughter. I have a great-granddaughter. And today I lost my wife. She died, for whom?'' He wept. The crowd quieted. ''She was killed by a shot. She was hiding in the bathroom. She was 72. Just imagine, I came from the funeral. They took money from me for the funeral.''

By this point, a similar slur in his speech was obvious. Not everyone was sure his wife had died.

''Who needs your money?'' the skeptical woman said. ''What nonsense are you even talking?''

''If you don't want to believe me, that's your problem. They took my money. Twenty-five thousand. How is it possible? I'm a pensioner. I'm 78. Do I deserve this shit?''

''You don't deserve it,'' the inebriated woman said. ''You're a very good man.''

Someone shouted out that Zelensky's children were abroad, too (a rumor that appears to be untrue).

''Zelensky is a liar,'' she said.

The chorus concurred.

''He promised to reduce our utility prices by 70 percent,'' the older woman said. ''He's a liar.''

Turning to me, the man asked, ''Will you write about our clown?''

''What should I write about him?'' I asked.

''That he is a clown,'' the man said. ''We chose him as a friend, as a human. We wanted him to make our lives better. Did he? He brought us war. My wife died because of him.''

''We don't believe the war will end under Zelensky,'' the older woman said.

''Do you mean to say Zelensky started this war?'' the skeptical woman asked.

''A liar!'' the slurring woman insisted.

''A 70 percent reduction, he promised us,'' the older woman said.

''He brought us war,'' the man said.

''War and higher utility rates,'' she said. ''Have you seen the prices?''

''His wife and children are hiding in America,'' the man said, ''but I can't hide because I have no money.''

At the entrance to the highway that leads from Kharkiv to Chuhuiv, the city to the southeast that the Russians seized at the beginning of the war, were a pair of obelisks engraved with ''Kharkiv 1654-1954.'' They'd been spared the rockets. A giant menorah, a monument to the Holocaust, had been less lucky. Its brushed metal arms were bent out of shape.

The houses of Malaya Rohan had been flattened. On the road through the town, a Russian tank was blown in two, the turret lying on its side. Outside the town, on the highway, beneath a billboard advertising caviar, were jackknifed trailers and a barricade of destroyed cars. A van had taken a direct hit, its side torn open. A dead man lay on his side in the road. Another was on the embankment. As a group of Ukrainian press officers and soldiers arrived, a mortar shell exploded among the cars, sending up a plume of dirt and pavement.

They found a dead Russian soldier in a roadside ditch. There was a large crimson stain on his T-shirt -- he'd taken a round of some kind in the stomach -- and he lay on his back, his limbs bent, his boots gone. The press officers gathered around the corpse gleefully as a group of European reporters arrived.

''Don't laugh,'' the ranking officer told her subordinates.

After the journalists moved on, I watched a soldier photograph the corpse and say something to it. Then he spat on the ground next to it.

The dead man may have been one of the crew of a nearby tank that had been abandoned in a hurry. A sleeping bag and medical kit lay next to the treads and body armor on the apron. The reporters shot video of a soldier opening the tank's hatches, removing equipment and describing the contents.

''Now say, 'This is a Russian tank!''' a reporter demanded.

The soldier looked confused. Wasn't the familiar white ''Z'' spray-painted on its side indication enough?

When I left Kharkiv, in the first week of April, the air was warming and the sun making more regular appearances. At Freedom Square, volunteers were sweeping glass and carrying away debris. From the northern edge of Saltivka, you could now look onto the ridgeline that the Russians once held. Its barren trees etched the horizon. Serdiuka Street had been cleared. People swept in front of their homes in Saltivka.

But the siege continued. I returned to the home of the retired engineers who asked me to bring them a Stinger; all the glass panes were gone, and wind coursed through the apartment, blowing the curtains from the broken windows. I knocked on the locked door. No one answered.

At the parking garage, Oleksandr stood outside, topless, sunning himself. Pellegrin photographed him. He didn't mind.

''No Playboy!'' Oleksandr insisted. ''No Playboy!''

A police car arrived, and three officers stepped from it. They opened the back and began unloading loaves of bread and pallets of eggs. The people took them gratefully and carried them into the garage. One of the officers was a young man from Saltivka. He was living in the Heroes of Labor Metro station.

I spoke with Nikita, the 17-year-old, about the future. He had planned to go to university next year, he said, but the season of the entrance exams was coming. Of course, there was no way he would be able to take them. Aside from everything else, the night bombing had been very bad lately, and he couldn't sleep.

''What do you do when you can't sleep?'' I asked.

''I listen to the rockets,'' he said.

He was born long after Ukraine gained its independence and had little recollection of the war in which his brother was disabled. ''I always thought of Russians and Ukrainians as best friends,'' he said. ''Until this war.''

His father, Igor, recalled when Ukraine became independent. ''At first I didn't understand what it meant. I was uncertain. But then we began to grow. And then I felt proud.'' His first son ''was conceived in the Soviet Union but born in independent Ukraine.'' Of the war in Donbas, he said, ''I could never have predicted it. I couldn't imagine this one, either.''

''What will you do if the Russians enter Kharkiv?'' I asked.

''I don't know. We have nowhere to run.'' He reflected a long while. ''We will decide when it happens. What else can we do? Maybe we will become partisans.''

I asked Nikita if he could live under Russian occupation.

''It depends on the situation.'' He considered. He'd inherited his father's gift for the thoughtful pause. Finally he said, ''I think, no.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/12/magazine/22mag-kharkiv.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/12/magazine/22mag-kharkiv.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A patient at Kharkiv Regional Hospital. (MM23)

A resident of Kharkiv's Saltivka neighborhood who is among those now living in basements. (MM25)

Funerals for two members of the Azov regiment inside the Kharkiv Regional Hospital complex. (MM26)

The remains of a street in central Kharkiv. (MM28-MM29)

A neighbor standing near the body of a man who died in a fall down the stairs while escaping a fire in his Saltivka apartment. (MM30)

Members of the Territorial Defense Forces operating in Saltivka. (MM33)

A nurse treating a wounded man at a hospital in Chuhuiv. (MM34)

A Ukrainian soldier and the body of a Russian soldier along the highway leading southeast from Kharkiv. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAOLO PELLEGRIN/MAGNUM, FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM36-MM37)

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[***The Best Movies and TV Shows New to Netflix, Amazon and Stan in Australia in December***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61G0-VG71-JBG3-604S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Our streaming picks for December, including ‘The Prom,’ ‘Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,’ and ‘Your Honor.’

**Body**

Our streaming picks for December, including ‘The Prom,’ ‘Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,’ and ‘Your Honor.’

Every month, streaming services in Australia add a new batch of movies and TV shows to its library. Here are our picks for December.

[*New to Netflix*](https://www.netflix.com/au/)

‘Mank’

When the director Orson Welles hired Herman J. Mankiewicz to write the script for his masterful 1941 debut feature film “Citizen Kane,” the Hollywood veteran saw an opportunity to turn his life experiences — including his personal relationships with powerful bullies like the publishing tycoon William Randolph Hearst and the movie studio boss Louis B. Mayer — into an enduring piece of cinema. Gary Oldman plays Mankiewicz in director David Fincher’s “Mank,” a look back at the tumultuousness of American politics and show business, in the years in and around World War II. Shot in softly expressionistic black-and-white, this movie is a lovely but sly consideration of how artists try to shape their times by documenting them as bluntly as possible.

‘Selena: The Series’

Based on the short life and phenomenal career of the Tejano singer Selena Quintanilla, “Selena: The Series” goes into granular detail on how her father and manager Abraham (Ricardo Chavira) spent years booking her into low-rent fairs and house parties, trying to find the right showcase for her obvious talent. Christian Serratos plays the adult Selena, who eventually broke through to a big Spanish-speaking American audience, but then had to deal with the sometimes confining expectations of her fans and family. Equally honest and inspiring — and, refreshingly, suitable for all ages — this biographical drama is about the hard work and thought that goes into creating a superstar.

‘The Prom’

Meryl Streep, James Corden, Nicole Kidman and Andrew Rannells play faltering Broadway actors looking for a profile-boosting cause in the satirical comedy “The Prom,” adapted by the producer-director Ryan Murphy from a Tony-nominated musical. The impressive newcomer Jo Ellen Pellman plays Emma, an Indiana teen who inadvertently gets her high school prom canceled by the local authorities when she announces her intention to attend with her girlfriend. This tuneful and upbeat film mocks the pretensions and the misconceptions of both New York lefties and social conservatives as they each stake out their positions, irrespective of what the kids want.

‘Tiny Pretty Things’

Partly a sensationalistic soap opera and partly a hard-hitting look at the demands of a high-end dance academy, the potboiler “Tiny Pretty Things” follows a talented but unpolished young dancer (played by Kylie Jefferson) as she adjusts to the cliques and the cattiness of her peers. Based on the Sona Charaipotra and Dhonielle Clayton young adult book series — but definitely not aimed at kids — this salty drama balances the dancers’ stories against a larger mystery, involving the scandalous death of a promising student.

‘Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom’

In his final screen role, Chadwick Boseman plays a smooth-talking jazz trumpeter named Levee, who bickers with his bandmates and tries to advance his own career, during one long, hot day in a Chicago recording studio. The director George C. Wolfe does justice to August Wilson’s Tony-nominated 1982 play, one of the first of the playwright’s century-spanning “Pittsburgh cycle,” covering aspects of the Black experience in America from the 1900s to the 1990s. An ace cast — led by Viola Davis as a world-weary blues diva and Colman Domingo as her fussy bandleader — brings an impressively lived-in feeling to the material. But the star of the show is Boseman, giving one of the most exciting performances of his career.

‘The Midnight Sky’

A different kind of post-apocalyptic drama, “The Midnight Sky” stars George Clooney (who also directed the film) as a loner scientist who belatedly takes responsibility for other people after a catastrophe devastates the Earth. Felicity Jones plays an astronaut on a deep space mission when the disaster strikes, who is unsettled by the lack of communication from the command centers back home. Based on the Lily Brooks-Dalton novel “Good Morning, Midnight,” this promises to be an unusually thoughtful science-fiction film about human beings trying to find each other at a time when everything seems cold and bleak.

‘Bridgerton’

With the series “Bridgerton,” the author Julia Quinn’s popular, Jane Austen-inspired romance novels finally come to the small screen, courtesy of the accomplished TV producer Shonda Rhimes and her longtime “Grey’s Anatomy” and “Scandal” writer Chris Van Dusen. Set in Regency-era London, the show has Phoebe Dynevor playing Daphne, one of high society’s most marriageable young women. Regé-Jean Page plays Simon, a noble who conspires with the heroine to placate their meddling elders. Julie Andrews narrates the story, which is filled with enough secrets and scandals to keep the characters buzzing amid elegant dances and tea parties.

‘Best of Stand-Up 2020’

Drawing from the many stand-up specials that Netflix debuted in 2020 — featuring comics from the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand — this compilation presents the year’s best bits and jokes. It’s a collection of winning comedy that doubles as a sampler, for anyone who wants a taste of everything Netflix’s stand-up comedy category has to offer.

Also arriving: “Angela’s Christmas Wish” (December 1), “The Holiday Movies That Made Us” (December 1), “Natalie Palamides: Nate — A One Man Show” (December 1), “Alien Worlds” (December 2), “Ari Eldjárn: Pardon My Icelandic” (December 2), “Fierce” (December 2), “Hazel Brugger: Tropical” (December 2), “Break” (December 3), “Just Another Christmas” (December 3), “Big Mouth” Season 4 (December 4), “Leyla Everlasting” (December 4), “Sweet River” (December 4), “Detention” (December 5), “Lovestruck in the City” (December 8), “Mr. Iglesias” Part 3 (December 8), “Rose Island” (December 9), “The Surgeon’s Cut” (December 9), “Alice in Borderland” (December 10), “Canvas” (December 11), “Giving Voice” (December 11), “The Mess You Leave Behind” (December 11), “Hilda” Season 2 (December 14), “Song Exploder” Volume 2 (December 15), “The Ripper” (December 16), “Run On” (December 16), “Home for Christmas” Season 2 (December 18), “Sweet Home” (December 18), “DNA” (December 26), “Best Leftovers Ever!” (December 30), “Equinox” (December 30), “Chilling Adventures of Sabrina” Part 4 (December 31).

[*New to Stan*](https://www.netflix.com/au/)

‘Your Honor’

Bryan Cranston plays a judge on the edge in this crime thriller, adapted by the “Criminal Justice” writer Peter Moffat from the Israeli series “Kvodo.” When the judge’s son gets involved in hit-and-run accident — and when he learns that the victim belonged to a mob family — an attempted cover-up quickly gets messy, with each illicit act necessitating another. Cranston is joined by an excellent supporting cast that includes Michael Stuhlbarg, Carmen Ejogo, Sofia Black-D’Elia and Isiah Whitlock Jr., for a suspenseful story that takes surprising turns.

‘A Sunburnt Christmas’

The “Bondi Hipsters” writer, director and performer Christiaan Van Vuuren steps back behind the camera for “A Sunburnt Christmas,” a rowdy holiday comedy set on a failing farm in the outback. Daniel Henshall takes a break from his usual dramatic roles to play a hapless lowlife who escapes from police custody in a Santa suit, and then hides out in the country with a struggling young widow and her awe-struck kids. As he pretends to be Santa Claus, the crook discovers the rewards of doing good deeds while fighting to save the widow’s farm.

‘The Good Wife’ Seasons 1-7

Though this legal drama wrapped its seven-season, 156-episode run back in 2016, it remains one of the most pertinent depictions of modern life, detailing how the daily grind is affected by technology, political divisions, and the unceasing provocations of social media. Julianna Margulies plays Alicia Florrick, a Chicago attorney thrown back into the rough-and-tumble world of top-dollar civil and criminal law after her high-powered politician husband is humiliated in a sex and corruption scandal. Some story lines carry across multiple episodes (and even the entire series), but for the most part each chapter covers individual cases, which in the courtroom and in the lawyers’ offices raise questions about how power and influence are wielded in the 21st century.

‘Hoges: The Paul Hogan Story’

This two-part 2017 mini-series tells the bittersweet story of the comedian Paul Hogan, who was working as a rigger on the Sydney Harbour Bridge — and was struggling to keep his wife and their five kids fed and clothed — when telling a few minutes of jokes on the talent show “New Faces” changed his life. Josh Lawson plays Hogan, whose down-to-earth, ***working class*** family man persona was tested after his hit action-comedy movie “Crocodile Dundee” made him an international sensation. This series captures some of Hogan’s ups and downs, but mostly focuses on his one-in-a-million success.

Also arriving: “Boy” (December 1), “Siren” Season 3 (December 1), “Young Offenders: Christmas Special 2018” (December 1), “Next of Kin” Season 1 (December 3), “Sweet Country” (December 3), “The Ice Storm” (December 8), “Mullholland Drive” (December 8), “Thomas Banks’ Quest for Love” (December 3), “Curious George” Season 13 (December 11), “Where’s Wally” Season 2 (December 12), “Dom and Adrian: 2020” (December 13), “Fearless” Season 1 (December 15), “The Guest” (December 17), “Shaun of the Dead” (December 19), “Escape from New York” (December 21), “Braindead” Season 1 (December 22), “Triple 9” (December 23), “Tutankhamun” Season 1 (December 23), “Gavin &amp; Stacey: Christmas Special 2019” (December 26), “Seven Types of Ambiguity” Season 1 (December 26), “Darklands” Season 1 (December 31), “Luther” Season 5 (December 31).

[*New to Amazon*](https://www.netflix.com/au/)

‘Sound of Metal’

The writer-director Darius Marder and his co-writer brother Abraham — an accomplished musician — quietly meditate on the meaning of sound in their fascinating and artful drama “Sound of Metal.” Riz Ahmed is outstanding as Ruben, a recovering drug addict and heavy metal drummer who tries to live a simple life of performing at nights and hanging out with his girlfriend Lou (Olivia Cooke) by day. But when Ruben begins rapidly losing his hearing, he reluctantly retreats to a commune for the deaf, where his insistence on getting back to “normal” as quickly as possible puts him at odds with the mentors who would rather he adjust to living in silence.

‘Sylvie’s Love’

In the period romance “Sylvie’s Love,” Tessa Thompson plays Sylvie, an aspiring TV producer living in Harlem in the late 1950s and early ’60s. Nnamdi Asomugha plays Robert, a saxophone player trying to make a living in New York City’s struggling jazz clubs — and trying to convince Sylvie that he can offer her a more interesting life than what her square businessman fiancé is promising. The writer-director Eugene Ashe brings the lush look and melodramatic complications of old Hollywood love stories to “Sylvie’s Love.” But what makes this movie special is its relatively low-key and realistic outlook, concerned more with everyday hopes and yearnings than with big dreams and crushing heartbreak.

Also arriving: “I’m Your Woman” (December 11), “The Wilds” (December 11), “The Expanse” Season 5 (December 16), “El Cid” (December 18), “The Grand Tour Presents: A Massive Hunt” (December 18), “Yearly Departed” (December 30).

PHOTO: ‘The Prom’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY Netflix FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 7, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Battles Erupt as Elite Schools Make Race Part of the Lesson***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63GH-F7W1-JBG3-60MN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Michael Powell

**Body**

In this world -- where tuition runs as high as $58,000 -- the topic has become flammable. Parents, faculty, students and alumni have all entered the fray.

Several years back Grace Church School, an elite private school in Manhattan, embraced an antiracist mission and sought to have students and teachers wrestle with whiteness, racial privilege and bias.

Teachers and students were periodically separated into groups by race, gender and ethnicity. In February 2021, Paul Rossi, a math teacher, and what the school called his ''white-identifying'' group, met with a white consultant, who displayed a slide that named supposed characteristics of white supremacy. These included individualism, worship of the written word and objectivity.

Mr. Rossi said he felt a twist in his stomach. ''Objectivity?'' he told the consultant, according to a transcript. ''Human attributes are being reduced to racial traits.''

As you look at this list, the consultant asked, are you having ''white feelings''?

''What,'' Mr. Rossi asked, ''makes a feeling 'white'?''

Some of the high school students then echoed his objections. ''I'm so exhausted with being reduced to my race,'' a girl said. ''The first step of antiracism is to racialize every single dimension of my identity.'' Another girl added: ''Fighting indoctrination with indoctrination can be dangerous.''

This modest revolt proved fateful. A school official reprimanded Mr. Rossi, accusing him of ''creating a neurological imbalance'' in students, according to a recording of the conversation. A few days later the head of school wrote a statement and directed teachers to read it aloud in classes.

''When someone breaches our professional norms,'' the statement read in part, ''the response includes a warning in their permanent file that a further incident of unprofessional conduct could result in dismissal.''

This is another dispatch from America's cultural conflicts over schools, this time from a rarefied bubble. Elite private schools from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., from Boston to Columbus, Ohio, have embraced a mission to end racism by challenging white privilege. A sizable group of parents and teachers say the schools have taken it too far -- and enforced suffocating and destructive groupthink on students.

This is nowhere more true than in New York City's tony forest of private schools.

Stirred by the surge of activism around racism, Black alumni have shared tales of isolation, insensitivity and racism during school days.

And many private school administrators have tried to reimagine their schools as antiracist institutions, which means, loosely, a school that is actively opposed to any manifestation of racism.

This conflict plays out amid the high peaks of American economic inequality. Tuition at many of New York's private schools hovers between $53,000 and $58,000, the most expensive tab in the nation. Many heads of school make between $580,000 to more than $1.1 million.

At a time when some public schools are battling over whether to even teach aspects of American history, private school administrators portray uprooting racial bias as morally urgent and demanding of reiteration. Some steps are practical: They have added Black, Latino and Asian authors, and expanded course offerings to better encompass America and the world in its complications.

Other steps are much more personal. The interim head of the Dalton School, Ellen Stein, who is white, spoke five years ago of writing a racial biography of herself to better understand biases and to communicate with ''other races.'' The Brearley School declared itself an antiracist school with mandatory antiracism training for parents, faculty and trustees and affirmed the importance of meeting regularly in groups that bring together people who share a common race or gender.

Kindergarten students at Riverdale Country School in the Bronx are taught to identify their skin color by mixing paint colors. The lower school chief in an email last year instructed parents to avoid talk of colorblindness and ''acknowledge racial differences.''

Private school leaders, along with diversity consultants, say these approaches reflect current research about confronting racism and stamping out privilege.

''There's always the same resistance -- 'Oh my God, you're going too far,''' said Martha Haakmat, a Black diversity consultant who serves on the board of Brearley. ''We just want to teach kids about the systems that create inequity in society and empower them rather than reinforcing systems of oppression.''

Studies show that very young children, she said, are aware of skin color. Better to address it -- ''Yes, that woman has Black skin. What do you think of that?'' -- than to let children view white skin as the baseline.

More broadly, Ms. Haakmat said, private schools need to sidestep white old boy networks in hiring and integrate antiracism into the curriculum: If you teach statistics, why not touch on economic and racial inequality? Or use biology classes to teach of eugenics and how race has framed the way we think of humans? That, she said, ''is thoughtful antiracism.''

Critics, a mixed lot of parents and teachers, argue that aspects of the new curriculums edge toward recreating the racially segregated spaces of an earlier age. They say the insistent emphasis on skin color and race is reductive and some teenagers learn to adopt the language of antiracism and wield it against peers.

The nerves of some parents were not soothed when more than 100 teachers and staff members applauded Dalton's antiracism curriculum and proposed two dozen steps to extend it, including calling on the school to abolish any advanced course in which Black students performed worse than students who are not Black.

A group of Dalton parents wrote their own letter to the school this year: ''We have spoken with dozens of families of all colors and backgrounds who are in shock and looking for an alternative school.''

This upswell of parental anger, fed also by discontent with Dalton's decision to teach only online last fall, led the head of school, Jim Best, who is white, to leave on July 1. Dalton's diversity chief resigned under fire in February.

Bion Bartning, who notes that his heritage is a mix of Jewish, Mexican and Yaqui tribe, pulled his children out of Riverdale and created a foundation to argue against this sort of antiracist education. ''The insistence on teaching race consciousness is a fundamental shift into a sort of tribalism,'' he said.

No head of school agreed to an interview. Those at Dalton, Riverdale and Grace Church answered some questions by email. Several dozen faculty members declined interviews; in the end six spoke only on the condition of anonymity, for fear of upsetting employers. A dozen parents at five schools agreed to interviews, only one on the record.

For parents to speak out, said a white mother of private school children, was laden with risk. ''People and companies are petrified of being labeled racists,'' she said. ''If you work at an elite Wall Street firm and speak out, a top partner will tell you to shut up.''

Another parent framed the primal class stakes: Wealthy parents plot and compete to get a child into a private school secure in the knowledge that education married to social connections will ease the way into an elite college and a gilded career. A letter or call from the counselor at a top private school can work wonders with college admissions offices.

Why risk all that?

Responding to Painful Stories

The stories make for disturbing reading. In the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, Black private school alumni formed Instagram accounts: @blackattrinity, @blackatdalton, @blackatbrearley, @blackatandover and @blackatsidwellfriends.

The posts are anonymous and difficult to fact-check. But the ache and hurt are inescapable. A Black student recalled a white peer who told him Dalton ''wasn't made for people like you anyway.'' A Black graduate of Columbia Grammar & Preparatory School recalled wealthy white classmates who complained Black students only got into certain colleges because of their race. A Black Brearley graduate wrote of being conditioned to believe ''white skin, straight hair, a skinny body and money was the only way I could be right in this world.''

Stories come laden with complication. Students wrote of favorite teachers and treasured experiences. And there were traces of class anger. A Black ***working-class*** parent at Trinity School wrote that wealthy Black families dominated the Black affinity group and excluded her child.

These kinds of stories, taken together with shifts in the culture around racism, persuaded private school leaders to double down on antiracist education. Such efforts extend back more than four decades.

''As schools got used to diversity they realized it enriched education for all students,'' said Ms. Haakmat, the consultant. ''But these schools were still way white.''

New York's private schools declined to provide the demographic breakdowns that are required of public schools. Riverdale and Trinity officials say about 40 percent of students identify as of color, a quite broad definition; Grace officials say 33 percent of students hail from ''diverse backgrounds''; Dalton said only that it had a ''strong commitment to being intentionally diverse.'' Riverdale's head of school, Dominic Randolph, said a precise count was complicated by the number of families identifying as multiracial.

Numbers compiled by the Guild of Independent Schools of New York City showed that the percentage of students in elite private schools who identified as Black or Latino remained static since 2013, hovering at a combined 12 percent; Black and Latino residents constitute more than 50 percent of the city's population.

Lisa Johnson is a graduate of a private school in Atlanta and heads Private School Village, a Los Angeles-based organization for Black families. ''They love to pitch you on diversity,'' she said. ''Then your child is one of two Blacks in a class and you think, 'Huh, how do they define diversity without crystal-clear data?'''

Chloé Valdary, a Black diversity consultant who diverges from her peers and is critical of aspects of antiracist education, noted that heated rhetoric rarely challenged the status quo. ''Antiracism sidesteps income inequality and doesn't actually threaten the elite at all,'' she said.

Several teachers spoke of a performance-like quality to heated rhetoric on antiracism and pointed by way of example to Dalton, which throws an annual diversity conference that attracts trustees, parents and donors from 30 private schools. The conference this May carried intrigue, with Dalton's head of school, Mr. Best, speaking of his confusion at being pushed out, saying, ''No one here, including me, has the full story.''

Mr. Best introduced the keynote speaker, Rodney Glasgow, a Black diversity consultant who leads a private Quaker school in Maryland. Mr. Glasgow, a popular speaker on the private school circuit, promptly laid waste to that world, describing it as laden with ''insidious'' whiteness and ''built to replicate the plantation mentality.''

Mr. Glasgow ended with a flourish, comparing those Dalton parents who pushed out Mr. Best to what he described as the white supremacists who invaded the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. Dalton featured his speech prominently on its website until questions arose. It has since been removed.

The Grace School Mission

Paul Rossi and Grace Church School's journey into antiracist education offers a window into its complexities. Mr. Rossi, 52, changed careers in his early 40s, and found at Grace -- an Episcopal school with liberal values -- a place he adored. He taught math and classes on existentialism and Stoic philosophy. Records show he received strong annual evaluations and was described as a natural teacher.

Slowly change came. The head of school, George P. Davison, who is white and has steered Grace for many years, pinpointed the moment his school embraced an antiracist mission.

''Grace began using the language of antiracism in 2015 as part of our efforts to foster a sense of belonging,'' he wrote in response to The New York Times. ''It means believing that racism is real, that opposing it requires active engagement and that our community and curriculum are enriched when we aren't blind to race's influence.''

Grace, he wrote, incorporated the language of critical race theory but did not rest upon that foundation. He emphasized that the school avoided using shame around race.

Mr. Rossi, along with two teachers who described themselves as progressives and asked for anonymity, was skeptical. The teachers acknowledged that quite a few colleagues appeared to support the new curriculum and they spoke of sustained pressure to demonstrate acceptance of the language of antiracism.

Last year, the @blackatgrace Instagram account anonymously accused a female administrator of once placing derogatory information in a Black student's file. A teacher circulated a petition demanding her firing.

Another teacher grew worried; he had not known of the petition and feared the absence of his signature would be taken as a sign of his insensitivity. ''I thought to myself: We've entered a culture of denunciation,'' Mr. Rossi said. ''We don't just denounce but if we don't do it fast enough, we could be denounced.''

Pressure to join affinity groups went ''beyond 'highly encouraged,''' teachers said. A Latino couple asked a teacher to stop pressuring their daughter, who did not want to join the Latino one.

Grace administrators agreed to demands to seek more diverse faculty; it is largely white.

With the election of Donald J. Trump, teachers said, permissible disagreement narrowed markedly. Mr. Rossi recalled some students in his ''The Art of Persuasion'' class hankered for contrarian readings outside what he called the ''Grace political bubble.'' So last autumn he proposed a work by Glenn Loury, a well-known economist at Brown University and a Black man with conservative leanings.

An administrator, Hugo Mahabir, whose family has roots in Trinidad, blocked that. He wrote in an email to Mr. Rossi that Mr. Loury's argument -- delivered to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology economics faculty -- ''rings hollow,'' and that to give students a Black conservative view on race might ''confuse and/or enflame students.'' Mr. Mahabir did not respond to requests for comment.

The transcript of the February session with Mr. Rossi's white affinity group revealed a tense, probing discussion, with teachers and students found on either side of various questions. Toward the end, the dean of student life, Ilana Laurence, offered thanks: ''As uncomfortable as Mr. Rossi may have made many people here, I firmly believe that our conversation would not ever have been nearly as rich and thought-provoking.''

This drew support from the consultant, Emily Schorr Lesnick, who ran the affinity session. At a faculty meeting a few days later, she noted that Mr. Rossi and fellow teachers modeled an intelligent discussion.

''I have been in lots of spaces with adults, with students around antiracist work,'' she said, where white people are ''kind of just saying things and going through the motions and this was not that space, and I am so so grateful.'' Ms. Schorr Lesnick, who is white, did not respond to a request for an interview.

That air of congratulation dissipated. Soon Mr. Rossi talked with Mr. Davison, the school head, about the dim shape of his future. He secretly recorded that conversation.

It offered a surprise. ''The fact is that I'm agreeing with you that there has been a demonization,'' Mr. Davison told the teacher. ''I also have grave doubts about some of the doctrinaire stuff that gets spouted at us in the name of antiracist.''

Mr. Davison said he was worried students were made to feel shame because of race. ''We're demonizing white people for being born,'' he said, adding later, ''We're using language that makes them feel less than, for nothing that they are personally responsible.''

Mr. Rossi wrote of his case on the Substack site of the writer Bari Weiss, a former Times Opinion editor. In an email to Mr. Rossi, Mr. Davison claimed he was misquoted. The teacher later released recorded excerpts from that conversation, after which Grace claimed that the quotes lacked context.

Mr. Rossi was denounced at Grace and in private school circles. He rejoined that he was trapped, accused of racial insensitivity and in danger of losing his job.

This drama occurred against a backdrop of tension at the school. Months earlier, nine Black students demanded that classes be called off in the wake of Mr. Floyd's death. They said peers were ''voicing their white opinions about how Black and brown people should protest.''

The Grace Gazette, the school newspaper, surveyed 111 students and staff this spring of all backgrounds about free speech.

By a margin of about 48 percent to 43 percent, respondents said they were uncomfortable expressing dissenting opinions. And 35 percent said they had practiced ''wokeness'' to protect their reputations. ''There is no viewpoint diversity on race,'' a student wrote, ''because everyone is expected to view things the same way.''

An Uncertain Future

The pushback against antiracism education has taken on aspects of an ideological uprising. In Boston, a new group, Parents United, has entered the fight with New England's private schools. Mr. Bartning, the former Riverdale parent, established the Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism, with a large board that includes the academic and writer Steven Pinker; the human rights activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali; the former Fox newscaster Megyn Kelly; and Mr. Loury, the economist at Brown. Mr. Rossi works with this foundation.

Grace Church School appointed a task force to re-examine its antiracist teachings.

But the schools seem unlikely to change their approach to educating students on race. And opponents face daunting challenges. Powerful trustees say they support the schools, and administrators sound steeled for the argument. Tom Taylor, the head of Riverdale's Upper School, who is white, recently published an academic article on race and private schools. He, too, is a product of such schools.

Private schools perpetuate whiteness, he wrote, and must pursue an ''antiracist, decolonizing and culturally affirming'' agenda, with no obligation to educate those who resist. ''Private schools who find parents unwilling to accept moves toward a culturally responsible school are free to draw a line,'' he wrote.

Mr. Rossi, the Grace schoolteacher, will watch from the outside. Grace Church School offered him a contract if he participated in ''restorative practices'' for the supposed harm done to students of color. Grace officials did not explain what that would entail.

Soon after, Mr. Rossi and the school parted ways. ''It's no longer the school I loved,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/27/us/new-york-private-schools-racism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/27/us/new-york-private-schools-racism.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: BION BARTNING, who pulled his children from Riverdale Country School because of its antiracist education curriculum

PAUL ROSSI, a former math teacher at Grace Church School who objected to some parts of its antiracist mission (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

LISA JOHNSON, founder and executive director of Private School Village, an organization for Black families in private schools

CHLOÉ VALDARY, a Black diversity consultant who diverges from her peers and is critical of antiracist education (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELA BHASKAR/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18)

**Load-Date:** August 29, 2021

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Rana Foroohar; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PT-4NP1-DXY4-X2FR-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 12138 words

**Highlight:** A conversation with the financial journalist Rana Foroohar.

**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Rana Foroohar. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: I’m Ezra Klein. This is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

Before we begin today, we are looking for a researcher on the EK Show, somebody who is going to be diving deep into our preps with us, helping us get ready for the episodes, figure out the episodes, write questions for them. It’s a great job for somebody who is unbelievably obsessive about going down information rabbit holes, unbelievably capable at inhaling a lot of reading, and a lot of data all at once and then synthesizing it into something comprehensible. If that sounds like you we’re going to put the job description in the description for this podcast. You can also find it at nytco.com if you go to the Careers tab, but we’re only going to keep this open for probably about two more weeks. So the time to apply is now.

But onto today’s episode, we did it, everybody, we’re officially in a bear market. The S&amp;P 500 is down about 22 percent roughly from its January peak, inflation is really, really high. A recession is very possible, mortgage rates are rising pretty sharply. A lot of analysts think the housing market has already peaked. Crypto, whoa, crypto has just been hammered. Crypto markets lost $200 billion just over the last weekend, woof. So we’re seeing valuations collapsing across asset categories, stocks, houses, crypto, it’s not obvious that these should all be correlated. For instance, wasn’t Bitcoin supposed to be a hedge against inflation, the thing you bought so you didn’t lose money when inflation began rising? But nope, turned out to be highly, highly correlated with stocks, just one more speculative asset.

So what is behind all the correlations here? And that answer I think is pretty easy. The lines all begin going down when the Federal Reserve began tapping the brakes, signaling an end to the era in which they flooded markets with easy money. For a decade or more it has seemed stocks only go up, home prices only go up, investments only go up. The big problem that investors had was what to do with all this money? The big problem that a lot of companies had was what to do with all this money? They began stockpiling these huge hoards of cash. And a lot of companies and investors and startup C.E.O.s came out looking like geniuses for a while, but it is easy to look like a genius when you can borrow money for nothing, when investors are trying to give you money for nothing.

My guest today, years ago, called this era the everything bubble, and now she thinks it is popping. Rana Foroohar is a columnist at “The Financial Times.” She’s the author of multiple books, including 2016’s “Makers and Takers,” which is a look at the financialization of the U.S. economy. And her argument is that loose monetary policy has been the economic equivalent of a sugar high, that has kept markets and portfolios looking good even as the fundamentals of the economy have been eroding. So we talk about that and about whether or not there’s more we could have or should have done with all this money? Could we have made more out of that opportunity, even as the fundamentals of the economy have been eroding? As always, my email is [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com)

[MUSIC]

Rana Foroohar, welcome to the show.

RANA FOROOHAR: Thanks so much for having me.

EZRA KLEIN: So I want to start by looking at the last decade or so in the economy a little differently. Tell me about what you’ve called the everything bubble.

RANA FOROOHAR: So the everything bubble is the fact that when you look at basically all the prices of everything you can buy in asset markets right now. So that’s stocks, bonds, I would call housing an asset, all this stuff is going up, crypto is going up, I mean, until quite recently, we’ll get into that in a minute. But for the last decade, actually decade-plus, the price of pretty much everything you could buy as an investor has been rising. And I believe that large swaths of that are a bubble, and you can call it the everything bubble.

EZRA KLEIN: Was it rising in an unusual way? If we look historically have the valuation increases we’ve seen in stock prices and home prices and I guess you can’t say historically in prices of Ether and Dogecoin but nevertheless. The money you made in the last 10, 15 years by being just a banal investor, normal in the sweep of American history?

RANA FOROOHAR: Well, so your question is really interesting. I’m going to come to the main question but I want to just give you a little caveat no, you can’t look at crypto historically because it’s only been around for a few years. But if you look at how gold prices were rising in the Weimar Republic and compare it to crypto until quite recently, very similar, boom-bust and we can get into why that might be.

But to answer your core question, yeah, they’re absolutely rising to historical records, in some cases records that we’ve never seen before for these types of assets. And that’s really down to the fact that Washington has, and in particular, the Fed has been manipulating the price of assets, certainly for the last 15 years or so following the financial crisis. We saw even more of that in Covid because it was a way of uplifting the price of assets and making people feel a little richer in the midst of a global downturn that could have been catastrophic, it was in many ways, in a human sense.

But even before that, if you go back decades, we have been manipulating the economy in a way that is fundamentally disconnecting Wall Street from Main Street.

EZRA KLEIN: Manipulating is a very sinister-sounding word.

RANA FOROOHAR: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And I know people at the Fed, I know people who work on these issues, and they would tell you they’ve just been trying to keep the economy afloat, to keep bad things from happening. So when you say manipulating both what do you mean mechanically, what were they doing? And what do you mean motivationally, why were they doing it or why do you think they were doing it?

RANA FOROOHAR: OK. So I love that you’re breaking out the question that way. And first of all, let me say I 100 percent agree with you, it’s hard for me to think of anybody at the Fed that I know that I don’t think of as a pretty good person, a pretty moral person. I’d put Janet Yellen right up at the top of that list, when she was at the Fed, now at Treasury.

It’s not that they are trying to do something nefarious but the Fed has limited tools in its toolbox. So for the last, I would argue really since the end of the Bretton Woods system in 1971, policymakers from both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans, have been able to shift the tough process of what we might call guns and butter decisions, using the Vietnam War terminology. You got a lot of stakeholders in the economy, you got the Defense Department, you got folks that want to see more spending on social programs, education, whatever it is. All these people are competing for money.

When you have a fixed pie of money, you really have to make those choices. But when we actually delinked from gold and that enabled central bankers to have a lot more control over how interest rates could go up and down, how much money could go into the economy. That sort of unleashed that, it unlocked that peg of decision making. And so politicians were able to say, you know what, Fed, you deal with the guns and butter decisions, you keep interest rates low, you stretch out the business cycle.

And so the Fed understandably with its mandate of keeping prices stable, keeping unemployment rates looking good, basically keeping the economy afloat. They’re saying, OK, this is our official mandate. So what do we do? Well, we better keep the party going. We can keep rates lower a little longer, put a little more money into the economy.

And that’s basically what we’ve been doing more or less since the early 1980s in particular. And you can actually see that in the statistics. So business cycles and by that, what I mean is boom-busts, so recoveries in which the economy is growing and then recessions in which there’s a correction and some weaker parts of the economy, companies, et cetera being weeded out. Those cycles used to happen every five years or so.

We are officially in the longest business cycle expansion since records were actually tallied in 1854 right now. So we’ve been in an expansionary cycle for over 10 years actually. We’ve seen some hiccups because of Covid but we’re stretching out the time that the economy is growing, growing, growing because nobody wants the music to stop, right?

But the problem is if you keep rates low if you put a lot of money into the economy and that happened especially after the subprime crisis, and then again after Covid, what you’re doing is creating this kind of saccharine high, where asset prices are growing because that’s really all the Fed can do, it can lower interest rates, it can make credit flow more easily. Rich people have most of the money in the economy, they tend to use it to buy more stocks and more houses. And the price of those things go up.

But the Fed can’t do what policymakers can do, it can’t change the story on Main Street. It can’t build a new factory. It can’t re-skill all of us to do better jobs that are higher up the food chain. It can’t change that story.

So what you do is you almost get the sugar high, where there’s these headline numbers, stock prices are up, housing is up, things are booming. But nothing at the ground level is really changing. And so when I say manipulate that’s what I mean. It’s not nefarious, it’s more there’s limited things that a central banker can do. And they’re pretty much at the limit of that.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, let’s play with the metaphors here for a minute because one metaphor here is the sugar and high, the saccharin high, which is a sense of superficiality that we have energy, but we don’t really have it. And so the economy looks good but it really isn’t. Another metaphor I sometimes think about, which is a different way of thinking about the problem is blockage.

And I think of Ben Bernanke, Fed Chair Ben Bernanke going to Congress month after month after month after the Great Recession, and basically begging them to spend the easy money he was creating. Basically saying, listen, we can create money we can do quantitative easing, we cannot build a road.

RANA FOROOHAR: 100 percent.

EZRA KLEIN: We cannot build a bridge. We cannot invest in decarbonization technology. Use this money for something. And then for the most part they didn’t. And so one hypothesis I’ve sometimes had about the economy is basically that between the paralysis of our political system on a lot of issues, and some of the difficulties we simply have deploying money because of how hard it’s become to build things, and the regulatory state, and for other reasons.

That what happened is the Fed created a bunch of money and the political system didn’t take the handoff. And so all that money simply pooled in assets, things where you could increase the amount of money without having to increase any kind of real materials or anything real in the economy. How does that strike you as a theory?

RANA FOROOHAR: I think that makes a ton of sense. And it’s very much in line with what I’m talking about. I totally agree with you, that’s exactly what happened. I mean, if we go back, I mean, I’m sure many of us can remember in the wake of the financial crisis. So, you know, we get the initial hit, Bernanke comes in with the helicopter money. We fix the banks. We don’t really fix homeowners, everybody’s talking about this is a great time to rebuild America’s infrastructure, to fix our highways, to invest in education. And we’ve heard that basically for over a decade since. And you’re right, no president, no administration has been able to push through those sorts of investments.

Meanwhile, as you say, companies are able to leverage the low rate environment and the printing of money that the Fed was doing, the distributing of all that money into the economy, to their own ends. So if you look at stock prices since 2009, I mean, they’re just except for the last few months, on a completely upward trajectory. At the same time, corporate spending on things like research and development, again, until very recently because of some shifts that we can get into, has been going down.

And that’s been the same really since the 1980s. You could look at share prices going up, real investments going down. And every time a company, not just the government but a company tries to do something like, you know, invest in a technology that maybe isn’t going to pay off for seven years, or 10 years. And maybe it’ll be a little pricey and it’ll mean that you get a little hit to your quarterly profits, their stock prices tank. And so you have an entire financial system, not just a political system, that is locked into a very dysfunctional way of doing things.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, this gets to this story you tell in your book “Makers and Takers.” And something I’ve been thinking about since reading it — and it’s a book that came out some years ago but is I think very prescient about where we are — you really show the way a lot of companies that we think of as Main Street companies, as companies that make real things in the real world, also became hedge funds, also became investment firms.

And this is, of course, true also with a lot of universities that have big endowments those — at this point, it’s cliche to say that Harvard is a hedge fund with a small university attached to the side of it. And this is a, I think, on some level very unintuitive and on some level an intuitive thing, that when an institution or a person has much more money than they know how to spend, then the next step is for them to become an investor. And what you show is that began to happen in increasingly Baroque ways, with corporations. So can you draw the connection there, the way potentially a lot of easy money flowing through the system actually changed what a lot of people in the system spent their time doing with that money?

RANA FOROOHAR: Yeah, for sure. A couple of examples come to mind I led that book, which actually came out in 2016, and you’re very kind to say prescient. It was a little too early. As an author, you want to kind of be right where people are, it was a little — it was a few years too early because the trends just kept building.

My intro chapter was actually about Apple, which is not a financial company except it kind of is. And what do I mean by that? Well, all right, biggest, most profitable company in history by many measures. Carl Icahn, the famous robber baron activist investor depending on which lingo you like to use, was tweeting regularly that Apple, which he held a big chunk of at the time, should do more share buybacks and pay out bigger dividends, and essentially reward investors.

And just to unpack this for listeners share buybacks are when a company goes into the market and buys its own stock, which has the effect of artificially elevating prices because it cuts the number of shares, prices go up, that’s really good for the top 12 percent of people that own over 80 percent of stock but it really doesn’t again doesn’t change anything. Doesn’t build a new factory. Doesn’t create a new iPhone.

So investors like Icahn are tweeting to Tim Cook, you got to do this, you got to do this. And then he does it, he’ll go out and use those low rates to borrow tons of money in very cheap corporate bond offerings and then use the proceeds to give it back directly to the, I’ll say the top 12 percent, really if you look at the bulk of it it’s the top 1 percent the top 0.1 percent. Which again, it’s literally just making the rich richer.

And this is a company that is using the financial markets to do this rather than to actually raise money for daily business. So that’s a really weird perversion I think of our financial system. And it has the effect of increasing inequality. That’s one example.

The other example I would use — and this has been publicized recently in the book about Jack Welch, a company like G.E., great American innovator, under Jack Welch, who is sort of the epitome of the downsize in workers and distribute profits to investors sort of model, basically turned the company from a company that made things into a company that issued loans so that people could buy things. He cut workers, he cut investment. He turned the company really into a financial firm.

And this is a model that’s actually been repeated widely in the rest of the economy. There’s some great stats actually by a University of Michigan scholar that’s looked at the way in which companies today get about five times as much of their business from doing financial things, you know, lending to allow people to buy their products but really kind of using debt to paper over weak consumer markets and low income. That’s become the way that companies of all stripes do business as opposed to going back to the early ’80s or the ’70s. OK, you do business, you make your widget, you make your iPhone. But you don’t become a bank.

EZRA KLEIN: So if you had a more traditional economist here on the other side of the microphone —

RANA FOROOHAR: Like Larry Summers perhaps?

EZRA KLEIN: I’m not naming any names. I’m just I’m channeling an industry here, a way of being, the Tao of neoclassical economics. They might say, well, look, it’s true that a lot of money came out of the Fed, and then a lot of money went into the hands of people who owned assets because what the Fed was able to do was pump up asset prices, what quantitative easing is, is they pump that money into asset markets. And then that did lead to investors and companies for various reasons having a lot of money.

But if they can’t spend that money and so they put it into some kind of investment arm or buybacks or whatever it is. That money is still flowing into the economy, that money is being used by people who are trying to find the highest rate of return, and the highest rate of return is going to be ultimately something that matters in the real economy. So at the end of this very long chain of money passing around from company to company, person to person, there should be something that creates economic value, right? I mean, at some point valuation is supposed to equal value. And value is what we all experience. What holes do you think there are in that story if you do think there are any holes in that story?

RANA FOROOHAR: That was a very succinct way of thinking about. I think you said neoclassical, I would also call it neoliberal economic thinking. Let me break that down and look at it through the lens of an individual and then through the lens of a company. So if I look at an individual. And I think — I go back to that number that when you pump up asset prices you’re essentially rewarding the top 12 percent of the population that owns 82 percent of the stock, and probably more housing wealth than that.

Well, even for the super-wealthy, there’s only so many houses, only so many diamond rings, only so many pair of jeans that they can buy. And as somebody that’s been covering business for over 30 years now for my sins, it’s been interesting to me that retail C.E.O.s have for a decade or more been coming to me and saying, we’re really worried about this because they can see that if you don’t have a middle class that is big enough to support an economy, if you’ve only got 12 percent of the people that have all the wealth, that does not a healthy economy make. So that’s how I think about it at the individual level.

At the corporate level, it’s interesting and a little more complex. Corporations — and this is part of the whole neoclassical fallacy and I would say neoliberal fallacy — corporations have really certainly since the 1980s been able to fly 35,000 feet above any of those issues of distribution in the nation-state because companies are global.

So if you look at where wealth has landed in the last half-century it’s basically been in multinational companies headquartered mostly in the U.S. and in China. There was a trade-off of cheap capital flowing to places where labor was a lot cheaper. There was also the effect of companies buying and investing in a lot of technology to displace workers, very cheap to employ a Chinese worker as opposed to American one, even cheaper to employ a robot. Which are now disintermediating Chinese workers.

So companies are able to put that money to use that enriches the top of the C-suite but doesn’t actually create a broader shared prosperity.

And it’s very interesting because if you look at a chart, for example, that would have say, the numbers of G.D.P. growth of America, and how companies are doing. And how your average household is doing. In the 1970s those lines would be pretty similar.

If you look at those lines now, you might see them all over the map. You might see a country going one direction, certain kinds of consumers going either down or very up, depending on where they are socioeconomically. And companies kind of floating over the whole thing.

Which is what I believe the core fallacy of both neoclassical and neoliberal economists are, which is that the market was going to always know best, the market was going to distribute absolutely properly and we would get this trickle-down effect. We are not getting a trickle-down effect. None of the statistics show that.

EZRA KLEIN: But I want to hold on the question of why because even just go back to the story you just told, which I think is in large respects a true one so they begin outsourcing a lot of labor to China, which has a very bad effect on many, on many, many, many American workers but does lead to what they say it will lead to, which is much lower prices for many consumer goods. Beyond that, you can invest in both worker displacing but also productivity-enhancing technology.

RANA FOROOHAR: True enough.

EZRA KLEIN: — we don’t —

RANA FOROOHAR: If education keeps pace, that’s an important caveat.

EZRA KLEIN: We don’t think it’s a bad thing that we’ve automated most of farm labor. So if you get robots doing more retail work. So in theory again, this is the theory, that this is supposed to lead to these investments that boost productivity, boost overall living standards, and the money is supposed to flow to its highest use. And at some point, that highest use is supposed to be something that drives a lot of value.

And I think you brought in something really important there at the end, which is then if you look at G.D.P. in this period. If you look at median wages in this period.

If you look at a lot of the places you might look to for that value to show up you’re not really seeing it. It’s like the money somehow stayed in this financialized space in the economy, actually, quite a lot of money went into crypto. I mean, trillions of dollars is not an insignificant amount of cash. A lot of money went into wild — I mean, if you look at the rise in Tesla prices, I mean, now they’re gone back down but that was really big.

That’s the thing I’m trying to get at that it actually breaks the theory a little bit for so much money to be able to remain in financialized uses without eventually creating something in the real world worth having on average but it seems that for some time that’s actually been happening.

RANA FOROOHAR: True enough. I love this question and I’m going to try and take it sort of in three parts. First off I would note that this classical theory that says if consumer prices are falling and it’s amazing to me that there are still many neoliberal economists who we don’t have to name, that are saying as long as consumer prices are falling everything’s fine. The problem is that a cheaper TV, even if it’s $100 cheaper, $800 cheaper, it doesn’t make up for the fact that all the things that make us middle class, education, health care, housing, have been rising at multiple times core inflation rates for decades now.

Way before Covid, way before the financial crisis, the price of housing, education, health care, these things were all rising faster than anybody’s wages. So that’s one reason why a lot of us haven’t been feeling wealthier despite all this money sloshing in the economy.

The other thing is why is it all going to Tesla stock? Why is it going to crypto? Well, over in particular the post-financial crisis era, but again I would go back farther, decades of low rates, what that does, the Fed sort of manipulates the economy, keeps rates low, keeps borrowing costs low. That enables a lot of creation of debt. It enables riskier assets which may not even be profitable in many cases or could be totally speculative like in the case of crypto, it allows them to sort of get inflated in price because investors of all kinds are looking for returns.

So when the Fed pumps a lot of money into the economy it means you can’t get a great return in something like a bond or even sort of a plain vanilla stock. So you’re just like oh my God, how am I going to make money? All right, let me try and go into a riskier — don’t try and go into tech stocks. My poor mother, a schoolteacher, I mean, thank God she’s got a pension still. She went into tech stocks pre-1999, lost a third of her retirement savings. The fact that we allow individuals or force them to make these decisions is a whole other podcast, don’t get me started.

So you get these really risky assets soaring in prices and eventually the little guy — and it’s always the little guy at the end, comes in and says, I’ve got to get a piece of this, I got to get a piece of this. So crypto makes me crazy. And I’m so worried about it because the real profit that The New York Times did recently in that brilliant piece kind of unpacking who the real investors of Bitcoin are a lot of the people really making money are a concentrated type of the usual suspects.

But a lot of retail investors got into this stuff too. And they got into it late because they’re not insiders, and they’re just thinking God, I’m losing out, you know. And so the people that bought crypto, many of them were younger than average, many of them were poorer than average, many of them were people of color. And they’re sort of saying, wait a minute, we’re still waiting for trickle-down. Let’s try and get into some of that trickle-down.

This is how boom-bust cycles look. If you look just at the period from Covid onward, there’s been a four-fold increase in the number of retail investors, that means little guy investors, in the markets relative to the institutions. Professionals have been getting out since really 2018 or so but little guys are getting in because it’s the tail end of the cycle. And the Fed in its best efforts with a good intention has been trying to smooth things out. But really what it’s been doing is making things that have no value look like they have a lot of value until they don’t.

EZRA KLEIN: Let me come back to crypto because I do want to talk with you about that both as an economic and as a cultural or almost metaphorical phenomenon. But I want to get at something that I think is implicit in this argument and see if I’m understanding it correctly so during this period of easy money there are consistent warnings it is going to unleash wild amounts of inflation. You go back practically to what Republicans were saying in 2010, in 2011, and you hear a lot of that.

And it doesn’t. If you track what the Fed understands, what the economics profession understands to be inflation, core inflation, look at the other measures too. Until very recently the pandemic period, it’s very stable. And so the people saying easy money is going to create all of this inflation are somewhat discredited. They look like cranks.

I understand what you’re saying, and I’ve come to believe in this view more, that there was a lot of inflation. It was just asset inflation. And we understand asset inflation, not as an economic problem, when asset inflation begins to go nuts, we don’t report it like we do core inflation, where we say there’s a huge problem happening in the economy. We say, hey, look, the lines going up, everybody’s getting richer. And so is that the argument here, that it actually did unleash the promised inflation, that inflation was just somehow weirdly confined to assets? And so we experienced it as a boon and not a problem?

RANA FOROOHAR: Yes. In answer, yes, that is one prong of the argument. I would say that there’s another prong too which is I think just now starting to get talked about in the post-Covid, post-Ukraine war era, which is there were a lot of false deflationary headwinds. And by that I mean, all right. What’s the real cost of a product? What’s the cost of a product, say a t-shirt in Walmart, if you’re not using cotton harvested with concentration camp labor in Xinjiang?

What’s the cost of something if you actually have a real price on carbon, and then you have to tally in how much it costs to tote it over tens of thousands of miles from the South China Seas? What’s the cost if you have proper environmental and labor standards? This is the conversation happening right now. And once you start pricing all those costs in, and you start really thinking of the economy in a different way, then yeah, it is certainly is inflationary.

And this is something that I think, unfortunately, no politician, particularly the Democrats right now in advance of a midterm or a presidential want to land on, which is some of the transitions to a kinder, gentler, I believe more stable, and ultimately more resilient economy, are going to be inflationary in the short to medium term.

EZRA KLEIN: Oh, there’s a lot there. I’ll do one minute on this just because I love this topic, the false low prices we have I’m a vegan and an animal rights person. And one of my arguments to people is always that meat should be expensive —

RANA FOROOHAR: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: — because you are not paying the price of the suffering of animals in factory farms. You have made them pay that price. And so the meat looks cheap but it’s not, it’s just the suffering is being paid by the animals as opposed to the cost of animals raised well being paid by you.

RANA FOROOHAR: I agree with that, but it’s also you don’t even have to be a vegan, it’s also being paid by the labor. It’s also being paid by the land. The big food, I mean, this was one of those wonderful telling stories that Covid was like a scrim that got pulled up on it, you know. Covid hit, suddenly nobody’s in restaurants but yet everybody’s lined up at grocery stores. There are food shortages, producers are dumping milk and meat, wait a minute, what’s happening here? Well, we have two highly concentrated supply chains, one for restaurants, one for grocery stores. They don’t talk to one another. Big food, a handful of companies have gotten monopoly power and use highly toxic and very hard on the land industrial farming techniques because that’s how you get cheaper prices.

But what was the cost for that? It was the devastation of many communities in the Midwest. I grew up in the rural Midwest, I saw this play out in Indiana. It was toxins in our water. It was health care, I mean, don’t even get me started on the cost of obesity and all the kind of disease and health problems that come from that model, that neoliberal, neoclassical model of cheap is everything. When you see the real cost of things, cheap is not cheap.

EZRA KLEIN: Right. And I’ll say too, my view on this is never that everybody should become vegan it’s simply that meat should cost what it costs to be raised environmentally, sustainably and humanely. And then you would get into a much better equilibrium for everyone involved.

[MUSIC]

I want to pull us now into this era because this has been a critique burbling around the edges, and I think it has only been in the last, call it four or five months, that some of it has moved into something almost proven. And so what happens now is that you have a pandemic and the Fed goes into unbelievably easy money mode. I mean, they do things as you can read about in Adam Tooze’s work, that they’ve never done before, right?

The amount of money they’re printing, the way they’re buying things. I mean, this is truly uncharted territory. And in a way that is different than what happens in 2010. Congress really steps up because Donald Trump as leader of the Republicans can get them to spend money and the Democrats want to spend money. And they spend a ton of money in CARES, they spend a ton of money then later with Joe Biden in as president in the American Rescue Plan, to bring up Larry Summers, who says, I think in the end correctly, that was a little bit too big.

But the moment that money begins getting moved directly into the pockets of most people, then you begin to see inflation. Happen and the moment inflation begins to happen, then you begin to see the Fed tap on the brakes. And the moment the Fed taps on the brakes, then you see the asset economy pop, and pop much quicker than people were expecting. Suggesting that its underpinnings are more fragile than they had admitted. So can you talk a bit about how you understand that part of the story? Like what has been revealed by the kind of policy experiments taken place in this period?

RANA FOROOHAR: Yeah. You’re making an important point — and this is where yeah, Summers got the timing right about wait a minute, fiscal right now at this moment going to be tricky. Now, I would say Larry is not acknowledging the fact that some of his own policies during the Clinton administration actually led us into a highly financialized economy, which is why we are where we are.

And that’s the thing that I would want to connect is whenever you have a crisis there’s always a trigger, there’s always something that seems small that happens, and then it just explodes and the shrapnel of everything that was wrong starts to go everywhere. And so our trigger this time was Covid. And what did Covid do?

Well, for starters, it illuminated these highly financialized, highly globalized, highly fragile, “efficient,” and I put efficient in quotation marks, supply chains that actually turned out to be not all that resilient. Pandemic hits, you can’t buy masks, why? Because China is hoarding them. Well, China’s hoarding them because it makes them because that was the bargain, cheap capital for cheap labor. And it wants to put masks on its own people. Well, that’s kind of understandable if you’re sitting in Beijing. But if you’re sitting in North Carolina it’s a problem.

So Covid hits, we start to see supply chains breaking down. That paradigm of efficient but cheap suddenly disappears. And so you get blockages. And then the fact that each individual country because suddenly, we’re not — the world is not flat. The world is not flat. It’s not one big happy global economy, it’s every nation for themselves. And every nation deciding differently how to deal with Covid, how much to lock down, when to let people back out on the streets. And because the virus is moving in different ways in different places, there’s asymmetry between recoveries and when people have to go back down into another lockdown.

Then you get the war in Ukraine, which just adds no pun intended, but fuel to that fire, by knocking out a good chunk of the world’s excess gas and oil reserves, and also creating a food shortage because Ukraine is the breadbasket of that particular region. And so that creates more inflationary pressures.

Now, all this was happening in very complicated and asynchronous ways at the same time that you have a president who let us remember, is one of the most labor-friendly presidents probably that we’ve ever had, comes in and is like, what I’m not going to do? I’m not going to do what my predecessors did and bail out banks while letting homeowners go it on their own. I’m going to make sure I’m doing the right thing by individuals, by labor, even if that means going a little overboard. So I think that’s what happened. And that complicated confluence of events but basically what it did was just light the fire that then kind of exploded the whole system and the pressures had been building for decades.

EZRA KLEIN: I have had trouble figuring out how to make this point correctly, but it revolves around what you’re talking about here. I think it’s really powerful what problems we understand how to see in an economy and what prioritization we give to them. And I was mentioning earlier that assets go up, we look at that, we think great. Our first response is terrific.

You look at core inflation going up, even if some of the reason is wages, and it is immediately treated as a problem. And I’m not saying that inflation getting out of hand isn’t a problem because it really, really, really is. But nevertheless, it is coded, inflation almost always and everywhere is coded as a problem.

And one of the dynamics of this period in the economy that I think deserves more scrutiny than it’s gotten, is the way that we can give a lot of money to rich people without the distortions coding as an economic problem.

And then the moment you begin giving a lot of money to folks who aren’t as rich, the distortions do code as a problem. And you might say that that’s because in the short term we put a bunch of demand into a supply-constrained economy, and that really did create an inflation problem. I truly don’t want to be seen to be diminishing what I think is a genuine economic challenge. And at the same time, putting all that money into the economy really did create a housing boom, and a housing prices rise that is going to be a problem and is a problem for anybody who wants to buy a home.

It’s nice for homeowners but it’s a difficulty for anybody who wants to buy a home, or you can say similar things about dimensions in the stock market. So I wanted to talk about this piece of it, the differential ways that we are able to see problems among a lot of money sloshing around the ***working class***, versus a lot of money sloshing around the very, very wealthy classes.

RANA FOROOHAR: Yeah. It’s such a great question. Let me try and nail this because it’s a hugely important thing for people to understand. I had a conversation once with a union representative who was actually on an advisory board that the Fed created. The Fed following the financial crisis decided to actually put some real people on its advisory boards to ask them some questions about, hey, what are you seeing for Main Street, because we’re way up here in the ivory tower.

And I was raising this issue because I’m a card-carrying Democrat, but unlike most liberals, I actually do think debt matters. And I think that financialization, even though some wealth, like a little bit, will eventually trickle down to people that make $15 an hour. It’s just so disproportionate to the amount that’s gone to the rich. And to the risks that have been brewed up in the system as a result of that strategy, that it actually ricochets and creates the very problems that you’re talking about, which is now a housing market that is so out of control, that even a lot of middle or even upper-middle-class people that I know are saying my God, we can’t get on the housing ladder period, you know.

And he said it’s true, that there are these risks but one reason that a lot of labor leaders supported all that quantitative easing and that kind of post-2009 monetary you know saccharin high that we’ve spoken about, was that they keep waiting and waiting for everything to trickle-down and just when it’s about to trickle-down to them is when the moneyed classes, the investors and the policymaking classes, decide oh, there’s a little too much risk now for us, let’s pull the plug. We’ll stop the music, you can stop dancing now. And they’re like, wait we just want a drink. Like mice looking for that little dropper.

And I have got so much sympathy for that. I mean, it actually almost makes me a little tearful because I have so much sympathy and time for that argument and I understand that the labor left that has supported some of the easy money policies has been doing the best they can for working people within the context of a totally effed up system. I don’t know if I’m allowed to say that on podcast but.

EZRA KLEIN: You are.

RANA FOROOHAR: What we have got to do now because I frankly think we’re at the end of this whole neoliberal, neoclassical economy, making any sense for anybody. What we now have to do is tell a true story, which is trying to get like $0.50 for the working person at the end of creating a bubble that makes it impossible for you to ever become a homeowner, that doesn’t work.

What we need — and other countries make these decisions. I mean, you can look at Germany, Germany’s not perfect in many ways but it’s made some decisions as a society to have an income-led economy rather than an asset bubble-led economy. And that’s something Biden I think messaged quite well, work, not wealth.

Unfortunately, going back to one of your first points, we have a gridlocked political system in which you can’t get through those very basic, very smart investments in education and the caring economy, and highways, and all the things that we did at certain times in our economy as a society that created broad-based shared prosperity. And that’s where we’ve got to get to. I believe we will get there. It may take a lot more pain but we’re going to get there because there’s just really no other alternative.

EZRA KLEIN: Is that the tragedy of this period, because I think one thing people could hear when we talk about saccharine highs or when we talk about easy money or bubbles, is there can be a sense of inevitability in it. If it was always an illusion, if it was always a hologram, then eventually somebody was going to touch it. But I used to run Wonkblog at The Washington Post and I remember that one of our mainstay charts for just years, is we would go to the government website that tracks real interest rates, real rates at which the government can borrow, Treasury rates. And they would be at the 5 and 10-year frame negative. And we would like sit there pounding the table, that the market is basically paying us in inflation-adjusted terms, to issue Treasuries so that the government can spend money.

And the government did spend money on a bunch of things like if you look at government spending in this period it’s not that it was low but will we look at this period as the great tragedy was we could have functionally been paid to decarbonize the country. We could have functionally been paid to upgrade every school into a palace. We could have functionally been paid to build a lot of things that would have generated returns for a really long time.

And for a bunch of reasons instead of doing that we sloshed money around and subsidized Uber rides for a whole generation of people, and Postmates deliveries, and crypto bubbles, and I won’t say nothing came out of it. I mean, I think some things did come out of it. There are companies that invested the money well and whatever his other problems, I admire what Elon Musk did with Tesla and SpaceX, and I mean, there are things here that happened that got built.

But we could have built nationally a lot because we had this period of investment opportunity. And I worry that when we look back we won’t just look at this as a bubble, we’ll look at it as a miss. That there was a period of easy choices when we could have made great investments. And now we’re going into a period of hard economic choices, where it’s going to be a lot harder to make investments that are still needed.

RANA FOROOHAR: Yeah. I’m just so sad as I hear you talk about it because yeah, I 100 percent agree with that analysis. I was thinking historically if you look back on what are the decisions taken by the public sector and the private sector that actually lead to broad-based shared prosperity? And they tend to be in periods like this where you have a potentially world game-changing, transformative technology coming down the pike which is in our era clean energy, that you typically have the government come in and kind of put a floor under that with some kind of investment. You could look back to the period and say, of the building of the railroads, the government incentivizes the push to the West. Land grants, even something like creating standards for the kind of gauges that would go on a railroad.

And then the private sector is like OK, we’ve got a floor. We’re going to come in now and we’re going to privatize this. And that’s when you get real growth. That’s kind of how the internet was created, right? Post World War II you have this investment into telecoms, and tech and you get the internet, and then it gets privatized and people make money and some real productive things get created.

We had — I don’t know whether to say had or have. Honestly, it like tears at my heart because I feel that we have this window and it used to be really, really, really big. It was like not even a window. It was a huge door. It was like a bridge that was being lifted up and come in, make this happen. And it is closing very quickly and it is going to make a huge difference to our lives. Not today but in absolutely in 10 years, 100 percent in 20 years, or 50 years. It may look a lot more like an emerging market country in America because we didn’t make these decisions.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: Let me get at another piece of financialization here, which will bring us back to crypto. So one of the things I find interesting about crypto again as a metaphor, as an ideology, as a concept, is that it really is on some level, the financialization of everything. It is a whole new way of structuring the internet, built on how you would structure a currency, then how you would trade the currency, then how you would verify that the currency is being traded and that ownership of the currency was validated.

And I find something about it very poignant actually, this whole technological structure and idea that is in many ways a critique of hyper-financialized digital capitalism. That is itself at its heart, hyper-financialized digital capitalism, such as the contradiction is baked into the center of the entire thing. Like all these people who don’t like how say the Feds ran money, surfing these waves of Fed money, going into how they don’t like how web 2.0 companies took over the internet but then we’re perverted by capitalism, the need to make money becoming part of this Web3, that is at its core perverted by capitalism and the need to — like the whole thing is so —

RANA FOROOHAR: Insane.

EZRA KLEIN: It’s so unsubtle. But it’s also a little — I mean it when I say I think it’s poignant. I think that there’s this — you’re really watching people struggling with like the inability now to — it’s like the only way to imagine escape from capitalism is more capitalism. It’s very strange. I’m curious what you make of it.

RANA FOROOHAR: It’s a fascinating topic and I feel like we could almost do a whole other podcast on crypto. When we talk about crypto, most people use that term to talk about private coin that is not backed by a central bank. But that’s only one part of the digital currency story. So crypto is exactly what you say, kind of naively, optimistically and wildly speculative on one level but it’s also telling us something very important.

An investor once said to me — and I thought this stuck in my mind, that he saw Bitcoin not as something that he wanted to invest in but as a kind of a canary in the coal mine for the level of trust in the existing systems. And that’s sort of interesting because it gets to your point that well, you know wait a minute, you’re surfing a wave of central bank-backed money so you’re kind of part of the system, you’re sort of the icing on this very large financialized cake if you’re in crypto.

On the other hand, the notion of a privately-issued currency that can be in some way — and this is sort of unclear whether this is really true or not too but controlled in the way that gold was. Where there’s a limited supply. That appeals to a lot of both techno-utopians but also kind of average people. And again, this gets to young people that are totally cut out of the existing system of wealth, to people of color who are disproportionately invested relative to their wealth in crypto.

That they look around and they think well God, this system is not working for me, I want something different. It’s almost like — I mean, this just came to me, I’m thinking like is it sort of like the people that voted for Trump and Sanders. Like that weird overlap of well, I know that Main Street politicians of either political stripe are not serving me, so I’m going to go outside the paradigm. I think there’s some of that, there.

EZRA KLEIN: Let me draw on that Trump analogy because I think there’s something very, very viable in it. And put aside a lot of Trump’s personal characteristics.

RANA FOROOHAR: Of course.

EZRA KLEIN: Because I don’t want to over-polarize this metaphor. But one thing that’s always been interesting about Trump’s 2016 run to me, I’ve always loved a line he had, he said I’ve been greedy my whole life. Now I want to be greedy on behalf of America. And I’m doing that from memory but that’s basically — that was the structure of the line.

And the point of Trump wasn’t to break the system, not really. People talk about him as a wrecking ball but that isn’t what he actually promised. The point of Trump was to have somebody who knew how to game the system, who is on your side in it. And I’ve always thought that’s very, very important subtlety, and there’s a way in which I think crypto reflects that the way people participated in both the currency and the ultimately, then the NFT markets, was it wasn’t an escape from financialized capitalism, it was a hyper-financialized digital capitalism. That you could be in on the ground floor of. Right, it wasn’t the end of it, it was your version of it.

RANA FOROOHAR: There’s very much something to that. And I’m thinking of two things. First of all, I’m thinking of an article that I wrote a while back on Robinhood because I was just — I was horrified. I didn’t even know about Robinhood but my now —

EZRA KLEIN: You mean the company here, not the old guy who lives in the woods and has a bow and arrow?

RANA FOROOHAR: No, I mean, the company, the trading platform for average Joe investors, where you can go on and do kind of like super-fast day trading. And they do a lot. They were doing a lot of crypto, a lot of meme stocks. I learned about Robinhood, I’m embarrassed to say because I cover the financial markets, from my then 13-year-old son who told me at one point, he’s like mom, are you going to buy the dip? I’m like oh my God, did you just say buy the — wait a minute, what are you — how did you even know that term? What are you doing? And he was on Robinhood, you know, like a bunch of his friends that apparently have made money on these platforms in crypto.

And I thought oh my God, OK, yes, this is — and I wrote an article saying how frightening this was to me. And then I got a bunch of angry responses from individuals who said exactly what you just did, that we’ll wait a minute, this is our way of getting in to do what the big guys are doing, to be in that kind of speculator.

Which ties directly to your point about Trump, which I 100 percent agree with. I said this actually in the intro to the paperback of “Makers and Takers” because he had been elected by then, and I’m like this guy is the president for a financialized era. He’s like a — he’s like Melville’s conman, he takes one truth, which is the system is broken and corrupt, and kind of embeds it in a welter of lies. And somehow, whomp, whomp, like the space-time fabric is bending and he’s able to get elected.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the things about that, it makes me think of when I first heard of Robinhood, it’s a real story for the air, where were you when you first heard of the Robinhood trading platform? But it was by an investor in it. And he was saying this is the big thing. This is the next really big thing because it is going to democratize trading.

And one way of responding to that comment if you’re me and you cover financial crises in that period is well, is democratizing trading such a great idea? But to the point of our larger framework here, in an era of easy money and in a long era, whereas Thomas Piketty has said it’s R over G, returns over growth. If you think basically the line does always go up, then democratizing trading is really, really important. We talk about trading as risky but for a long time, it actually hasn’t been.

If you’ve been able to be part of the trade, and you can wait out some risk now and again, then you’ve done great. And you’ve particularly done great in the last decade. So I think a lot of economists and economic writers and so on scoff at this idea that everybody should be piling into what look like these risky markets. But I think it’s because, on a generational timeline, they haven’t actually felt that risky to people.

And in fact, even things like the financial crisis which we call a financial crisis, if you just stayed in the market, you did perfectly fine. It was no crisis for you. The crisis was if you weren’t in the markets and lost your job.

RANA FOROOHAR: It’s a great point and you’re also getting to something — I mean, I literally spend most of my day these days, as an economic columnist thinking about this very topic, will the paradigm hold or will it break? Because I do think that we are really at a pendulum swing of a 70-year neoliberal paradigm.

And I would go back and I’ll just be super wonky and used to run Wonkblog so you won’t mind, to the 1930s when we had the beginnings of really of our current monetary system, of our current system of global capitalism. Which was invented in Europe in the ’30s and ’40s by a group of economists and policymakers and thinkers that were trying to figure out OK, how do we take really super polarized societies that have been just completely torn apart by war and connect them together?

And they thought the way to do that was by connecting capital and global business. And that made a lot of sense at that time. But the pendulum of capital being above everything else has just swung so far to the extreme. And I really do think that in some ways Trump was the apex of that because already, you can see Biden little by little, this administration pushing back on those policies. I really do think we’re at a turning point where the paradigm is going to break.

And one thing I would give to support that you ultimately do reach a point, this is true in hundreds, thousands of years of financial markets, where Wall Street or the financial markets let’s say, Wall Street and Main Street will meet. They will meet at some point. It may take years, it may take decades, it may take half a century but they do reconverge.

And I believe that point is coming and I think it’s coming in part because if you look at where the growth is in the world, it’s mostly in Asia right now. And this is definitely going to be the Asian century. We’re going to get cut out of that growth. And not because of anything that a U.S. policymaker has done but because the Chinese policymakers have decided we’re going to own our own supply chains.

We’re going to have — they call it the dual circulation economy but basically it’s about producing local for local. I think we are moving to a much more localized, regionalized world. Again, just this is actually the topic of my next book, “Homecoming.” And I think in that world you have to change the paradigm because you cannot surf the wave of financialization and globalization anymore because the paradigm has shifted. So you have to create some more income-led growth at home.

EZRA KLEIN: So let me offer two points of skepticism here because I’ve been thinking about the same thing. And I’ve — depending on which day you catch me I have somewhat different views but nevertheless. A month ago, six weeks ago, as Russia invaded Ukraine and people began to absorb the implications of that, and possibly the long-term implications for us in China. I was much more of the view that this might represent a fundamental turning in our attitude towards globalization, whose supply chains we’d be in hock to.

And now I’m not sure. And the reason I’m not sure twofold, it isn’t that we’re not going to try to reshore some critical supply chains, I think there’s no doubt that we are going to very likely pass a big bill this year to try to reshore among other things semiconductor manufacturing. So there will be a couple critical chains that we are going to try to get back here.

But in general, even Biden, they are not going out there saying, hey, you know what, we’ve lived in this low price era, actually, the cost of that were much higher than we ever leveled with you about. And it is time to accept that we’re going to make this transition.

And until I hear that I think what everybody wants is to get back to what has passed for normal for a long time as quickly as humanly possible. And they might do that. I mean, Europe is still not even off Russian oil and gas. Like it’s amazing to me actually how much sticking power a lot of this has really had. Because prices you see this in America too, like Democrats, are going to get hammered in 2022 in part on prices. There’s very little that is as devastating to a political party than price increases. Asset increases everybody loves. Price increases, that’s the end of you.

RANA FOROOHAR: Yeah. No, I think you’re making a very powerful point. And truth be told, I wonder about is too but I guess what I would say, first of all, if you go back to the, I believe it was I’m trying to think when Biden put — I think it was the summer of 2021 that he actually did make a really, really important statement, which I think was way underplayed and overlooked in the media, about shifting the economy from low prices to being one that was more about workers and about labor.

And it was a very broad speech and it went across all different industries and sectors of the economy. So there was a stake in the ground put down. And you can see those policy tweaks happening really throughout the administration in many, many ways that I won’t go into right now. But yes, OK so we get to Covid, we’ve suddenly got all this inflation, Janet Yellen is saying oh, maybe we should take the tariffs off China. Sure take the tariffs off China.

Honestly, tariffs are kind of a red herring in this whole thing, because I think that the forces that are pushing — you call it deglobalization or call it regionalization or localization or the moving closer of production and consumption. I think those forces are going to stay with us and be more powerful. And they would include everything from the fact that China really does want to own its own supply chains and be independent. So that’s Asia, right there and potentially a pathway through the old Silk Road into North Africa and parts of West Africa.

There’s of course, an amazing opportunity right now for the U.S. and Europe to come together on climate change standards, and maybe even put a price on carbon, which would just immediately knock out Chinese mercantilism because it would actually help us to tally the cost of cheap labor, child labor, long supply chains, that take up too much energy to tote cheap stuff to us to put in Walmart or sell on Amazon, all of these things are happening.

And what’s more, there are two other factors. We have some really interesting new technologies. Not to be a techno-utopian, but 3D printing, additive manufacturing, things that actually allow you to build stuff like entire houses or cars in one place in a few hours with a machine that can essentially lay down materials and print, that’s a real deal. That’s growing 22 percent year on year and it is a paradigm shift of a kind that’s going to change manufacturing.

We also have a new generation of consumers, of citizens, of workers that are younger, and they just really care about the environment. And they care about food, and they care about where they don’t want fast fashion. They understand the cost of these things.

And I think we also have in a funny way to go back to the Trump and Sanders metaphor we’ve got some weird and interesting territory in which the far left and the far right can kind of overlap. Like you have security hawks on the right that say yeah, we need more secure, resilient, independent supply chains. Which means we need to produce some chips here and we’re probably going to need to produce some rare earth minerals and secure those mines, and maybe some lithium batteries too. And you’ve also got some green New Dealers that say, you know what, that’s not a bad idea I think we’d like to support labor in America and have jobs, and we’d also like to be better for the environment and make sure that we don’t have these long supply chains with heavy emissions.

And so I just see so many tailwinds and I think ultimately, we’re going to be in for a lot of turmoil but I think they’re going to take us to a better place. Because as we’ve talked about for the last hour plus, the old system was untenable.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to end by talking about the asset class that sits most squarely in the middle of all this to me, which is housing and real estate. So there has been a tremendous multi-trillion-dollar run-up in housing wealth over the past couple of years. At the same time, it’s not a rarely held asset, the home ownership rate is about two-thirds.

At the same time, there’s a housing shortage, at the same time, there’s been a huge investment coming in from private equity and other kinds of more financialized investment firms buying up a lot of homes. And meanwhile, we are seeing new home sales fall. They fell by about 17 percent in April. How do you understand the housing market here? Has it peaked? If it has peaked what does that mean for this main engine of wealth? What is your take on that space?

RANA FOROOHAR: So there’s a few things happening in the housing market and I’ll just do a real quick run through history if I may. You remember the term ownership society, which was I believe, a Bush word. We were all supposed to be encouraged to become homeowners, to own homes. That was encouraged by the right but also by the left that wanted people who hadn’t had access to housing credit to get more of it. That eventually did lead to predatory lending, lower lending standards.

And of course, when the subprime bubble exploded in 2008 poorer people, more vulnerable people, really suffered the most because when they have debt it’s much harder for them to pay it off. There’s a wonderful book by a couple of academics, Sufi and Mian, called “House of Debt” that explores that topic.

Anyway, right after the financial crisis, I was actually exploring for “Makers and Takers.” in fact, I was out in the Inland Empire in California a couple of hours East of L.A. looking at this weird phenomenon, where you had really still pretty high unemployment rates, devastated communities, but rental prices that were wildly increasing. And I’m like, how can they be raising rents this much?

Well, it turned out that a big private equity firm had become the biggest landlord in town. And in fact, Blackstone’s Invitation Housing, they have spun it off since but it was — it became the country’s biggest homeowner. So you have a remote private equity firm that is the landlord of the country that can raise rents at will, that actually was able to buy up cheap houses on literally on courthouse steps after the financial crisis in ways that even big banks couldn’t do because they were not as highly regulated. So you get that investor class starting to actually like be your landlord, own the little pink houses that are part of the American dream.

Fast forward to the last few years, you have that now happening in multifamily housing, you have private equity buying up trailer parks, and raising the rents. I mean, it’s just really I think obscene and I think that there should really be limits on that kind of investor-led housing. There already are limits in fact, in many European countries.

Now, Covid, of course, further distorted and potentially changed in interesting ways the housing market. And I’ll just note that you saw people decamping, right, for two or three hours outside of big cities, where they could get cheaper rents or buy cheaper houses but then suddenly those property prices shot up too. And all that financialization and all that fiscal stimulus then, of course, helped put a little fuel onto that market.

I think we’re at a tipping point now. It’s funny, I’ve been hoping for years to be able to buy like a small cabin somewhere in the Catskills and I couldn’t. I was priced out of the market during Covid. I watched these things that literally look like meth shacks were suddenly doubling or tripling in prices. And I’m like oh my God, what’s going on? Now those are starting to correct.

So you are seeing that bubble beginning to deflate. But to be fair, I think Covid, you know — pandemics and wars sometimes fundamentally change things. And I do think that they are changing the geography of work in this country. I think that you are going to see a more permanent move South and to the West to the mountain regions, to places where taxes are lower or property prices are lower, and there’s less density. I think that’s probably going to last as long as work from home lasts. And so that may be the real dynamic that also sits alongside the more financialized dynamics.

EZRA KLEIN: Is this a way in which the political economy though of easy money becomes very, very hard to dislodge? Because if you want to say that well, we shouldn’t have so much random money sloshing around. I think people will agree with that to some degree at least, but it’s when mortgage rates start going up when they feel that their homes, which in this period have been I mean, the engine of middle-class wealth in this country are going down.

That you might think that this policy equilibrium is fairly fragile because sure, rich people have a lot of political power but there aren’t that many of them but it’s actually in many ways that same source of money that is powering a lot of the housing market. And that’s not a fragile political constituency. That is like most families and a lot of voters. How do you see that as playing into the decisions that the Fed is going to have to make, the decisions that the other parts of government are going to have to make?

RANA FOROOHAR: I guess I see it in two ways. To go back to that paradigm I just sketched out where pandemic hits, you suddenly see the rings that are two or three hours outside the main urban areas housing prices just skyrocketing. So suddenly the Catskills is like Aspen, you can’t afford to live there and work there. You have to be an investor. That’s deflating because rates are rising and that’s actually a good thing. We need that kind of correction.

I mean, that goes back to this problem, this kind of fundamental problem of the stretching out of unsustainable business cycles. You need there to be collapses, even though nobody likes them, you know. You need the market to correct at some point to kind of weed out things that are unsustainable and speculative. And so I’m glad that there’s a correction happening in some of those markets.

I am worried however as you say, what will be the effect on the consumption economy, which is 70 percent of our economy as people consumer spending amongst Americans, what happens to that when our home values are suddenly half of what they were? And more people are actually invested in the stock market than ever before now so when stock prices collapse what happens to consumer spending?

And I’m actually already starting to see little glimmerings of this, consumers kind of going on buying strikes, particularly things that are really dispensable, you know, like all those streaming services, for example, you saw Netflix had some bad results recently. Well, I think people are looking at all those hundreds of dollars that they’re spending yearly on streaming services and saying, OK, I don’t need that. Maybe I don’t need that new gadget, what do I really need, I need to heat my home, fuel my car, I need shelter of some kind. Everything else is maybe dispensable. That of course is going to create a snowball effect, where once Main Street starts to meet Wall Street, you’re going to get that asset price correction. It’s going to be painful but it’ll be —

EZRA KLEIN: Do you really think that’s plausible, we’re going to have a major housing asset correction? I’ve heard a lot of people say they think the housing market is peaked.

RANA FOROOHAR: Not immediately, but eventually yes. I think there are two trends here in just to speak about housing, it’s overvalued, just like stocks in many places but there is also some legitimate supply and demand issues and you’ve seen the administration calling those out, zoning issues, supply chain issues, that are just making it hard to get building materials. That’s going to take a couple of years to work its way out of the system.

And then at that point, we’re going to see are we in a Mississippi land bubble where everything is going to collapse or were we actually building the railroads to L.A. and we’re moving around after the pandemic and we’re working from home in Iowa somewhere. And so we don’t know the answer to that yet. I suspect it’ll be a combination of both. But I think in the really frothy markets you are going to see a correction.

Although I’ll say one thing, which is that in the markets where the super-rich control most of the real estate, like Jackson Hole, Nantucket, I think they may stay in the clouds because you do unless you see real — God, corporate lobbying, dark money limits and tax reform, you’re going to have a class of American oligarchs that are — they’re living in the clouds.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that’s a good place to end it. So always our final question, what are three books you would recommend to the audience?

RANA FOROOHAR: So one book that I read earlier this year that I really loved was “All That She Carried,” which is this wonderful non-fiction exploration by a Harvard academic of an African-American artifact really, it was a sack that was passed down through a family. And it was given by a mother to a daughter, as she was being sold during slave times to another family, was being taken away from her. And she gave her this sack and packed it with these things, with a handful of nuts, with some things, with a cloth that she could keep warm with on the journey.

And it is a fascinating exploration of an academic that is de-siloing all these different areas of study, Black history, anthropology, the economy of America and how it’s run, how you actually track and tell a narrative story about a person whose name you don’t even know. And I just found that really, really powerful.

I also read another book called “Beautiful Country,” which was a story of an immigrant family who had come from China to live in New York and what it’s like to be undocumented, what it is like to be living in the shadow economy. It was a memoir and a narrative tale, which I often give memoirs a hard time because I think there’s frankly, a lot of people that should not be writing memoirs that are, but this one was a real keeper.

And I guess my third book would be Gary Gerstle’s “The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order,” which I reviewed recently in the FT. It’s an instant classic I mean you can barely use that phrase for most books but it really is. He looks at a lot of what we’ve just been talking about, this half-century of neoliberalism, financialization, globalization, all those threads, pulling them together, what did it mean and where is it taking us? And I think that it really asks and answers some of the big questions of the day.

EZRA KLEIN: And your books are “Makers and Takers,” which we’ve talked about a lot here, and “Don’t Be Evil,” you big look at how the tech industry got a little bit more evil. Rana Foroohar, thank you very much.

[MUSIC]

RANA FOROOHAR: Thank you so much, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: The “Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Annie Galvin, Jeff Geld and Rogé Karma. Fact-checking by Andrea López Cruzado. Original music by Isaac Jones, mixing and engineering by Jeff Geld. Audience strategy by Shannon Busta. Our executive producer is Irene Noguchi. And special thanks to Kristin Lin and Kristina Samulewski.

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**Body**

G.O.P. leadership would like to blunt President Trump's influence over the party. Mr. Trump and his allies want to punish those who have crossed him. A series of clashes looms.

As President Trump prepares to leave office with his party in disarray, Republican leaders including Senator Mitch McConnell are maneuvering to thwart his grip on the G.O.P. in future elections, while forces aligned with Mr. Trump are looking to punish Republican lawmakers and governors who have broken with him.

The bitter infighting underscores the deep divisions Mr. Trump has created in the G.O.P. and all but ensures that the next campaign will represent a pivotal test of the party's direction, with a series of clashes looming in the months ahead.

The friction is already escalating in several key swing states in the aftermath of Mr. Trump's incitement of the mob that attacked the Capitol last week. They include Arizona, where Trump-aligned activists are seeking to censure the Republican governor they deem insufficiently loyal to the president, and Georgia, where a hard-right faction wants to defeat the current governor in a primary election.

In Washington, Republicans are particularly concerned about a handful of extreme-right House members who could run for Senate in swing states, potentially tarnishing the party in some of the most politically important areas of the country. Mr. McConnell's political lieutenants envision a large-scale campaign to block such candidates from winning primaries in crucial states.

But Mr. Trump's political cohort appears no less determined, and his allies in the states have been laying the groundwork to take on Republican officials who voted to impeach Mr. Trump -- or who merely acknowledged the plain reality that Joseph R. Biden Jr. had won the presidential race.

Republicans on both sides of the conflict are acknowledging openly that they are headed for a showdown.

''Hell yes we are,'' said Representative Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, one of the 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Mr. Trump.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/16/us/politics/republicans-trump-leadership.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/16/us/politics/republicans-trump-leadership.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: REPRESENTATIVE LIZ CHENEY faces calls for her removal from leadership after voting to impeach.

REPRESENTATIVE ADAM KINZINGER said he expects challenges to his House seat after his vote.

SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL is moving to break President Trump's grip on the Republican Party. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

**Load-Date:** January 17, 2021

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[***Post Trump, Republicans Are Headed for a Bitter Internal Showdown***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61SH-KGX1-DXY4-X35J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2021 Saturday 08:52 EST

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**Byline:** Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin

**Highlight:** G.O.P. leadership would like to blunt President Trump’s influence over the party. Mr. Trump and his allies want to punish those who have crossed him. A series of clashes looms.

**Body**

G.O.P. leadership would like to blunt President Trump’s influence over the party. Mr. Trump and his allies want to punish those who have crossed him. A series of clashes looms.

As President Trump prepares to leave office with his party in disarray, [*Republican*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/10/us/politics/republicans-leaving-party.html) leaders including Senator Mitch McConnell are maneuvering to thwart his grip on the G.O.P. in future elections, while forces aligned with Mr. Trump are looking to punish Republican lawmakers and governors who have broken with him.

The bitter infighting underscores the deep divisions Mr. Trump has created in the G.O.P. and all but ensures that the next campaign will represent a pivotal test of the party’s direction, with a series of clashes looming in the months ahead.

The friction is already escalating in several key swing states in the aftermath of Mr. Trump’s incitement of the mob that attacked the Capitol last week. They include Arizona, where Trump-aligned activists are seeking to censure the Republican governor they deem insufficiently loyal to the president, and Georgia, where a hard-right faction wants to defeat the current governor in a primary election.

In Washington, Republicans are particularly concerned about a handful of extreme-right House members who could run for Senate in swing states, potentially tarnishing the party in some of the most politically important areas of the country. Mr. McConnell’s political lieutenants envision a large-scale campaign to block such candidates from winning primaries in crucial states.

But Mr. Trump’s political cohort appears no less determined, and his allies in the states have been laying the groundwork to take on Republican officials who voted to impeach Mr. Trump — or who merely acknowledged the plain reality that Joseph R. Biden Jr. had won the presidential race.

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PHOTOS: REPRESENTATIVE LIZ CHENEY faces calls for her removal from leadership after voting to impeach.; REPRESENTATIVE ADAM KINZINGER said he expects challenges to his House seat after his vote.; SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL is moving to break President Trump’s grip on the Republican Party. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2021

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[***New York’s Private Schools Tackle White Privilege. It Has Not Been Easy.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63G4-1VD1-JBG3-64BN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Michael Powell

**Highlight:** In this world — where tuition runs as high as $58,000 — the topic has become flammable. Parents, faculty, students and alumni have all entered the fray.

**Body**

In this world — where tuition runs as high as $58,000 — the topic has become flammable. Parents, faculty, students and alumni have all entered the fray.

Several years back Grace Church School, an elite private school in Manhattan, embraced an antiracist mission and sought to have students and teachers wrestle with whiteness, racial privilege and bias.

Teachers and students were periodically separated into groups by race, gender and ethnicity. In February 2021, Paul Rossi, a math teacher, and what the school called his “white-identifying” group, met with a white consultant, who displayed a slide that named supposed characteristics of white supremacy. These included individualism, worship of the written word and objectivity.

Mr. Rossi said he felt a twist in his stomach. “Objectivity?” he told the consultant, according to a transcript. “Human attributes are being reduced to racial traits.”

As you look at this list, the consultant asked, are you having “white feelings”?

“What,” Mr. Rossi asked, “makes a feeling ‘white’?”

Some of the high school students then echoed his objections. “I’m so exhausted with being reduced to my race,” a girl said. “The first step of antiracism is to racialize every single dimension of my identity.” Another girl added: “Fighting indoctrination with indoctrination can be dangerous.”

This modest revolt proved fateful. A school official reprimanded Mr. Rossi, accusing him of “creating a neurological imbalance” in students, according to a recording of the conversation. A few days later the head of school wrote a statement and directed teachers to read it aloud in classes.

“When someone breaches our professional norms,” the statement read in part, “the response includes a warning in their permanent file that a further incident of unprofessional conduct could result in dismissal.”

This is another dispatch from America’s cultural conflicts over schools, this time from a rarefied bubble. Elite private schools from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., from Boston to Columbus, Ohio, have embraced a mission to end racism by challenging white privilege. A sizable group of parents and teachers say the schools have taken it too far — and enforced suffocating and destructive groupthink on students.

This is nowhere more true than in New York City’s tony forest of private schools.

Stirred by the surge of activism around racism, Black alumni have shared tales of isolation, insensitivity and racism during school days.

And many private school administrators have tried to reimagine their schools as antiracist institutions, which means, loosely, a school that is actively opposed to any manifestation of racism.

This conflict plays out amid the high peaks of American economic inequality. Tuition at many of New York’s private schools hovers between $53,000 and $58,000, the most expensive tab in the nation. Many heads of school make between $580,000 to more than $1.1 million.

At a time when some public schools are battling over [*whether to even teach aspects of American history*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/20/us/texas-history-1836-project.html), private school administrators portray uprooting racial bias as morally urgent and demanding of reiteration. Some steps are practical: They have added Black, Latino and Asian authors, and expanded course offerings to better encompass America and the world in its complications.

Other steps are much more personal. The interim head of the Dalton School, Ellen Stein, who is white, spoke five years ago of writing a racial biography of herself to better understand biases and to communicate with “other races.” The Brearley School declared itself an antiracist school with [*mandatory antiracism training*](https://issuu.com/thebrearleyschool/docs/baab) for parents, faculty and trustees and affirmed the importance of meeting regularly in groups that bring together people who share a common race or gender.

Kindergarten students at Riverdale Country School in the Bronx are taught to identify their skin color by mixing paint colors. The lower school chief in an email last year instructed parents to avoid talk of colorblindness and “acknowledge racial differences.”

Private school leaders, along with diversity consultants, say these approaches reflect current research about confronting racism and stamping out privilege.

“There’s always the same resistance — ‘Oh my God, you’re going too far,’” said Martha Haakmat, a Black diversity consultant who serves on the board of Brearley. “We just want to teach kids about the systems that create inequity in society and empower them rather than reinforcing systems of oppression.”

Studies show that very young children, she said, are aware of skin color. Better to address it — “Yes, that woman has Black skin. What do you think of that?” — than to let children view white skin as the baseline.

More broadly, Ms. Haakmat said, private schools need to sidestep white old boy networks in hiring and integrate antiracism into the curriculum: If you teach statistics, why not touch on economic and racial inequality? Or use biology classes to teach of eugenics and how race has framed the way we think of humans? That, she said, “is thoughtful antiracism.”

Critics, a mixed lot of parents and teachers, argue that aspects of the new curriculums edge toward recreating the racially segregated spaces of an earlier age. They say the insistent emphasis on skin color and race is reductive and some teenagers learn to adopt the language of antiracism and wield it against peers.

The nerves of some parents were not soothed when more than 100 teachers and staff members applauded Dalton’s antiracism curriculum and proposed two dozen steps to extend it, including calling on the school to abolish any advanced course in which Black students performed worse than students who are not Black.

A group of Dalton parents wrote their own letter to the school this year: “We have spoken with dozens of families of all colors and backgrounds who are in shock and looking for an alternative school.”

This upswell of parental anger, fed also by discontent with Dalton’s decision to teach only online last fall, led the head of school, Jim Best, who is white, to leave on July 1. Dalton’s diversity chief resigned under fire in February.

Bion Bartning, who notes that his heritage is a mix of Jewish, Mexican and Yaqui tribe, pulled his children out of Riverdale and created a foundation to argue against this sort of antiracist education. “The insistence on teaching race consciousness is a fundamental shift into a sort of tribalism,” he said.

No head of school agreed to an interview. Those at Dalton, Riverdale and Grace Church answered some questions by email. Several dozen faculty members declined interviews; in the end six spoke only on the condition of anonymity, for fear of upsetting employers. A dozen parents at five schools agreed to interviews, only one on the record.

For parents to speak out, said a white mother of private school children, was laden with risk. “People and companies are petrified of being labeled racists,” she said. “If you work at an elite Wall Street firm and speak out, a top partner will tell you to shut up.”

Another parent framed the primal class stakes: Wealthy parents plot and compete to get a child into a private school secure in the knowledge that education married to social connections will ease the way into an elite college and a gilded career. A letter or call from the counselor at a top private school can work wonders with college admissions offices.

Why risk all that?

Responding to Painful Stories

The stories make for disturbing reading. In the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, Black private school alumni formed Instagram accounts: @blackattrinity, @blackatdalton, @blackatbrearley, @blackatandover and @blackatsidwellfriends.

The posts are anonymous and difficult to fact-check. But the ache and hurt are inescapable. A Black student recalled a white peer who told him Dalton “wasn’t made for people like you anyway.” A Black graduate of Columbia Grammar &amp; Preparatory School recalled wealthy white classmates who complained Black students only got into certain colleges because of their race. A Black Brearley graduate wrote of being conditioned to believe “white skin, straight hair, a skinny body and money was the only way I could be right in this world.”

Stories come laden with complication. Students wrote of favorite teachers and treasured experiences. And there were traces of class anger. A Black ***working-class*** parent at Trinity School wrote that wealthy Black families dominated the Black affinity group and excluded her child.

These kinds of stories, taken together with shifts in the culture around racism, persuaded private school leaders to double down on antiracist education. Such efforts extend back more than four decades.

“As schools got used to diversity they realized it enriched education for all students,” said Ms. Haakmat, the consultant. “But these schools were still way white.”

New York’s private schools declined to provide the demographic breakdowns that are required of public schools. Riverdale and Trinity officials say about 40 percent of students identify as of color, a quite broad definition; Grace officials say 33 percent of students hail from “diverse backgrounds”; Dalton said only that it had a “strong commitment to being intentionally diverse.” Riverdale’s head of school, Dominic Randolph, said a precise count was complicated by the number of families identifying as multiracial.

Numbers compiled by the Guild of Independent Schools of New York City showed that the percentage of students in elite private schools who identified as Black or Latino remained [*static*](https://www.nais.org/statistics/pages/guild-of-independent-schools-of-new-york-city/) since 2013, hovering at a combined 12 percent; Black and Latino residents constitute more than 50 percent of the city’s population.

Lisa Johnson is a graduate of a private school in Atlanta and heads Private School Village, a Los Angeles-based organization for Black families. “They love to pitch you on diversity,” she said. “Then your child is one of two Blacks in a class and you think, ‘Huh, how do they define diversity without crystal-clear data?’”

Chloé Valdary, a Black diversity consultant who diverges from her peers and is critical of aspects of antiracist education, noted that heated rhetoric rarely challenged the status quo. “Antiracism sidesteps income inequality and doesn’t actually threaten the elite at all,” she said.

Several teachers spoke of a performance-like quality to heated rhetoric on antiracism and pointed by way of example to Dalton, which throws an annual diversity conference that attracts trustees, parents and donors from 30 private schools. The conference this May carried intrigue, with Dalton’s head of school, Mr. Best, speaking of his confusion at being pushed out, saying, “No one here, including me, has the full story.”

Mr. Best introduced the keynote speaker, Rodney Glasgow, a Black diversity consultant who leads a private Quaker school in Maryland. Mr. Glasgow, a popular speaker on the private school circuit, promptly laid waste to that world, describing it as laden with “insidious” whiteness and “built to replicate the plantation mentality.”

Mr. Glasgow ended with a flourish, comparing those Dalton parents who pushed out Mr. Best to what he described as the white supremacists who invaded the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. Dalton featured his speech prominently on its website until questions arose. It has since been removed.

The Grace School Mission

Paul Rossi and Grace Church School’s journey into antiracist education offers a window into its complexities. Mr. Rossi, 52, changed careers in his early 40s, and found at Grace — an Episcopal school with liberal values — a place he adored. He taught math and classes on existentialism and Stoic philosophy. Records show he received strong annual evaluations and was described as a natural teacher.

Slowly change came. The head of school, George P. Davison, who is white and has steered Grace for many years, pinpointed the moment his school embraced an antiracist mission.

“Grace began using the language of antiracism in 2015 as part of our efforts to foster a sense of belonging,” he wrote in response to The New York Times. “It means believing that racism is real, that opposing it requires active engagement and that our community and curriculum are enriched when we aren’t blind to race’s influence.”

Grace, he wrote, incorporated the language of critical race theory but did not rest upon that foundation. He emphasized that the school avoided using shame around race.

Mr. Rossi, along with two teachers who described themselves as progressives and asked for anonymity, was skeptical. The teachers acknowledged that quite a few colleagues appeared to support the new curriculum and they spoke of sustained pressure to demonstrate acceptance of the language of antiracism.

Last year, the @blackatgrace Instagram account anonymously accused a female administrator of once placing derogatory information in a Black student’s file. A teacher circulated a petition demanding her firing.

Another teacher grew worried; he had not known of the petition and feared the absence of his signature would be taken as a sign of his insensitivity. “I thought to myself: We’ve entered a culture of denunciation,” Mr. Rossi said. “We don’t just denounce but if we don’t do it fast enough, we could be denounced.”

Pressure to join affinity groups went “beyond ‘highly encouraged,’” teachers said. A Latino couple asked a teacher to stop pressuring their daughter, who did not want to join the Latino one.

Grace administrators agreed to demands to seek more diverse faculty; it is largely white.

With the election of Donald J. Trump, teachers said, permissible disagreement narrowed markedly. Mr. Rossi recalled some students in his “The Art of Persuasion” class hankered for contrarian readings outside what he called the “Grace political bubble.” So last autumn he proposed [*a work*](https://www.city-journal.org/bias-narrative-v-development-narrative?wallit_nosession=1)by Glenn Loury, a well-known economist at Brown University and a Black man with conservative leanings.

An administrator, Hugo Mahabir, whose family has roots in Trinidad, blocked that. He wrote in an email to Mr. Rossi that Mr. Loury’s argument — delivered to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology economics faculty — “rings hollow,” and that to give students a Black conservative view on race might “confuse and/or enflame students.” Mr. Mahabir did not respond to requests for comment.

The transcript of the February session with Mr. Rossi’s white affinity group revealed a tense, probing discussion, with teachers and students found on either side of various questions. Toward the end, the dean of student life, Ilana Laurence, offered thanks: “As uncomfortable as Mr. Rossi may have made many people here, I firmly believe that our conversation would not ever have been nearly as rich and thought-provoking.”

This drew support from the consultant, Emily Schorr Lesnick, who ran the affinity session. At a faculty meeting a few days later, she noted that Mr. Rossi and fellow teachers modeled an intelligent discussion.

“I have been in lots of spaces with adults, with students around antiracist work,” she said, where white people are “kind of just saying things and going through the motions and this was not that space, and I am so so grateful.” Ms. Schorr Lesnick, who is white, did not respond to a request for an interview.

That air of congratulation dissipated. Soon Mr. Rossi talked with Mr. Davison, the school head, about the dim shape of his future. He secretly recorded that conversation.

It offered a surprise. “The fact is that I’m agreeing with you that there has been a demonization,” Mr. Davison told the teacher. “I also have grave doubts about some of the doctrinaire stuff that gets spouted at us in the name of antiracist.”

Mr. Davison said he was worried students were made to feel shame because of race. “We’re demonizing white people for being born,” he said, adding later, “We’re using language that makes them feel less than, for nothing that they are personally responsible.”

[*Mr. Rossi wrote of his case*](https://bariweiss.substack.com/p/i-refuse-to-stand-by-while-my-students) on the Substack site of the writer Bari Weiss, a former Times Opinion editor. In an email to Mr. Rossi, Mr. Davison claimed he was misquoted. The teacher later released recorded excerpts from that conversation, after which Grace claimed that the quotes lacked context.

Mr. Rossi was denounced at Grace and in private school circles. He rejoined that he was trapped, accused of racial insensitivity and in danger of losing his job.

This drama occurred against a backdrop of tension at the school. Months earlier, nine Black students demanded that classes be called off in the wake of Mr. Floyd’s death. They said peers were “voicing their white opinions about how Black and brown people should protest.”

The Grace Gazette, the school newspaper, surveyed 111 students and staff this spring of all backgrounds about free speech.

By a margin of about 48 percent to 43 percent, [*respondents said they were uncomfortable expressing dissenting opinions*](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeInGY0fPP4lhnN0WRR-pEscSeP1qV8JUO0PKFB2G8LH-7aQA/viewanalytics). And 35 percent said they had practiced “wokeness” to protect their reputations. “There is no viewpoint diversity on race,” a student wrote, “because everyone is expected to view things the same way.”

An Uncertain Future

The pushback against antiracism education has taken on aspects of an ideological uprising. In Boston, a new group, Parents United, has entered the fight with New England’s private schools. Mr. Bartning, the former Riverdale parent, established the Foundation Against Intolerance &amp; Racism, with a large board that includes the academic and writer Steven Pinker; the human rights activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali; the former Fox newscaster Megyn Kelly; and Mr. Loury, the economist at Brown. Mr. Rossi works with this foundation.

Grace Church School appointed a task force to re-examine its antiracist teachings.

But the schools seem unlikely to change their approach to educating students on race. And opponents face daunting challenges. Powerful trustees say they support the schools, and administrators sound steeled for the argument. Tom Taylor, the head of Riverdale’s Upper School, who is white, recently published an academic article on race and private schools. He, too, is a product of such schools.

Private schools perpetuate whiteness, he wrote, and must pursue an “antiracist, decolonizing and culturally affirming” agenda, with no obligation to educate those who resist. “Private schools who find parents unwilling to accept moves toward a culturally responsible school are free to draw a line,” he wrote.

Mr. Rossi, the Grace schoolteacher, will watch from the outside. Grace Church School offered him a contract if he participated in “restorative practices” for the supposed harm done to students of color. Grace officials did not explain what that would entail.

Soon after, Mr. Rossi and the school parted ways. “It’s no longer the school I loved,” he said.

PHOTOS: BION BARTNING, who pulled his children from Riverdale Country School because of its antiracist education curriculum; PAUL ROSSI, a former math teacher at Grace Church School who objected to some parts of its antiracist mission (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); LISA JOHNSON, founder and executive director of Private School Village, an organization for Black families in private schools; CHLOÉ VALDARY, a Black diversity consultant who diverges from her peers and is critical of antiracist education (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELA BHASKAR/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18)

**Load-Date:** August 29, 2021

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[***What Should Be Done About the Police?; The conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:604W-NKF1-DXY4-X2WN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 16, 2020 Tuesday 17:21 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1311 words

**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Highlight:** From abolition to reinforcement, there are a lot of different ways to think through the problem.

**Body**

From abolition to reinforcement, there are a lot of different ways to think through the problem.

Bret Stephens: Hi, Gail. A question I never thought I’d ask: Should we abolish the police?

Gail Collins: Bret, I kinda think that’s stacking the deck. Should we reform the police? Set new standards? Totally rethink their role? I’m good to go anywhere except the a-word.

Bret: I was struck by an Op-Ed by Mariame Kaba we ran this weekend that went all the way with the a-word: It was called, “[*Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html).” Personally, I think the idea is nuts: The world is filled with a lot of terrible people who do terrible things and wouldn’t be better people if only they met with a social worker twice a week. And I’m not just talking about the president.

But what I mainly found interesting about the piece is that it represents a growing constituency of activists and voters who think that reform isn’t enough, that another recommendation-making blue-ribbon commission on police violence won’t accomplish anything, and that policing in America is so rotten and racist that it needs to be gotten rid of, root and branch.

Gail: Well, one could argue that the chances of getting very serious, major league, radical reform are a whole lot better if the other side thinks the alternative is abolition.

Bret: I guess radicalism might induce the police to make some long-resisted changes, especially when it [*comes to police unions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html)’ protecting bad cops from discipline and dismissal. The other possibility is that abolish-the-police radicalism gives Donald Trump a terrific foil to run against in the fall.

Gail: Well, Joe Biden has already said he isn’t in favor of defunding or abolishing the police. Trump may try to pin it on him anyway, but one advantage of having Biden at the top of the ticket is that almost nobody imagines him doing anything dramatic.

Bret: To adapt a line from George W. Bush, it’s the soft benefit of low expectations.

Gail: Nevertheless, there’s a lot that needs doing. Particularly when it comes to the blue wall that shields officers who behave badly. Cops almost always stick up for other cops, no matter how bad things get. Making citizen complaint records public would be a good first step toward attacking that.

Bret: Good idea.

Gail: And it’s true that there are a lot of jobs cops do that could be performed by others. For instance, people are wondering whether policing the schools couldn’t be done better by specially trained civilians.

How about you? What would your reform agenda be?

Bret: I’d definitely get the police out of social work. And the police shouldn’t need to be called when your neighbors’ Halloween party gets too loud. As for getting the police out of schools, fine by me, provided the specially trained civilians you mention are competent to deal with an emergency like a school shooting.

Gail: You’ve just given me a little opening to point out that the best thing we can do for public safety on all fronts is a nationwide gun law that keeps weapons out of the hands of anyone who hasn’t passed a shooting skills test and government vetting.

Bret: Sure, except that the more people there are who call to abolish the police, the likelier many others are to go and buy a gun. A few years ago, I wrote a column calling for the [*repeal of the Second Amendment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html). The whole idea is predicated on a robust police force that keeps our streets safe. Now I’m having second thoughts about that column.

Gail: Stick with us!

Bret: More broadly, while I recognize there’s a serious problem with heavy-handed and trigger-happy police — as we horrifically saw yet again in Atlanta over the weekend — I’m just not onboard with the idea that the police are some kind of urban scourge. I’m grateful to live in a city where the murder rate is [*down by about 90 percent from 30 years ago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html), thanks in large part to the work of great cops like Ray Kelly. I’m grateful that the N.Y.P.D. has helped make the city an almost impossibly hard target for terrorists. The great majority of police officers are hard-working, brave, public-spirited, ***working-class*** men and women of every race and ethnicity tasked with some very unpleasant but essential jobs. And while the police obviously need to reform — not least so that they are not viewed with fear and distrust by communities they’re meant to serve — nobody’s going to be well served if their budgets are slashed and reputations smeared just because they are in blue.

Gail: There are a lot of reasons for New York’s murder rate plummeting. One very big one is the aging of the population. Another is the end of the crack epidemic.

But a great commissioner can make a huge difference. I knew one, a good friend, who used to say that the most important job of a police force is keeping apart people who hate each other.

Bret: You mean, like Melania and Donald? Sorry, go on.

Gail: Meanwhile, it’s interesting to see how this latest crisis has got the sports community embracing the idea of taking a knee. I think that’s great — something that was so wildly controversial is now looking like a useful nonviolent protest.

Bret: I’ve always defended the right of athletes or anyone else to take a knee. It’s a free country, and I generally admire anyone who takes an unpopular stand (or knee) out of a deeply held belief. The question is whether the knee-taking is truly sincere. There seems to me something forced or gestural about it now; more about social posturing than personal conviction. And I wonder what it will mean for our politics as a whole. If Isaac Newton were a pundit today, he might say that every action in American politics has an equal and opposite overreaction.

Gail: Well, it’s sort of the way things are supposed to work, right? Some people take an unpopular public stance to call attention to a terrible social problem. They suffer the consequences for a while, but they eventually convince many, many others of the righteousness of their cause. Then their colleagues feel compelled to join in, because otherwise they might lose popularity.

Bret: Fair point. In the meantime, Gail, coronavirus cases seem to be [*rising in Sunbelt states*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html). Do you think the country is ready for a second lockdown?

Gail: Lord, that would be awful. Shocking that so many governors are afraid of telling their people to put on masks and make some sacrifices now for the long-term common good. Of course, it’s all about Donald Trump. Can’t believe he’s holding a mass rally — he clearly cares less about the health of his supporters than getting his adulation fix.

Bret: I’m tempted to say that if Trump’s rally-goers want to take those risks, out of moral conviction or epidemiological ignorance, they’re welcome to do so. Of course, there’s this little matter of them spreading it to those who share neither their beliefs nor their level of ignorance.

Gail: The president actually wasn’t looking too good at [*his West Point appearance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html). If he came down with the virus, would you be quietly gleeful, or are you a better person than that?

Bret: The thought that these stoical cadets had to quarantine for two weeks for the “honor” of hearing their commander in chief praise himself and exaggerate his accomplishments is, in its small way, all you ever need to know about Trump. But really, Gail, I don’t wish the coronavirus on anyone, even this president. Maybe just a really painful bone spur.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html).

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PHOTO: Police officers standing in front of a precinct house as protesters pass in the Clinton Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Building a Future With the Indigenous Past***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60N0-06P1-JBG3-61DH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1470 words

**Byline:** By Damien Cave

**Body**

Bruce Pascoe's book ''Dark Emu'' sparked a reconsideration of Australian history. Now he hopes to use his writing to revive Aboriginal community.

WALLAGARAUGH, Australia -- Bruce Pascoe stood near the ancient crops he has written about for years and discussed the day's plans with a handful of workers. Someone needed to check on the yam daisy seedlings. A few others would fix up a barn or visitor housing.

Most of them were Yuin men, from the Indigenous group that called the area home for thousands of years, and Pascoe, who describes himself as ''solidly Cornish'' and ''solidly Aboriginal,'' said inclusion was the point. The farm he owns on a remote hillside a day's drive from Sydney and Melbourne aims to correct for colonization -- to ensure that a boom in native foods, caused in part by his book, ''Dark Emu,'' does not become yet another example of dispossession.

''I became concerned that while the ideas were being accepted, the inclusion of Aboriginal people in the industry was not,'' he said. ''Because that's what Australia has found hard, including Aboriginal people in anything.''

The lessons Pascoe, 72, seeks to impart by bringing his own essays to life -- and to dinner tables -- go beyond appropriation. He has argued that the Indigenous past should be a guidebook for the future, and the popularity of his work in recent years points to a hunger for the alternative he describes: a civilization where the land and sea are kept healthy through cooperation, where resources are shared with neighbors, where kindness even extends to those who seek to conquer.

''What happened in Australia was a real high point in human development,'' he said. ''We need to go back there.'' Writing, he added, can only do so much.

''Dark Emu'' is where he laid out his case. Published in 2014 and reissued four years later, the book sparked a national reconsideration of Australian history by arguing that the continent's first peoples were sophisticated farmers, not roaming nomads.

Australia's education system tended to emphasize the struggle and pluck of settlers. ''Dark Emu'' shifted the gaze, pointing to peaceful towns and well-tended land devastated by European aggression and cattle grazing. In a nation of 25 million people, the book has sold more than 260,000 copies.

Pascoe admits he relied on the work of formal historians, especially Rupert Gerritsen, who wrote about the origins of agriculture, and Bill Gammage, whose well-regarded tome, ''The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia'' (2012), tracked similar territory. Both books cited early settlers' journals for evidence of Aboriginal achievement. Both argued that Aboriginal people managed nature in a more systematic and scientific fashion than most people realized, from fish traps to grains.

What made Pascoe's version a best seller remains a contentious mystery.

Critics, including Andrew Bolt, a conservative commentator for News Corp Australia, have accused Pascoe of seeking attention and wealth by falsely claiming to be Aboriginal while peddling what they call an ''anti-Western fantasy.''

Asked by email why he's focused on Pascoe in around a dozen newspaper columns since November, Bolt replied: ''Have fun talking to white man and congratulating yourself on being so broad-minded as to believe him black.''

Pascoe said ''Bolty'' is obsessed with him and struggles with nuance. He's offered to buy him a beer, discuss it at the pub and thank him: ''Dark Emu'' sales have doubled since Bolt's campaign against Pascoe intensified.

His fans argue that kind of banter exemplifies why he and his book have succeeded. His voice, honed over decades of teaching, writing fiction and poetry -- and telling stories over beers -- is neither that of an academic nor a radical. He's a lyrical essayist, informative and sly.

To some Aboriginal readers, he's too Eurocentric, with his emphasis on sedentary agriculture. ''It is insulting that Pascoe attempts to liken our culture to European culture, disregarding our own unique and complex way of life,'' wrote Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, a politician in the Northern Territory who identifies as Warlpiri/Celtic, last year on Facebook.

To others, Pascoe opens a door to mutual respect.

''He writes with such beautiful descriptions that let you almost see it,'' said Penny Smallacombe, the head of Indigenous content for Screen Australia, which is producing a documentary version of ''Dark Emu.'' ''It follows Bruce going on this journey.''

A telling example: Pascoe's take on early explorers like Thomas Mitchell. He introduced Mitchell in ''Dark Emu'' as ''an educated and sensitive man, and great company.'' Later, he darkened the portrait: ''His prejudice hides from him the fact that he is a crucial agent in the complete destruction of Aboriginal society.''

At the farm, tugging at his long white beard, Mr. Pascoe said he wanted to guide more than scold, letting people learn along with him. It's apparently an old habit. He grew up ***working-class*** around Melbourne -- his father was a carpenter -- and after university taught at a school in rural Mallacoota, just down the winding river from where he now lives. He spent years guiding farm kids through ''The Grapes of Wrath'' while writing at night and editing a fiction quarterly, ''Australian Short Stories,'' with his wife Lyn Harwood.

In his 30s, he said he started to explore his heritage after recalling a childhood experience when an Aboriginal neighbor yelled that she knew who his real family was so it was no use trying to hide. Talking to relatives and scouring records, he found Indigenous connections on his mother and father's side. His publisher, Magabala, now describes him as ''a writer of Tasmanian, Bunurong and Yuin descent.''

''Dark Emu'' followed more than two dozen other books -- fiction, poetry, children's tales and essay collections. Pascoe said he had a hunch it would be his breakthrough, less because of his own talent than because Australia was, as he was, grappling with the legacy of the past.

In 2008, a year after his book about Australia's colonial massacres, ''Convincing Ground,'' Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologized to Indigenous people on behalf of the government. In the months before ''Dark Emu'' was published, all of Australia seemed to be debating whether Adam Goodes, an Aboriginal star who played Australian football for the Sydney Swans, was right to condemn a 13-year-old girl who had called him an ape.

''There was just this feeling in the country that there's this unfinished business,'' Pascoe said. Pointing to the protests in the United States and elsewhere over racism and policing, he said that much of the world is still trying to dismantle a colonial ideology that insisted white Christian men have dominion over everything.

The deep past can help by highlighting that ''the way Europeans think is not the only way to think,'' he said.

Pascoe now plans to make room for a dozen people working or visiting his 140-acre farm. Teaming up with academics, Aboriginal elders and his wife and his son, Jack, who has a Ph.D. in ecology, he's set up Black Duck Foods to sell what they grow.

The bush fires of last summer slowed them all down -- Pascoe spent two weeks sleeping in his volunteer firefighter gear and battling blazes -- but the small team recently completed a harvest. Over lunch, Pascoe showed me a container of the milled grain from the dancing grass, shaking out the scent of a deep tangy rye.

Out back, just behind his house, yams were sprouting, their delicate stems making them look like a weed -- easy for the untrained eye to overlook, in the 18th century or the 21st.

Terry Hayes, a Yuin employee, explained that they grow underground in bunches. ''If there are five, you'll take four and leave the biggest one,'' he said. ''So they keep growing.''

That collective mind-set is what Pascoe longs to cultivate. He likes to imagine the first Australians who became neighbors, sitting around a fire, discussing where to set up their homes and how to work together.

That night, we sat on his porch and watched the sun set. On a white plastic table, in black marker, Pascoe had written Yuin words for what was all around us: jeerung, blue wren; marru, mountain; googoonyella, kookaburra. It was messy linguistics, with dirt and ashtrays on top of the translations -- an improvised bridge between times and peoples.

Just like the Pascoe farm.

''I'd love people to come here and find peace,'' he said, shaking off the evening chill after a long day of work that did not involve writing. ''It would give me a lot of deep satisfaction for other people to enjoy the land.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/books/bruce-pascoe-aboriginal-history-australia.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/books/bruce-pascoe-aboriginal-history-australia.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Bruce Pascoe in a field of mandadyan nalluk, also known as dancing grass, at his farm in Australia. Above from left: trees that were badly burned in last season's devastating bush fires

and Terry Hayes, a Yuin worker on Pascoe's farm, holding out yam daisy seedlings. Below, the Wallagaraugh River from Pascoe's farm. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNAMARIA ANTOINETTE D'ADDARIO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 21, 2020

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[***He Wants to Save the Present With the Indigenous Past***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60MR-SHS1-DXY4-X3B9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 20, 2020 Thursday 00:18 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1513 words

**Byline:** Damien Cave

**Highlight:** Bruce Pascoe’s book “Dark Emu” sparked a reconsideration of Australian history. Now he hopes to use his writing to revive Aboriginal community.

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“There was just this feeling in the country that there’s this unfinished business,” Pascoe said. Pointing to the protests in the United States and elsewhere over racism and policing, he said that much of the world is still trying to dismantle a colonial ideology that insisted white Christian men have dominion over everything.

The deep past can help by highlighting that “the way Europeans think is not the only way to think,” he said.

Pascoe now plans to make room for a dozen people working or visiting his 140-acre farm. Teaming up with academics, Aboriginal elders and his wife and his son, Jack, who has a Ph.D. in ecology, he’s set up [*Black Duck Foods*](https://www.facebook.com/1622506634677043/posts/all-of-this-demonstrates-the-utter-ignorance-surrounding-pascoe-and-the-abcs-lac/2388331814761184/) to sell what they grow.

The bush fires of last summer slowed them all down — Pascoe spent two weeks sleeping in his volunteer firefighter gear and battling blazes — but the small team recently completed a harvest. Over lunch, Pascoe showed me a container of the milled grain from the dancing grass, shaking out the scent of a deep tangy rye.

Out back, just behind his house, yams were sprouting, their delicate stems making them look like a weed — easy for the untrained eye to overlook, in the 18th century or the 21st.

Terry Hayes, a Yuin employee, explained that they grow underground in bunches. “If there are five, you’ll take four and leave the biggest one,” he said. “So they keep growing.”

That collective mind-set is what Pascoe longs to cultivate. He likes to imagine the first Australians who became neighbors, sitting around a fire, discussing where to set up their homes and how to work together.

That night, we sat on his porch and watched the sun set. On a white plastic table, in black marker, Pascoe had written Yuin words for what was all around us: jeerung, blue wren; marru, mountain; googoonyella, kookaburra. It was messy linguistics, with dirt and ashtrays on top of the translations — an improvised bridge between times and peoples.

Just like the Pascoe farm.

“I’d love people to come here and find peace,” he said, shaking off the evening chill after a long day of work that did not involve writing. “It would give me a lot of deep satisfaction for other people to enjoy the land.”

Follow New York Times Books on [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/1622506634677043/posts/all-of-this-demonstrates-the-utter-ignorance-surrounding-pascoe-and-the-abcs-lac/2388331814761184/), [*Twitter*](https://www.facebook.com/1622506634677043/posts/all-of-this-demonstrates-the-utter-ignorance-surrounding-pascoe-and-the-abcs-lac/2388331814761184/) and [*Instagram*](https://www.facebook.com/1622506634677043/posts/all-of-this-demonstrates-the-utter-ignorance-surrounding-pascoe-and-the-abcs-lac/2388331814761184/), sign up for [*our newsletter*](https://www.facebook.com/1622506634677043/posts/all-of-this-demonstrates-the-utter-ignorance-surrounding-pascoe-and-the-abcs-lac/2388331814761184/) or [*our literary calendar*](https://www.facebook.com/1622506634677043/posts/all-of-this-demonstrates-the-utter-ignorance-surrounding-pascoe-and-the-abcs-lac/2388331814761184/). And listen to us on the [*Book Review podcast*](https://www.facebook.com/1622506634677043/posts/all-of-this-demonstrates-the-utter-ignorance-surrounding-pascoe-and-the-abcs-lac/2388331814761184/).

PHOTOS: Top, Bruce Pascoe in a field of mandadyan nalluk, also known as dancing grass, at his farm in Australia. Above from left: trees that were badly burned in last season’s devastating bush fires; and Terry Hayes, a Yuin worker on Pascoe’s farm, holding out yam daisy seedlings. Below, the Wallagaraugh River from Pascoe’s farm. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNAMARIA ANTOINETTE D’ADDARIO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 21, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Spirit of Forgiveness, Whether by Practicality or Good Will***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJ2-J2W1-DXY4-X46C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 28, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1277 words

**Byline:** By John Eligon

**Body**

Cities are halting evictions and utility shut-offs, and law enforcement officials are freeing some low-level offenders from jail. But how long should the generosity last?

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Rent collections are being delayed. Water restored. Jailhouse doors are swinging open.

The coronavirus, for all its devastation, is spreading a spirit of forgiveness across America and softening the country's often uncompromising lock-'em-up ways.

Dozens of states and localities have suspended evictions and utility shut-offs. The $2 trillion stimulus bill that President Trump signed on Friday included provisions to halt evictions in some federally funded housing, defer federal student loan payments interest-free and stop collections on those who are in default. Law enforcement officials in numerous jurisdictions are refusing to send people accused of low-level offenses to jail or releasing some who are already locked up.

The efforts at leniency have bipartisan backing, with the biggest debate over just how long the generosity ought to extend. Those who have long been fighting for tenant rights or criminal justice reform all of a sudden see their views in the mainstream and argue that this is not forgiveness, but justice. Law-and-order and small-government types shudder to think of the consequences if the current mood is longstanding.

''We're winning stuff that last week sounded radical,'' said Tara Raghuveer, a tenant rights advocate in Kansas City, Mo. ''We have to start demanding more.''

The calculation for public officials may be as much about practicality as good will.

How can they ask people to stay at a distance, yet pack them into crowded jail cells? How can they demand that residents hunker down at home and maintain good hygiene, yet shut off their water and kick them out of their residences?

Frank White, the executive of Jackson County, which includes Kansas City, said halting evictions during the virus outbreak was the moral thing to do.

''It doesn't take a genius to figure out that people on the streets at a time like this is not safe for the public,'' he said.

The story of one Kansas City man shows why many policymakers say this is a particularly bad time for people to be left high and dry.

Once the tube was removed from his lungs, once he could breathe on his own again, once he knew he would survive the failing heart and collapsed lung that hospitalized him for weeks, Kevin Payne headed home with much trepidation.

His landlords had asked him months earlier to vacate his apartment in Midtown Kansas City because they wanted to renovate it. He hoped they would hold off because of health issues that had hospitalized him for weeks. Yet he arrived home on this day in late February to find an eviction notice on his door.

He was forced to move out the following week, and days later the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged people at least 60 years old to stay in their homes because of the risk of the novel coronavirus.

Without his thousand-square-foot apartment as a safe haven, Mr. Payne wondered how this was supposed to work. He was 60 years old, in poor health, squeezing into a hotel room with his girlfriend, also in fragile health. They needed to eat healthy but were fearful of going to the grocery store, or anywhere else, for risk of exposure to the virus.

''We're just scared to death,'' he said.

Mr. Payne and his girlfriend have not left the small hotel room they now call home since checking in on March 9. Groceries, delivered to them by members of K.C. Tenants, a tenant advocacy group, are piled on a small kitchenette in the room, which is a far cry from the two-bedroom unit they shared on a quiet residential street.

They are both on disability and can probably afford the $1,500-a-month hotel room for another month, Mr. Payne said, but it is impossible to know what comes next.

Though he always paid his $505 rent on time, his landlords said in an email to The New York Times that he was a hoarder who allowed his unit to devolve into unsanitary conditions. They needed to evict him for his health and safety and that of his neighbors. He got 60 days' notice and a month's free rent. The court approved the eviction in early February, weeks before anyone realized how the coronavirus would grip the country.

Since then, eviction court proceedings have been suspended statewide in 27 states, and numerous local jurisdictions have acted to do so on their own, according to a list compiled by Emily A. Benfer, a visiting law professor at Columbia Law School. But only 13 states have banned the enforcement of evictions statewide, addressing an important loophole.

Six days after the presiding judge in Jackson County issued an order that suspended most court proceedings, a court deputy showed up at an older woman's home on March 18 to evict her. It turned out that while the judge's order prevented pending cases from proceeding, it did not stop cases that already had been decided.

Ms. Raghuveer, the director of K.C. Tenants, spoke by phone with the deputy enforcing the eviction, and he told her, ''The judge has signed off on the eviction, and we need to proceed with it,'' according to a recording of the conversation provided by Ms. Raghuveer.

In a subsequent phone conversation, a supervisor at the court told Ms. Raghuveer that it was ''business as usual'' and he had six deputies out who were each executing several evictions.

After a public outcry, the presiding judge, David M. Byrn, issued an order the next day halting eviction enforcement in Jackson County.

Still, housing advocates say governmental officials need to go a step further and provide rental subsidies so tenants do not fall too far behind on their payments.

''The thing that scares me probably more than anything right now is just the incredible onslaught of evictions that may be waiting for poor and ***working-class*** people on the other end of these moratoria,'' Ms. Raghuveer said.

The Senate's stimulus package is not as forgiving as many liberal activists would like to see. There is no student loan debt cancellation, rental assistance for tenants in private housing, utility protections or unemployment and cash benefits for undocumented immigrants.

The question, for some, is where does amnesty end? Landlords have bills to pay, too. Utility companies cannot pump power and water into homes for free. And some law enforcement officials worry that without consequences, lawbreakers may feel emboldened to do as they please.

Clark Neily, the vice president of criminal justice at the Cato Institute, a libertarian policy research group, said he was all for reducing the jail population because he believed way too many people were locked up to begin with. He was not so sure, however, about the feasibility of long-term forgiveness for nonpayment of rent and utilities.

''If you create a situation where people know someone else will pay their rent and they can't be thrown out of their apartment, they become less disciplined,'' he said.

Policymakers on the left say they hope this moment of reprieve for those living on the edge will prompt the country to reconsider how it does things in the first place. Perhaps, they say, people might see that crime does not spike when low-level offenders are not incarcerated, or that there are ways to deal with someone behind on rent that benefits everybody.

''This is an opportunity for us to dissect some of these policies to ensure that they're right,'' said Danyelle Solomon, the vice president of race and ethnicity at the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank. ''And not only right, but that they're equitable.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/us/coronavirus-evictions-jails-stimulus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/us/coronavirus-evictions-jails-stimulus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Kevin Payne and his girlfriend, Lori O'Brien, have not left the hotel room they now call home since checking in March 9 after they were evicted from their apartment in Kansas City, Mo. Both have had bouts of pneumonia and are in fragile health. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***After Exposing Corruption in Russian Courts, He’s Now in Jail Himself; THE SATURDAY PROFILE***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YHM-F6D1-DXY4-X20S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 27, 2020 Friday 23:20 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1328 words

**Byline:** Ivan Nechepurenko

**Highlight:** Pretending to be a senior official, Sergei Davydov induced judges to fix cases, then revealed the conversations. Then the system struck back.

**Body**

Pretending to be a senior official, Sergei Davydov induced judges to fix cases, then revealed the conversations. Then the system struck back.

PERM, Russia — He always called shortly before the final court hearing, saying that the matter was urgent and had to be resolved by phone.

“Do not punish Mr. Gorodilov, OK?” Sergei V. Davydov, a small-time businessman, [*told one judge*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi-clVWF6Dg&amp;t=1s), pretending to be a senior justice official.

Adopting the peremptory tone often used by high-ranking Russians to speak to underlings, Mr. Davydov was seeking leniency for a friend Sergei V. Gorodilov, accused of driving under the influence.

“Of course, I will do everything,” the judge handling the case said obsequiously. “I understood everything.” And with that, Mr. Davydov’s request was granted, and his friend got off without punishment.

In his first state of the nation address after becoming Russia’s leader in 2000, President Vladimir V. Putin [*promised to impose*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi-clVWF6Dg&amp;t=1s) “the dictatorship of the law.” But 20 years later, Mr. Davydov says, the country resembles a dictatorship of graft, run by something that in time has acquired a name of its own: telephone justice. The lack of independent courts is universally cited by experts as one of the main predicaments for Russia’s economic and social development.

“My goal was to help myself and others and to show the whole country how judges make their rulings not according to the law, but in line with a telephone call,” Mr. Davydov said through his lawyer from prison, where he is serving a sentence of more than nine years on charges he calls bogus.

Over the years, Mr. Davydov, 52, called 18 judges in Russia’s Perm region, an ancient land of salt mines and metal factories on the footsteps of the Ural Mountains 750 miles east of Moscow. He asked the supposedly independent judges to make decisions in line with his instructions instead of the law.

Then Mr. Davydov would upload the conversations online, causing an uproar. In one recording, Mr. Davydov asked a federal judge to lower a prison sentence by seven years; his request was granted, and the judge apologized later that he could not do more.

The system Mr. Davydov exposed couldn’t tolerate this type of activism for too long. A former paratrooper, he appeared at a court hearing in March, looking haggard and walking with a stick after spending weeks in a solitary cell and being beaten by prison guards.

He had a smile on his face, though, which exposed some of his gold teeth.

“There is no judicial system in this country,” Mr. Davydov said in a short interview from his cell in the courtroom, despite repeated protests from the bailiff. “People are getting tortured in prisons. There is a complete lawlessness.”

In 2016, a local court ordered that Mr. Davydov’s recordings be removed from the internet, saying they caused “reputational damage” to the judicial system and could “incite protest rallies.” (The recordings are [*still available*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi-clVWF6Dg&amp;t=1s) on YouTube.) In a separate statement, a regional court said it had found no irregularities after studying all the cases presided over by the judges whom Mr. Davydov had called.

“There are no grounds to believe that the caller’s requests made an impact on the rulings made by judges,” [*the statement said*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi-clVWF6Dg&amp;t=1s).

Many of the judges whom Mr. Davydov spoke to have been relieved of their duties, including the one who let Mr. Gorodilov off in the drunken-driving case. In a sign of Kremlin displeasure with the courts in the region, last year the Kremlin refused to extend the new term of the chief justice of Perm.

Unlike the typical Russian activist in Moscow or St. Petersburg, Mr. Davydov is not a refined intellectual, nor his family background that of Soviet dissidents. Born into a ***working-class*** family, Mr. Davydov was running a small car rental business and leading an unexceptional life before he decided to expose the corruption in Russia’s judicial system.

It started when he began calling traffic police officers to advocate for friends who had been caught driving drunk or been charged with other misdemeanors.

Over time, he said, he realized that “every level of the government is corrupt” and took his efforts up a notch. Knowing that judges often made their rulings “after a phone call,” he decided to test whether it would actually work. It did — a court ruled in his favor in a case where a court bailiff tried to impose an administrative fine after Mr. Davydov argued with him at the entrance to a court building.

This kind of success prompted him to do more. He started calling judges over random cases to reveal how the system works.

“When he saw how blatantly corrupt our judges were it was as though his eyes opened up,” Sergei N. Klyavin, a friend, said in an interview.

With time and practice, Mr. Davydov trained himself to sound like a true high-ranking judge. He would speak with the commanding voice of a powerful official, exuding superiority. He would cite the precise case number and list the defendant’s name in full. He would use bureaucratic jargon known only to someone inside Russia’s Kafkaesque legal system.

Apart from judges, he called prosecutors and City Hall officials. The result was always the same: Bureaucrats, both large and small, tacitly acknowledged the unwritten rules of the game, exposing how Russia is run by a set of informal practices that tie the power vertical, built by Mr. Putin, into a chain of command.

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“Any provocations against United Russia must be stopped with the full force of the law,” Mr. Davydov told Mrs. Zabbarova.

“I heard you,” the chief investigator said. “I understand everything, there is no need to explain.”

Mr. Davydov was first detained in May 2016, hours before we were scheduled to meet in Perm. He was accused of extorting money from a City Hall official he called, threatening to post a record of their conversation online unless she paid. Mr. Davydov denied the charge, pointing to many irregularities in the case.

He says he was beaten in prison in Perm, and medical officials have confirmed that his right collarbone was broken during his time in prison. The prison warden refused him permission to use a walking stick that could have helped ease an exceptionally painful cyst in his left foot. He was regularly thrown into solitary confinement for trifling misdemeanors, things like failing to stand when a prison guard entered his cell.

Once, when he refused to leave his cell because walking hurt too much, the prison guards pulled him out, smashed his head against the concrete floor, searched him and pushed him back inside, he said. In excruciating pain, Mr. Davydov grabbed a piece of bread from his table and threw it at the guards, supposedly breaking one’s nose.

For that assault, Mr. Davydov’s sentence was extended by four years. When the judge read the verdict, Mr. Davydov protested, saying the word “deer,” an epithet in Russia meaning a very stupid person. That drew a contempt citation and five more years in prison. He has appealed the decisions to the European Court of Human Rights.

“The goal is to isolate him,” said Larisa V. Alfyorova, Mr. Davydov’s lawyer, who will represent him in the appeal. “They won’t release him, they will make sure he stays in prison.”

After he was detained, Mr. Davydov’s business collapsed, and his wife, Yekaterina Davydova, told their 15-year-old daughter that he had left to develop a new business far away.

“As we know, developing a new business takes a long time,” Mrs. Davydova said.

PHOTO: SERGEI V. DAVYDOV (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2020

**End of Document**



[***With His V.I.P. Voice, Russian Everyman Manipulates Tainted Courts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJ2-J2W1-DXY4-X47N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 28, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 20; THE SATURDAY PROFILE

**Length:** 1333 words

**Byline:** By Ivan Nechepurenko

**Body**

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/world/europe/russian-corruption-prank-sergei-davydov.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/world/europe/russian-corruption-prank-sergei-davydov.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: SERGEI V. DAVYDOV (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2020

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[***Scorn and Ire After Another One-Man Revolt by 'Mr. No' Is Quelled***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJ2-J2W1-DXY4-X46T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 28, 2020 Saturday

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**Byline:** By Catie Edmondson

**Body**

The Kentucky libertarian's tactics failed, but not before forcing lawmakers back to the Capitol for passage of the $2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package, infuriating them and President Trump.

WASHINGTON -- When Representative Thomas Massie heard that House leaders wanted to pass a $2 trillion stimulus measure to respond to the coronavirus without so much as a recorded vote, he swung into outraged action.

He got into his black Tesla on Wednesday and began the drive from his home in northeastern Kentucky to the Capitol, determined to object to its quick passage and insist that lawmakers show up in person -- in defiance of public health advice -- to register their support or opposition.

''I came here to make sure our republic doesn't die by unanimous consent and empty chamber,'' he said on the House floor on Friday.

Mr. Massie, the libertarian whose contrarian streak has earned him the moniker ''Mr. No,'' ultimately failed when House leaders in both parties united to deflect his stunt, assembling enough lawmakers in the chamber for a quorum and allowing the bill to pass by voice vote after all. President Trump signed the bill later in the afternoon, sending direct payments and jobless aid to taxpayers, help to states and hospitals battling the disease, and government bailouts to businesses battered by the crisis.

But putting down his one-man revolt required scores of House members to scramble late Thursday to return to Washington from all corners of the country, infuriated and terrified as they put their health on the line amid a rapidly spreading pandemic to grudgingly board empty flights or drive back to the Capitol.

Mr. Massie has never been one of the more beloved members of the House, but on Friday, he became in short order its most reviled representative, bringing together Democrats and Republicans -- who had spent days fighting bitterly over the economic aid bill -- around shared contempt for one man.

''Looks like a third rate Grandstander named @RepThomasMassie, a Congressman from, unfortunately, a truly GREAT state, Kentucky, wants to vote against the new Save Our Workers Bill in Congress,'' President Trump wrote in his first of two Twitter rebukes, in which he suggested that Mr. Massie should be expelled from the Republican Party. ''He just wants the publicity.''

Not long after, John Kerry, the former secretary of state and Democratic presidential nominee, took to Twitter himself to declare that Mr. Massie ''has tested positive for being an asshole,'' and should ''be quarantined to prevent the spread of his massive stupidity.''

''Never knew John Kerry had such a good sense of humor!'' Mr. Trump quipped in a rare showing of bipartisan camaraderie. ''Very impressed!''

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Mr. Paul provoked the ire of his colleagues this week for continuing to work in the Capitol while awaiting coronavirus test results that came back as positive. (Mr. Massie, in a nod to his friendship with Mr. Paul, for years sported a ''Stand With Rand'' decal on his Tesla.)

But that approach found few admirers on Friday. His primary race challenger, Todd McMurtry, who has accused Mr. Massie of being insufficiently supportive of Mr. Trump, eagerly seized on the president's comments, saying he agreed with Mr. Trump's assessment that Mr. Massie was ''a disaster for America.''

Nor were Mr. Massie's colleagues -- a majority of them older or with a pre-existing health condition -- amused. Many were privately terrified of the health risks of traveling. Shingles and lice, one senior Democratic aide said, were more popular than Mr. Massie.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/us/politics/thomas-massie-coronavirus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/us/politics/thomas-massie-coronavirus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Thomas Massie, Republican of Kentucky, forced a quorum to form in the House on Friday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Thomas Massie, House’s ‘Mr. No,’ Tries to Force Vote on Coronavirus Aid Bill***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YHN-V701-DXY4-X2H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 27, 2020 Friday 09:56 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1298 words

**Byline:** Catie Edmondson

**Highlight:** The Kentucky libertarian’s tactics failed, but not before forcing lawmakers back to the Capitol for passage of the $2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package, infuriating them and President Trump.

**Body**

The Kentucky libertarian’s tactics failed, but not before forcing lawmakers back to the Capitol for passage of the $2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package, infuriating them and President Trump.

WASHINGTON — When Representative Thomas Massie heard that House leaders wanted to pass a [*$2 trillion stimulus measure*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/us/coronavirus-senate-stimulus-package.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article) to respond to the coronavirus without so much as a recorded vote, he swung into outraged action.

He got into his black Tesla on Wednesday and began the drive from his home in northeastern Kentucky to the Capitol, determined to object to its quick passage and insist that lawmakers show up in person — in defiance of public health advice — to register their support or opposition.

“I came here to make sure our republic doesn’t die by unanimous consent and empty chamber,” he said on the House floor on Friday.

Mr. Massie, the libertarian whose contrarian streak has earned him [*the moniker*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/us/coronavirus-senate-stimulus-package.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article)   [*“Mr. No,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/us/coronavirus-senate-stimulus-package.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article)” ultimately failed when House leaders in both parties united to deflect his stunt, assembling enough lawmakers in the chamber for a quorum and allowing   [*the bill to pass by voice vote after all*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/us/coronavirus-senate-stimulus-package.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article). President Trump signed the bill later in the afternoon, sending direct payments and jobless aid to taxpayers, help to states and hospitals battling the disease, and government bailouts to businesses battered by the crisis.

But putting down his one-man revolt required scores of House members to scramble late Thursday to return to Washington from all corners of the country, infuriated and terrified as they put their health on the line amid a rapidly spreading pandemic to grudgingly board empty flights or drive back to the Capitol.

Mr. Massie has never been one of the more beloved members of the House, but on Friday, he became in short order its most reviled representative, bringing together Democrats and Republicans — who had spent days fighting bitterly over the economic aid bill — around shared contempt for one man.

“Looks like a third rate Grandstander named @RepThomasMassie, a Congressman from, unfortunately, a truly GREAT state, Kentucky, wants to vote against the new Save Our Workers Bill in Congress,” [*President Trump wrote in his first of two Twitter rebukes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/us/coronavirus-senate-stimulus-package.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article), in which he suggested that Mr. Massie should be expelled from the Republican Party. “He just wants the publicity.”

Not long after, John Kerry, the former secretary of state and Democratic presidential nominee, [*took to Twitter himself*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/us/coronavirus-senate-stimulus-package.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article) to declare that Mr. Massie “has tested positive for being an asshole,” and should “be quarantined to prevent the spread of his massive stupidity.”

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PHOTO: Thomas Massie, Republican of Kentucky, forced a quorum to form in the House on Friday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2020

**End of Document**



[***A Divided Senate Is A 'Golden Opportunity' For an Upbeat Manchin***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DR-3MB1-JBG3-61MN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 1, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 21

**Length:** 1705 words

**Byline:** By Luke Broadwater

**Body**

Frustrated by the dysfunction on Capitol Hill, Senator Joe Manchin III is eager to cut bipartisan deals and check what he views as progressive overreach in the Biden administration.

WASHINGTON -- A year ago, Joe Manchin III was ready to quit.

As the most conservative Senate Democrat, he saw nothing but dysfunction and inaction when he looked around on Capitol Hill. ''This place sucks,'' he repeatedly declared. As he often has since arriving in Washington, he openly mulled leaving to try to reclaim his old job: governor of West Virginia.

Instead, he stayed for a second term. Now, with President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. preparing to govern from the middle in a Congress whose thin majorities will force him to compromise on almost every priority, Mr. Manchin, a centrist, suddenly finds himself at the center of relevance in the nation's capital.

In his office on a recent afternoon, seated not far from a framed quote from President John F. Kennedy stressing independence from political party, Mr. Manchin, 73, was feeling energized. He paged through a proposal he was developing for a new coronavirus relief deal and said he was imagining a more moderate course for Congress.

''I think we have a golden opportunity to bring the country back together and for us to work in the middle,'' Mr. Manchin said excitedly. ''I'll tell you the reason why: The numbers are so close with what the Democratic House members lost. For Nancy Pelosi, she's going to have to work with people that have a more moderate view than some of the people that pushed her from the left.''

If Democrats are able to win two runoffs in Georgia in January and take control of the Senate, any plans to enact a liberal agenda -- such as increasing the number of Supreme Court justices -- will have to go through Mr. Manchin. Likewise, if Republicans win at least one of the Georgia races, allowing them to maintain Senate control, they will need centrists in both parties to help block progressive items or pass compromise legislation.

That is the situation that Mr. Manchin said he considered more likely. He is already preparing for a power dynamic that he asserted would give him and three moderate Republicans -- Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Mitt Romney of Utah -- a big role in determining what happens at the dawn of Mr. Biden's presidency.

With Vice President-elect Kamala Harris empowered to break ties, Mr. Manchin noted that it would take only two Republican defections to hand Democrats a majority on any given measure.

''It behooves everybody to start working together,'' he said during a wide-ranging interview in his office. ''If they don't, it doesn't take many of us to say, 'Guys, we've given all of you a chance. We haven't done our job for the last 10 years, and we're going to start.'''

In recent days, Mr. Manchin has been working to corral support for a new coronavirus stimulus package, racing around the Capitol asking his colleagues what price range they are comfortable with and directing his chief of staff, Lance West, to draw up proposals. Mr. Manchin said he thought about $1.2 trillion might be acceptable to finally reach a deal -- about half of what his party's leaders had been pushing for before the election.

He has been in talks with a bipartisan group of senators to try to forge a deal. They include the three Republican moderates, as well as Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana; Senator Angus King, independent of Maine; and the Democratic senators Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Mark Warner of Virginia.

''Something needs to be done before Joe Biden becomes president,'' Mr. Manchin said. ''I've got people who aren't going to make it to February or March.''

He is also ready to do battle with the progressive left, whose ire he drew when, in an interview this month, he responded to a question about some liberals' calls to defund the police with the phrase, ''Defund, my butt.''

In response, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the progressive firebrand from New York, posted a photo on Twitter of her glaring at Mr. Manchin as he applauded during President Trump's second State of the Union address.

''I guess she put the dagger stare on me,'' Mr. Manchin said. ''I don't know the young lady -- I really don't. I never met her. I'm understanding she's not that active with her bills or in committee. She's more active on Twitter than anything else.''

That amounts to a sharp insult in a chamber where legislative prowess is prized. Mr. Manchin said he would stand firm against the agenda that the left flank of his party is pushing.

''We're not going to defund the police, we're not for the new green deal,'' he said. ''That's not going to happen. We're not for Medicare for All -- we can't even pay for Medicare for some.''

Lauren Hitt, a spokeswoman for Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, said the congresswoman had submitted more amendments than 90 percent of other freshmen -- including those promoting fair housing and a tear gas ban that passed the House -- and had missed fewer votes than Mr. Manchin. ''The congresswoman has earned a reputation as a tough, prepared member in committee hearings,'' Ms. Hitt said.

Mr. Manchin is also a staunch opponent of another step for which progressives have advocated, having loudly spoken out against a move to change Senate rules so that the majority could muscle through legislation with a vote of 51, rather than requiring that bills meet a 60-vote threshold to advance. Should Democrats win control of the chamber, the change would allow Mr. Biden to circumvent Republican opposition and push through his policy priorities.

''I can assure you I will not vote to end the filibuster, because that would break the Senate,'' Mr. Manchin said. ''If you've got to blow up the Senate to do the right thing, then we've got the wrong people in the Senate.''

Instead, Mr. Manchin said he and a group of like-minded senators in both parties -- including many of those with whom he is discussing a new relief package -- were eyeing a different change to the rules to empower the rank and file. Their idea is to allow any bill approved by a committee with bipartisan support to advance to the floor. That would dilute the unilateral power of the majority leader -- currently Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky -- to control which measures advance.

''Before we know definitely who is going to be the majority leader, we should make the changes of how the Senate should work,'' Mr. Manchin said of the proposal, which is exceedingly unlikely to be successful.

Still, John C. Kilwein, the chairman of the political science department at West Virginia University, said Mr. Manchin would be ''incredibly important'' in the event of a 50-50 Senate. His stances would also serve as useful cover for Mr. Biden and Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the minority leader, from criticism they are likely to face for not fully embracing the progressive agenda.

''He dashed progressives' hopes already of doing away with the filibuster and packing the court,'' Mr. Kilwein said.

In some ways, Mr. Manchin is a throwback to a bygone era. A gun owner who grew up in the small town of Farmington, W.Va., and lives on a houseboat while in Washington, he keeps photographs of children killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on his office wall. Teaming up with Senator Patrick J. Toomey, Republican of Pennsylvania, Mr. Manchin tried in 2013 to craft some modest gun safety measures to prevent such mass killings from happening again, but their efforts stalled amid bipartisan opposition.

He often describes having learned to govern with ''common sense'' from watching small-town officials navigate problems like whether to put in or take out a stoplight.

Charles S. Trump IV, a Republican state senator from West Virginia who has known Mr. Manchin for three decades and is not related to the president, said the senator took after his uncle A. James Manchin, an ''icon of West Virginia politics.'' The elder Mr. Manchin was an entertaining politician who rid the state's countryside of thousands of junked cars and old tires.

As the state's ***working-class*** rural white voters -- who once voted for Democrats partly because of strong ties to labor unions -- shifted to the right, few Democrats could continue to win in West Virginia. The president won the state by nearly 40 percentage points this year. But Mr. Manchin held onto his seat in 2018, surviving the steepest re-election challenge of his career partly on the strength of the trust he has built with constituents over decades.

Mr. Trump, the state senator, recalled how Mr. Manchin as governor cut short a trip in 2006 to attend the Sugar Bowl in Atlanta, where he planned to cheer on the West Virginia University Mountaineers, when there was a mine disaster back home.

''He came straight home,'' Mr. Trump said. ''He knew it would be important to the people during a crisis that he was there.''

This year, Mr. Manchin crossed party lines when he became the only Democratic senator to endorse Ms. Collins in her fourth re-election attempt against a strong challenger, Sara Gideon, whom many in Congress expected to win. When Ms. Collins defied the polls, Mr. Manchin was one of the first to call and congratulate her.

''He's courageous,'' Ms. Collins said. ''I admire he does the things he believes are right, even if he gets a lot of grief from the Democratic leader for it.''

Ms. Collins said she looked forward to working with Mr. Manchin on issues such as reducing the price of prescription drugs and a broad infrastructure package. But the obstacles are steep, with powerful groups on both sides of the political spectrum ''demanding 100 percent compliance'' with their views, she said.

Ms. Murkowski said she hoped a functioning Senate was not ''a pipe dream from a bygone era.''

''For those of us more in the moderate camp, it's a very important role that needs to be played, and I'm looking forward to playing a part in that,'' she said. ''I'm tired of the bitter partisan divide we've seen. I want to try to figure out how we are governing again for all the country, not just for the Republicans.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/30/us/politics/joe-manchin-senate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/30/us/politics/joe-manchin-senate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator Joe Manchin III, Democrat of West Virginia, suddenly finds himself at the center of relevance in the nation's capital. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2020

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[***Democrats in Trump Country: No Longer Shy to Back Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6127-W5W1-JBG3-60F7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 13, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1618 words

**Byline:** By Katie Glueck

**Body**

As the campaign enters the final stretch, some Democrats in Trump country are less hesitant than before to express their preference. The surge in enthusiasm reflects an urgency for Democrats desperate to oust the president.

LATROBE, Pa. -- When Vicki Simon passes the rare fellow Biden supporter in her small town in western Pennsylvania, she quietly flashes a covert hand signal.

''There's a secret society of us,'' said Ms. Simon, 54, of Scottdale, Pa. ''We give each other the peace sign.''

Standing near Ms. Simon as they waited to catch a glimpse of Joseph R. Biden Jr. in nearby Latrobe recently, Mike Sherback, 55, said that he, too, was not typically outspoken about his political views. The two cited the vocal Trump supporters in their conservative communities who sometimes shout down dissenters.

''The Biden supporters don't like to come out as Trump supporters do,'' Mr. Sherback said. ''Usually I wouldn't do this, either. But it's the biggest election in my lifetime. He needs the support because the Trump people, Trump supporters, show their support whether through radical ways or not.''

As a divisive presidential campaign enters the final stretch, there is evidence that some Democrats deep in Trump country -- the kind of voters who avoided political discussions with their neighbors, tried to ignore Facebook debates and in some cases, sat out the last election -- suddenly aren't feeling so shy. It's a surge in enthusiasm that reflects the urgency of the election for Democrats desperate to oust President Trump, one that could have significant implications for turnout in closely fought battleground states that the president won in 2016.

No one expects Westmoreland County, which includes Latrobe and Scottdale, to flip to Democratic control after Mr. Trump won it by more than 30 percentage points in 2016. And no one doubts the passion of the president's supporters in counties like this across Pennsylvania and the Industrial Midwest. Pennsylvania in particular is home to some longtime Democrats who have aligned themselves firmly with Mr. Trump in recent years.

The question is whether Biden-backing Democrats in counties like Westmoreland are engaged enough this year to prevent Mr. Trump from recreating his overwhelming 2016 margins of victory in white ***working-class*** areas, the kind of support that compensated for his losses in cities and suburbs elsewhere last time. If Mr. Biden can reduce Mr. Trump's support in these regions while producing even bigger numbers in the suburbs and cities than Mrs. Clinton did in 2016, Mr. Trump's path becomes all the more difficult.

''Even if we just cut the margin,'' Mr. Biden said on his recent train tour through eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania, ''it makes a gigantic difference.''

The extent to which Mr. Biden can achieve that goal is uncertain in a highly polarized environment, amid plenty of evidence that Mr. Trump's supporters in these areas have only grown more committed. But pollsters, Democrats and some Republicans on the ground say there are also unmistakable signs of more Democratic energy this year -- even in ''the belly of the beast,'' as Ms. Simon put it -- compared with 2016.

''Among those who didn't show up in Pennsylvania, they were two-to-one Clinton supporters,'' said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. ''What we're seeing right now is not the same lack of enthusiasm.''

''Many of these so-called shy Biden voters, who haven't been talking about it before, are also the voters, the Democratic voters, who stayed home four years ago and now regret it,'' he added.

A Monmouth poll of registered voters in Pennsylvania last week showed that Mr. Trump's lead among white voters without a college degree had fallen from 22 points in early September to just nine points this month, suggesting that Mr. Biden was cutting into a demographic that is crucial to the president's hopes of winning re-election. Multiple recent polls have found Mr. Trump's standing with those voters down compared with his 2016 result in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Biden has been working aggressively to engage just those voters -- and to court their neighbors who feel uneasy about their past support of Mr. Trump. On Saturday, he campaigned in Erie, Pa., in a county that supported Mr. Trump after going for President Obama and Mr. Biden in 2012. On Monday he was set to visit Ohio, a state that some Democrats have spent the past four years writing off but that polls show may now be up for grabs.

And his train tour after the first debate took him through parts of Ohio and Pennsylvania that are closely associated with disillusioned Democrats and committed Trump voters.

His first stop after launching the tour in Cleveland was Alliance, Ohio, where the Republican mayor, Alan C. Andreani, described seeing ''as many Biden signs as Trump signs, Biden flags with Trump flags.''

''We seldom get as many signs as we see right now,'' said Mr. Andreani, who declined to say how he would vote. On both sides, he said, ''a lot of people are engaged.''

Yard signs, while far from definitive, can offer a snapshot of enthusiasm, as they did in 2016, when rural areas of key battleground states were blanketed with Trump signs. And in a deeply partisan area, they can function as part of a permission structure, of sorts -- encouragement for others, in this case Biden supporters, to speak up.

''With an older population, it's a way of making people feel connected,'' said JoAnn Seabol, 70, who coordinates volunteers for the Westmoreland County Democratic Party. ''Sometimes they're surprised by their neighbors, when they see them also put out a Biden sign.''

And when signs are stolen off lawns -- which has happened regularly this year, on both sides, as partisan emotions run high -- ''it's making Biden supporters more angry and more determined,'' Ms. Seabol said, as she sat behind a desk at the Democratic office in Greensburg, Pa.

Rochelle Thompson, 68, said she drove over to the office because her neighbor's Biden sign had been stolen. She described her neighborhood as ''very Trumpy'' and said that political discussions could be tense.

But Ms. Thompson also said she was seeing more Democrats publicly airing their views this year than they did in 2016.

''More people are being vocal because they're really sick of what's been happening the last four years,'' she said. ''I'm thinking more people are going to vote Biden than they're saying.''

A Monmouth poll of Pennsylvania from over the summer found that 57 percent of voters surveyed believed that there was a ''secret'' Trump vote after the president's unexpected victory in the state in 2016. But in Trump counties, 32 percent of voters also expressed a belief in a ''secret'' Biden vote.

In interviews, a number of Democrats in Westmoreland described being reluctant to make their views known in their communities, because they are greatly outnumbered and are reluctant to argue with neighbors, just as some conservatives in big cities or on some liberal college campuses tend to keep their views to themselves.

''We're biding our time till Election Day,'' Rich Seanor, 67, a Biden supporter who works at a liquor store, said as he finished a shopping trip at an Aldi grocery store in Greensburg. ''Then we'll be loud.''

About 10 miles away, in the Latrobe area, Republicans who had made the pilgrimage to a place called the Trump House felt no such reservations about speaking their minds. A mixture of Pennsylvanians and tourists from as far as Florida and Colorado milled around the yard and porch of a converted farmhouse painted to look like an American flag. The spot was designed to be a grass-roots, pro-Trump gathering place, said Leslie Rossi, the owner.

There, she distributes free Trump paraphernalia alongside voting information, and encourages people to change voter registrations and sign up as Republicans.

''Biden can't get 100 people a day at a rally,'' she said from the porch there, hours before Mr. Trump would announce his positive test for the coronavirus. ''I get a thousand people a day.''

''The polls are wrong,'' she added, ''because of what I'm seeing here.''

Representative Guy Reschenthaler, the Republican congressman in the area, said in an interview that he was skeptical that Mr. Biden would do any better in rural areas than Hillary Clinton had, arguing that there was even more enthusiasm for Mr. Trump among Republicans who had doubted him four years ago.

Mr. Reschenthaler cited in particular Mr. Trump's support for the oil and gas industry and his calls for ''law and order'' in response to civil unrest.

''Our base wasn't as excited in 2016 as they are now,'' he said. ''So I'm actually seeing more excitement from the Republican base for the president in 2020.''

Yet Republican and Democratic energy are not mutually exclusive.

John Petrarca, 61, of Latrobe, served as a Trump delegate to the Republican National Convention in 2016 and agreed that Republicans in his area had only grown more supportive of the president. But in an interview outside the Trump House, Mr. Petrarca said that he was seeing more signs of Democratic activity in the area, too, pointing to Biden advertisements and signs. He didn't doubt the enthusiasm of some Democrats in the area, he said, noting, ''This isn't Alabama.''

''Biden put more effort into the area this time than Clinton, more money, I've seen more ads, signs -- I didn't see Hillary Clinton signs,'' he said. ''It's how, like, a Republican would be when Obama was in office. People aren't afraid to put their signs up because this election is so important to both sides.''

Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/us/politics/biden-trump-pennsylvania.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/us/politics/biden-trump-pennsylvania.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''There's a secret society of us,'' Vicki Simon, 54, said about Biden voters in Scottdale, Pa. Below left, Patty Wood of Unity Township, Pa., picking up a Biden yard sign. Below right, the Trump House, a grass-roots gathering spot for Trump fans in the Latrobe area. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATE SMALLWOOD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12)

**Load-Date:** October 13, 2020

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[***Who Gets Help? How, and What?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YGY-ST01-JBG3-6141-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Matt Apuzzo and Monika Pronczuk

**Body**

In some countries, workers will have 90 percent of lost wages covered. In others, residents fear eviction. Nation to nation, rescue plans reflect conflicting ideas of government's role in a crisis.

In a Queens apartment, a laid-off busboy has no idea if he will make next month's rent or feed his family. An out-of-work waitress in Amsterdam, though, can count on the government to cover 90 percent of her wages. As a Malaysian florist anxiously burns through her savings, cafe owners in Brussels receive about $4,300 to make up for lost revenue.

Weeks of layoffs and lockdowns have made clear that poor and ***working-class*** people will bear a disproportionate share of the pain from the coronavirus pandemic. In cities around the world, work has stopped. Bills have not. And no end is in sight. But the first wave of government rescue packages has exposed another reality: The pain will depend largely on where people live.

The disparity reflects not only the world's differing safety nets, but also the contrasting views of a government's role in a crisis. Should it pump cash into the economy? Bail out businesses? Replace lost income for workers? Those questions are at the heart of a protracted debate over a nearly $2 trillion rescue package being negotiated in Washington.

''I don't know what I'm going to do. Oh my God,'' said Jose Luis Candia, 34, who lost his two jobs busing tables at high-end Manhattan restaurants. His wife gave birth to their third daughter a month ago. Friends have donated money for groceries. He does not know how he will pay rent or what will happen if he cannot.

Half a world away, in Copenhagen, workers in Mr. Candia's situation face a different reality. The Danish government has promised to cover 75 percent to 90 percent of salaries if businesses do not lay off their employees. Better to pay to keep people employed than to pay for the disruption caused by mass layoffs and unemployment, the government has said.

''I live from paycheck to paycheck,'' said Sebastian Lassen, 25, a coffee shop manager in Copenhagen. He feared the uncertainty, he added, but never considered that the government would allow so many workers to fall into poverty. ''We didn't come to the thought that, 'OK, maybe we'll be on the street,''' he said.

The Netherlands will pay up to 90 percent of wages for companies hit hard by the pandemic, with extra provisions being developed for restaurants. ''Everybody here believes that the government will take responsibility for the situation, and I believe that too,'' said Athina Ainali, a 25-year-old waitress for one of Amsterdam's many shuttered restaurants.

Washington is divided over how to dole out recovery aid. Proposals have included one-time $1,200 payments. The biggest chunk of money, about $425 billion, is set aside for central bankers to use largely as they see fit. Economists say they expect that will include buying corporate debt and stabilizing financial markets. Democrats say the proposals do not do enough to expand unemployment benefits, provide food assistance or relieve student debt.

New York restaurant owners and workers are calling for aggressive action, including doubling unemployment benefits (which currently cover only about 50 percent of wages, even for minimum-wage employees) and providing rent abatement for displaced employees.

What distinguishes the United States from other countries ''is not the nature of the bailouts. It's the underlying structure,'' said Carol Graham, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who studies safety nets. ''People are more vulnerable from the get-go, even in normal times. You throw a shock like this at the system? It's about as bad as it could get.''

American workers face extra anxiety over medical costs. The United States, unlike most of the developed world, does not guarantee health care.

While countries like Denmark have famously robust safety nets, even the Conservative government in Britain has, after years of austerity, adopted a similar approach. ''For the first time in our history, the government is going to step in and pay people's wages,'' the British chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said last week. The plan, which is still being developed, will pay up to about $2,900 a month to workers who have lost hours but are not laid off.

The center-right government in Germany will spend more than $40 billion to help small businesses cover basic needs to stay afloat during the crisis. That is in addition to a program aimed at larger companies, called ''kurzarbeit,'' or ''short-time working,'' that covers lost wages for employees who are sent home, to avoid laying them off. Economists expect about two million workers to receive aid under the program, more than during the financial crisis a decade ago.

''We have a security net, and people don't fall below the security net,'' said Dierk Hirschel, the chief economist of ver.di, one of Germany's largest trade unions. ''But people are going to lose income, and in a traumatic way.''

The German development bank, KfW, has promised an all-but-unlimited supply of business loans. ''There will be no upper limits for the amount of credit that the KfW can give out,'' Peter Altmaier, the minister of the economy, said.

Even with the rush to save jobs, uncertainty remains. Britain's plan may come too late for workers who have already been laid off. If they cannot find jobs soon, they will most likely fall into the nation's welfare system, which can pay as little as $300 a month. ''I do not know where to go from here,'' said Delphine Thomas, 20, who was laid off from a movie theater in Liverpool.

South Korea's employee-retention program covers 70 percent of wages or more, and the government recently loosened the rules to make more businesses eligible. But part-time workers, contractors and the self-employed receive fewer protections. Some may be eligible for one-time cash payments. Labor advocates want those workers to have the same benefits as full-time employees.

Business owners, too, face uneven support depending on the country. Elias Calcoen and his partner opened a cafe in Brussels eight months ago. It has been closed for more than a week, but the city's government is offering small businesses immediate $4,300 payments, plus $1,300 a month in federal aid for displaced self-employed workers.

''We have no kids, we are in good health and the Belgian government is not leaving us by ourselves,'' Mr. Calcoen said. ''There are many people who are in a much worse position.''

Brenda James-Leong, a florist in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, says she has been burning through savings while her store is closed. The Malaysian government has offered monthly assistance to the unemployed and lump payments to workers in certain sectors. ''If the government is doing anything for small businesses like mine, it has not been communicated as of now,'' she said.

Such apprehension is common, even in countries with generous aid programs. Ursula Waltemath, who owns Restaurant Brace in Copenhagen with her husband, has converted from fine dining to takeout. With schools closed, their 3-year-old daughter shadows them everywhere. At this rate, she figures they can survive three months, even with the government paying a portion of salaries.

''It sounds amazing, and it is, to have this help,'' she said. ''But even 25 percent of all employee salaries, and rent and basic expenses, is a fortune if you have zero income.''

Reporting was contributed by Anna Schaverien, Su-Hyun Lee, Jack Ewing and Melissa Eddy.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/world/europe/coronavirus-economic-relief-wages.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/world/europe/coronavirus-economic-relief-wages.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ursula Waltemath, above left, and Nicola Fanetti have no choice but to bring their daughter, Sophia, to their Copenhagen restaurant. Brenda James-Leong, left, a florist in Malaysia, is burning through savings while her store is closed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETINA GARCIA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ALEXANDRA RADU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2020

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[***We Are Leaving ‘Lost Einsteins’ Behind; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6366-13J1-DXY4-X43X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3085 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** Hundreds of thousands of highly capable people are being dropped by the wayside.

**Body**

In the international competition to produce a work force equipped to cope with accelerating rates of technological innovation, the United States is leaving hundreds of thousands of highly capable people by the wayside, perhaps even millions.

“Current talent search procedures focus on the assessment of mathematical and verbal ability,” wrote [*David Lubinski*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) of Vanderbilt and [*Harrison J. Kell*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), a senior researcher at the Educational Testing Service, in “Spatial Ability: A Neglected Talent in Educational and Occupational Settings.” Lubinski and Kell stress the failure of many of such searches to test for the cognitive skill known as spatial ability.

This omission, they continue, leads to

a substantial missed opportunity. Many spatially talented adolescents may never approach their full potential due to a lack of opportunities to develop their skills. A great loss occurs at talent searches that identify intellectually precocious young adolescents.

What is spatial ability?

“Spatial ability, defined by a capacity for mentally generating, rotating, and transforming visual images, is one of the three specific cognitive abilities most important for developing expertise in learning and work settings,” wrote [*Gregory Park*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), an independent researcher, Lubinski and [*Camilla Benbow*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) of Vanderbilt in [*Scientific American*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski).

They go on:

Two of these, quantitative and verbal ability, are quite familiar due to their high visibility in standardized tests like the Scholastic Aptitude Test. A spatial ability assessment may include items involving mentally rotating an abstract image or reasoning about an illustrated mechanical device.

“While those with verbal and quantitative strengths have opportunities to be identified by standardized tests or school performance,” Park, Lubinski and Benbow argue, “someone with particularly strong spatial abilities can go unrecognized through these traditional means.”

In his paper, “[*Spatial ability and STEM: A sleeping giant for talent identification and developmen*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski)t,” Lubinski further explains that the failure to test for spatial ability has left a reservoir of potentially productive workers untapped, people who would not only thrive in the marketplace but who would also make significant contributions to the national economy:

“Spatial ability is a powerful systematic source of individual differences that has been neglected,” according to Lubinski. “It has also been neglected in modeling the development of expertise and creative accomplishments.”

In a separate [*2020 paper*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), “Understanding educational, occupational, and creative outcomes requires assessing intraindividual differences in abilities and interests,” Lubinski writes:

There are several essential occupations that all modern societies require and for which outsourcing is not possible. Master carpenters, electricians, mechanics, and plumbers, among others, are needed to maintain and build complex infrastructures.

Spatial ability testing could, then, prove effective in identifying the “many (people) with talent in spatial/mechanical ability (who) possess ability/interest patterns that are ideally suited to these occupations.”

In “[*Spatial Ability for STEM Domains*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski),” [*Jonathan Wai*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) of the University of Arkansas, Lipinski and Benbow make three claims:

First, spatial ability is a salient psychological characteristic among adolescents who subsequently go on to achieve advanced educational and occupational credentials in STEM. Second, spatial ability plays a critical role in structuring educational and occupational outcomes in the general population as well as among intellectually talented individuals. Third, contemporary talent searches miss many intellectually talented students by restricting selection criteria to mathematical and verbal ability measures.

Interestingly, some studies link spatial ability with superior performance in sports. In “[*Relation between sport and spatial imagery: comparison of three groups of participants*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski),” Sylvie Ozel and [*Corinne Molinaro*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), both of the University of Caen, and [*Jacques Larue*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) of the Université d’Orléans found that when comparing the spatial skills of athletes with those of non-athletes, the athletes “obtained significantly shorter response times than those of the non-athletes. We suggest that the regular practice of spatial activities, such as sports, could be related to the spatial capacities of the participants.”

There are other forces at work in academia and the workplace that result in a failure to recognize talent.

In “[*Lost Einsteins*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski): How exposure to innovation influences who becomes an inventor,” [*Alex Bell*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), [*Raj Chetty*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), [*Xavier Jaravel*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), [*Neviana Petkova*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) and [*John Van Reenen*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), economists at U.C.L.A., Harvard, the London School of Economics, the U.S. Treasury and M.I.T., argue:

Children at the top of their 3rd grade mathematics class are much more likely to become inventors, but only if they come from high-income families. High-scoring children from low-income or minority families are unlikely to become inventors. Put differently, becoming an inventor relies upon two things in America: excelling in mathematics and science and having a rich family.

Bell and his co-authors graphed patent rates, looking at inventors who were children in families from the top income quintile compared with the rate for those who were children from the bottom four quintiles. Guess who won.

The failure to “harness the underutilized talent” of mathematically inclined children from middle-class and ***working-class*** families, the authors argue, results in a substantial loss of innovation and economic growth. In order to remedy the situation, they call for policies providing those with strong math scores with “greater exposure to innovation” through “mentoring programs to internships to interventions through social networks.” Targeting exposure programs “to children from underrepresented groups who excel in mathematics and science at early ages is likely to maximize their impacts.”

Schools serving heavily minority, disproportionately poor urban neighborhoods exhibit a parallel pattern of lost opportunity for the most talented in those student bodies.

[*David Card*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) and [*Laura Giuliano*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), economists at the University of California-Berkeley and U.C.-Santa Cruz, make the case in two 2016 papers — “[*Can Tracking Raise the Test Scores of High-Ability Minority Students*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski)?” and “[*Universal screening increases the representation of low-income and minority students in gifted education*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski)” — that gifted, low-income minority students often go unrecognized in urban school systems that are not equipped to identify talent and may instead be captured by a presumption that all students are low performers.

In one paper, Card and Giuliano examined “the experiences of a large urban school district following the introduction of a universal screening program for second graders.” The result, in the unidentified Florida school district:

Without any changes in the standards for gifted eligibility, the screening program led to large increases in the fractions of economically disadvantaged and minority students placed in gifted programs. Comparisons of the newly identified gifted students with those who would have been placed in the absence of screening show that Blacks and Hispanics, free/reduced price lunch participants, English language learners, and girls were all systematically “under-referred” in the traditional parent/teacher referral system. Our findings suggest that parents and teachers often fail to recognize the potential of poor and minority students and those with limited English proficiency.

Florida law — unchanged by the screening program — “dictates that students must achieve a minimum of 130 points on a standard IQ test to qualify for gifted status. English language learners and free- or reduce- price lunch participants are subject to a lower 116 point threshold, known as ‘Plan B’ eligibility,” Card and Giuliano wrote.

The screening process, which identified through testing all high scorers, substantially changed the demographic profile of the district’s gifted students from the 2004-5 school year to the 2006-7 school year, the authors write: The percentage of non-Hispanic African Americans rose from 12 to 17 percent, of Hispanics from 16 to 27 percent, while the white percentage fell from 61 to 43 percent.

In their paper on tracking, Card and Giuliano attempt to answer the question, “Is the low fraction of high‐performing minorities at the end of high school due in part to the failure to identify and adequately serve minority students with high learning ability?” To do this, they studied “the impacts of a tracking program in a large urban school district that establishes separate ‘gifted/high achiever’ classrooms for fourth and fifth graders whenever there is at least one gifted student in a school-wide cohort.”

What did they find?

Participation in a gifted/high-achiever class leads to significant achievement gains for participants who are

concentrated among Black and Hispanic students, who gain 0.5 standard deviation units in fourth grade reading and math scores, with persistent effects to at least sixth grade. Importantly, we find no evidence of spillovers on non-participants.

The Card-Giuliano study is based on an examination of the results of the 2004 adoption in a major school district of a requirement that

schools establish separate classrooms for any fourth or fifth grade gifted students. Crucially, the extra seats in each class were allocated to non‐gifted students in the same school who scored highest in statewide achievement tests in the previous year — a group known as high‐achievers.

Card and Giuliano reach two main conclusions:

First, we find that placement in a fourth‐grade GHA [Gifted/High Achiever] class has significant positive effects on the reading and math scores of high achievers, with the gains concentrated among Black and Hispanic students.

These positive effects “are in the range of 0.5 standard deviation units — comparable to the impacts of ‘best practice’ charter schools.” The effects for white students, in contrast, “are small and insignificant in all our specifications.”

Second, they write:

We find no evidence of either positive or negative spillover effects on other students in the same school/grade cohort, including those who narrowly miss the cutoff for admission to the GHA class.

What factors lie behind the gains for the minority students in the gifted class? The authors

hypothesize that higher‐ability minority students face obstacles in the regular classroom environment that cause them to underperform relative to their potential, and that some of these obstacles — including low teacher expectations and negative peer pressure — are reduced or eliminated in a GHA class.

In addition, they point out that

minority students have lower achievement scores than white students with the same cognitive ability, and that placement in a GHA class effectively closes this minority under‐achievement gap.

There are very different problems at the college level.

A team of scholars at Drexel University’s [*Center for Labor Markets and Policy*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) — [*Paul Harrington*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), [*Neeta Fogg*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) and [*Ishwar Khatiwada*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) — has been analyzing a series of studies of high school and college test results, graduation rates and subsequent employment patterns in cooperation with the Educational Testing Service.

In an email, they describe some of their basic findings:

About two thirds of graduating high school seniors enroll in college right after graduation and 8 years later nearly 9 in 10 high school graduates will have enrolled in an institution of higher learning. Given the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores this implies that a considerable share of students are admitted into college with low reading, writing and math skills. But a large share of these students will not graduate.

Harrington, Fogg and Khatiwada “estimate that there are about 31 million adults in the U.S. who left college with no award.”

Not only that, but a substantial portion of those who do graduate do not have the basic skills for a job with college-level requirements: “more than one in five adults with a bachelor’s degree have literacy skills below level 3 (basic) and one in three have low numeracy scores.”

Why has this happened?

Many colleges and universities expanded their enrollment capacity to accommodate this near universal demand. This accommodation included admission of a substantial share of students with weaker literacy and numeracy skills.

Admissions requirements were liberalized, Harrington and colleagues write, despite the fact that

most colleges are not organized to bolster those skills. Substantial shares of matriculating students with lower literacy and numeracy skills raise the risk of both quitting school before graduation and of [*mal-employment*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) after the degree award.

Who are the mal-employed?

Employed persons with a bachelor’s degree or higher who are employed in an occupation that does not typically require the knowledge skills and abilities of a college graduate. The college labor market is largely composed of professional, technical, managerial and high-level sales occupations. The incidence of mal-employment is highest among recent college graduates who frequently struggle to find their place in the labor market.

Harrington and his colleagues estimate that

about one in four prime age workers are mal-employed. The likelihood of mal-employment varies considerably by major field of study. About one in three humanities/liberal arts/social sciences majors are mal-employed, about one in six engineering, math and computer science majors as well as majors in health specialties are mal-employed.

I asked John Van Reenen, the M.I.T. economist who co-authored the “Lost Einsteins” paper, about these trends and he replied by email that these developments are

particularly a problem for disadvantaged groups — kids from low-income families and minorities. The U.S. has stunningly high levels of inequality and this means many talented kids are not getting the opportunities they should have. This is bad on grounds of equity and growth.

There are many kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, he continued, “who could benefit but do not get the opportunity because of the quality of K-12, the neighborhoods they grow up in, their lack of access to mentors and networks, bad information, etc.,” citing the work of Card-Giuliano and others.

[*David Deming*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), a professor of education and economics at Harvard, dissented from those faulting the quality of public schooling.

“There is a narrative out there that our K-12 schools are failing, and I think it’s wrong,” Deming wrote by email.

NAEP scores in grade 12 have been flat for 20 years, but we are educating more low-income and immigrant students in grade 12 than ever before, which makes me think that flat overall scores are understating our progress due to composition effects. The high school graduation rate over this period rose by 7 percentage points, from 84 percent in 2000 to 91 percent today. So there are many more young people staying in school long enough to be tested.

Deming argues that the focus of public concern should be on inequities in postsecondary education:

Most importantly, resource inequality is an order of magnitude larger in higher education compared to K-12. Rich school districts spend maybe 20 percent more than poor school districts. Elite private colleges are spending upwards of $100k per student per year, compared to about $10k in community colleges. In higher education, we devote the most resources to the students who need the least help.

At the same time, Deming acknowledges the relentless escalation in the demand for skills of all kinds:

Work is becoming more knowledge-intensive, and more and more jobs require BOTH a strong foundation of numeracy and literacy AND “higher-order” skills like problem-solving, teamwork, critical thinking etc. Many of these jobs also require digital fluency and more advanced technical skills. Overall, the baseline skill set required for most middle or high-paying jobs is increasing, and will continue to do so.

Deming suggested that responsibility for many of the problems in education today could be laid at the feet of the for-profit college industry:

If you could measure skills by college type, I suspect you’d find that the college grads with low skills in non-college jobs are mostly graduating from for-profit schools and less-selective open access nonprofits and publics. I also suspect that the “mal-employed” college grads are mostly from this group.

Furthermore, he continued,

almost all of the expansion in college degrees over the last 20 years has happened in for-profit and less-selective schools. So I think it is all part of the same problem. There are lots of colleges out there, but the best ones are not expanding. In fact, they are getting harder to access. Just look at any data on median GPA and SAT/ACT scores among entering classes at flagship universities. They have all become way more selective. There are more and more talented young people out there, but only so many slots at selective schools.

The fact is that the whole topic of standardized testing has become extraordinarily controversial.

In October 2020, [*Ibram X. Kendi*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), founder and director of Boston University’s Center for Anti-Racist Research and author of “[*How to Be an Antiracist*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski),” [*told*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) the Boston School Committee:

Standardized tests have become the most effective racist weapon ever devised to objectively degrade Black and Brown minds and legally exclude their bodies from prestigious schools.

But what if, as Lubinski says, there is a “sleeping giant of talent” out there? How do we find him? How do we awaken her? How do we reach out to make a better world?

Testing has become a flashpoint in the larger debate over policies based on merit: Do they prevent discrimination or are they barriers to admission and advancement? One of the original purposes of testing was to identify those who were illegitimately pushed to the side. Whatever their overall impact, these tests can and do often serve as a [*gateway*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) rather than a barrier to admission — that was part of what they were intended to do in the first place.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski).

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski), [*Twitter (@NYTopinion)*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski) and [*Instagram*](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/bio/david-lubinski).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Mark Makela for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Why We Still Care About 'Bicycle Thieves'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60KX-FS81-JBG3-62K0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 16, 2020 Sunday

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 4; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1477 words

**Byline:** By A.O. Scott

**Body**

On the unforgettable heartbreak and enduring pleasures of an Italian neorealist masterpiece.

''People should see it -- and they should care.'' Those are the concluding words to one of the more passionate raves in the annals of New York Times film criticism: Bosley Crowther's 1949 review of the Italian movie introduced to American audiences as ''The Bicycle Thief.''

The English title has since been adjusted to reflect the original. It's ''Bicycle Thieves'' (''Ladri di Biciclette'' in Italian) not only because more than one bike is stolen, but also because the cruelty of modern life threatens to make robbers of us all. More than 70 years after Crowther's enthusiastic notice -- during which time Vittorio De Sica's fable of desperation has been imitated, satirized, analyzed and taught in schools -- I'm tempted to let my predecessor have the last word.

But why should you see it, or see it again? Why should you (still) care? These are fair questions to ask of any consensus masterpiece -- skepticism is what keeps art alive, reverence embalms it -- and especially apt in the case of ''Bicycle Thieves.'' The movie is about seeing and caring, about the danger of being distracted from what matters. The tragedy it depicts arises partly from poverty, injustice and the aftereffect of dictatorship, but more profoundly from a deficit of empathy.

Based on a book by Luigi Bartolini, with a script by Cesare Zavattini -- written, as Crowther noted, ''with the camera exclusively in mind'' -- ''Bicycle Thieves is a political parable and a spiritual fable, at once a hard look at the conditions of the Roman ***working class*** after World War II and an inquiry into the state of an individual soul. The soul in question belongs to Antonio Ricci, a lean, handsome, diffident man who lives with his wife, Maria, and their two young children in a recently built apartment that lacks running water.

At a time of mass unemployment and widespread homelessness, the Riccis are relatively fortunate, and as the film begins, luck seems to be smiling on them. Antonio is picked out of a throng of job-seekers and offered a position pasting up advertisements. He needs a bicycle, and Maria pawns the couple's bed linens -- one set has never been used -- so her husband can get his trusty Fides out of hock.

The good times don't last. On his first day at work, Antonio's bicycle is snatched from under his nose, and he and his young son, Bruno, spend the rest of the movie in a desperate effort to recover it. Their journey takes them (and the viewer) on a tour of Rome's rougher quarters, away from the monuments and museums. By the end, we have witnessed a humble man's humiliation, a loss of dignity as devastating as an earthquake.

Antonio (Lamberto Maggiorani), Maria (Lianella Carell) and Bruno (Enzo Staiola) are played -- along with almost everyone else in the movie -- by nonprofessional actors. Some of the mystique around ''Bicycle Thieves'' rests on this fact, on the arguable but durable belief that minimal acting technique will produce maximal authenticity.

The use of ordinary people and actual locations, which didn't begin with De Sica, was already, in 1948, a hallmark of neorealism, the movement that helped Italy secure a central place in postwar world cinema. Like most artistic tendencies, neorealism has often been more of a puzzle than a program, its essence obscured by theoretical hairsplitting and ideological disputation.

By the strict accounting of some critics, there are exactly seven films in the neorealist canon: three apiece by De Sica and Roberto Rossellini and one by Luchino Visconti. A less rigorous definition includes countless Italian films released between the end of the war and the mid-1960s, even big-budgeted, movie-star-filled, internationally flavored productions like Federico Fellini's ''La Strada'' and Visconti's ''Rocco and His Brothers.'' Any Italian movie shot in black-and-white and concerned with the struggles of poor people might qualify.

I prefer to think of neorealism as an impulse, an ethos, a spore that caught the wind of history and sprouted in the soil of every continent. The spirits of Maria and Antonio Ricci -- and perhaps especially of the impish, vulnerable Bruno -- live on in the work of Satyajit Ray in Bengal in the late 1950s, in the Brazilian Cinema Novo in the 1960s, in Iran in the 1990s and the United States in the first decade of this century. Films like Ramin Bahrani's ''Chop Shop'' and Kelly Reichardt's ''Wendy and Lucy,'' which tally the moral and existential costs of economic precariousness, have a clear affinity with ''Bicycle Thieves.''

In Italy, the neorealist impulse has been refreshed in each generation, in the work of filmmakers like Ermanno Olmi and, most recently, Alice Rohrwacher, whose ''Happy as Lazzaro'' infuses a story of hardship and exploitation with literal magic. ''Bicycle Thieves'' itself has become an essential part of the cultural patrimony, a touchstone to be treasured, teased and taken for granted. It has been quoted and referenced in countless later movies. My own favorite is Ettore Scola's ''We All Loved Each Other So Much,'' which traces the postwar lives and loves of four anti-fascist partisans. One of them, a left-wing intellectual played by Stefano Satta Flores, is obsessed with De Sica and ''Bicycle Thieves,'' a preoccupation with absurd, unhappy consequences. His love of the movie costs him a job and causes him embarrassment on a television quiz show.

Part of what draws filmmakers (and film lovers) to ''Bicycle Thieves'' is its purity and simplicity, but to emphasize those elements -- the unvarnished honesty of the performances, the gritty realness of the Roman streets, the raw emotions of the story -- is to risk underestimating its complexity and sophistication.

Neorealism was partly an aesthetic of necessity. Right after the war, money and equipment were in short supply, and the vast Cinecittà studio complex on the southern edge of Rome was a refugee camp. Cinecittà had been built by Mussolini as one monumental expression of his belief in the natural affinity between fascism and film. (The Venice Film Festival was another.) The leading lights of neorealism -- including De Sica, a prominent actor before he took up directing -- had started out working in Mussolini's movie industry, which specialized in slick melodramas and high-society romances as well as propaganda.

While it is free of those genre trappings, ''Bicycle Thieves'' has a sometimes playful, sometimes poetic self-consciousness. The first work we see Antonio doing is hanging up a poster of Rita Hayworth, a sign that Hollywood is part of the Italian landscape. Within a few years, the import and export of movie stars would become a fixture of Italy's cultural and economic boom. Fellini's ''La Strada'' and ''Nights of Cabiria'' won back-to-back foreign-language film Oscars in 1957 and '58. Anna Magnani had won for best actress in 1956. Six years later it was Sophia Loren's turn, for ''Two Women,'' directed by De Sica, who had perhaps done more than anyone other than Loren herself to cultivate her star power and unlock her artistic potential.

''Bicycle Thieves'' may seem like an improbable gateway to the glamorous golden age of Italian cinema, the starry, sexy cosmos of Loren, Gina Lollobrigida and ''La Dolce Vita,'' but sensuality and spectacle are hardly alien to the neorealist universe. The struggle for survival doesn't exclude the pursuit of pleasure. Even as Antonio and Bruno encounter disappointment, indifference and cruelty, they also find glimmers of beauty and delight. Seeking help from a sanitation-worker friend in their search for the Fides, Antonio finds the man at the neighborhood cultural center, rehearsing a musical sketch for a revue. Later, Antonio and Bruno will cross paths with itinerant musicians, a fortuneteller, and a young man blowing bubbles in an open-air bicycle market. They will duck into a restaurant for a snack of fried mozzarella, enduring the condescending stares of the rich patrons at the next table.

Their pursuit of the purloined bicycle is full of pain and anxiety, but it is also an adventure, with episodes of tenderness and comedy on the way to final heartbreak. Those moments, modulated by Alessandro Cicognini's musical score, provide an undercurrent of hope, much as the bustling rhythm of Rome itself -- a city that has resisted dreariness for 2,000 years -- supplies a reminder that life goes on.

That's always a good lesson, though ''Bicycle Thieves'' is a film entirely without didacticism. It shows everything and doesn't need to explain anything, and so does away with the false choice between escapism and engagement. To care about a movie can be a way of caring about the world.

''Bicycle Thieves'' is available to stream on the Criterion Channel, HBO Max or Kanopy.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/movies/bicycle-thieves-italian-neorealism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/movies/bicycle-thieves-italian-neorealism.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Antonio (Lamberto Maggiorani) in Vittorio De Sica's ''Bicycle Thieves.'' Above from left: the director with Sophia Loren

and ''We All Loved Each Other So Much,'' one of countless films that reference ''Bicycle Thieves.'' Below left, Alice Rohrwacher's ''Happy as Lazzaro,'' a descendant of De Sica's classic. Bottom, American movies influenced by the film include ''Wendy and Lucy,'' starring Michelle Williams. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PRODUZIONI DE SICA

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[***Close Rust Belt States See Big Gains for Biden From Trump Defections***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6127-W5W1-JBG3-60FF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

New polls show Biden is gaining in the Northern battlegrounds among white voters.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. holds a significant lead in the pivotal states of Michigan and Wisconsin, with President Trump so far failing to retain the overwhelming advantage he enjoyed among white voters there in 2016, according to surveys from The New York Times and Siena College on Monday.

Over all, Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump by eight percentage points in Michigan, 48 percent to 40 percent, among likely voters. His lead in Wisconsin was slightly larger, 51 percent to 41 percent.

The new results, along with recent Times/Siena surveys from elsewhere in the Northern battlegrounds, suggest that the president has not yet managed to reassemble his winning coalition across the region. He faces modest but significant defections among white and independent voters, while facing a groundswell of opposition from those who voted for a minor-party candidate or didn't vote at all in 2016.

The president's path to re-election is narrow if he doesn't win either Wisconsin or Michigan. If Mr. Biden puts those two states in his column, along with the states carried by Hillary Clinton in 2016, he will hold 258 electoral votes, putting him on the doorstep of the 270 needed to win.

Nonetheless, the Trump campaign appears to recognize that the two states no longer represent his likeliest path to re-election. Over the last month, the campaign has reduced its television ad spending in the two states in favor of an apparent push to sweep Arizona, Florida and Pennsylvania, where Times/Siena surveys conducted since the first debate show the president trailing by somewhat narrower but still significant five-to-eight-point margins.

Four years ago, Mr. Trump's strength among white voters without a college degree helped him breach the so-called blue wall of traditionally Democratic Northern battleground states, including Michigan and Wisconsin. The new surveys show him well short of matching 2016 levels of support among white voters, leaving the president with a daunting deficit with just three weeks until the election.

Over all, Mr. Biden leads by eight points among white voters in Wisconsin and trails by just one percentage point among white voters in Michigan.

While Mr. Trump's surprising victory in 2016 lent him an aura of political invincibility, an Upshot analysis of more than 5,000 respondents to Times/Siena results surveys in the Northern battleground states suggests that his winning coalition was always a fragile one. The president's margin of victory was extremely narrow, and he failed to reach 50 percent of the vote in each of the decisive states. He also did so against an unusually unpopular opponent, Mrs. Clinton.

In the years after her defeat, Democrats agonized over whether their best path to the presidency was to lure back the white, ***working-class*** voters who'd defected to the president, or to increase turnout among Democratic voters who may have stayed home or supported minor-party candidates like Jill Stein. The Times/Siena surveys suggest that Mr. Biden is succeeding on both fronts, by at once peeling off a modest but crucial sliver of the president's former supporters and benefiting from a significant advantage among voters who either backed a minor-party candidate four years ago or didn't vote at all.

Over all, recent Times/Siena respondents in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Ohio indicate that they backed Mr. Trump by a 2.6-point margin in 2016, the same as his actual 2.6-point margin of victory across the Northern battlegrounds. Now, they back Mr. Biden across all six states.

How the Northern Battlegrounds Have Gone From Trump +3 to Biden +6

People who have switched sides since 2016 make up less than 4 percent of registered voters. But they effectively pack twice the punch of other voters, as they have both deducted a vote from their former preferred candidate and added one to the candidate they now support. Alone, these switches would be enough to give Mr. Biden a fairly comfortable victory, even without any change in the composition of the electorate or in the attitudes of voters who back a minor-party candidate.

Although the sample is small, the president's Midwestern defectors appear to be surprisingly representative of his supporters over all, at least demographically. They are only slightly likelier to be women, college graduates or suburbanites.

Mr. Biden also holds a significant lead among respondents who say they backed a minor-party candidate, like Gary Johnson or Jill Stein.

Mr. Biden's lead is largest among the former supporters of Ms. Stein, who say they back him, 59-9.

Mr. Biden's lead among the former supporters of Mr. Johnson is smaller, 38 percent to 14 percent, with this year's Libertarian nominee, Jo Jorgensen, winning 29 percent of their support.

Mr. Biden's lead would expand further to seven points if registered voters who didn't vote in 2016 turned out. Of course, not everyone will vote in the end, but he holds a 48-34 lead among this group.

Put it together, and Mr. Biden leads by six points across the Midwestern battlegrounds, a significant improvement over Mrs. Clinton's nearly three-point deficit across the region four years ago. It's almost exactly the same as Barack Obama's six-point victory in the same states in 2012.

But while the results seem to represent a restoration of the traditional Democratic coalition in the Midwest, a closer analysis reveals that the president's breakthrough victory in the region four years ago has had a lasting effect on the region's partisan loyalties and political geography.

Unlike in 2012, self-identified Republicans now outnumber Democrats in Times/Siena polls of Wisconsin, Michigan and even Pennsylvania, where the Democratic registration advantage remains significant but has dwindled in recent months.

Instead, Mr. Biden leads with an overwhelming advantage among independent voters, who back him by 20 percentage points in both states.

And though Mr. Biden's gains among white voters are broad, spanning both those with and without a college degree, he fares far better than Mr. Obama did among white college graduates, while faring worse among those without a four-year degree. As a result, Mr. Biden still trails narrowly in the precincts that flipped from Mr. Obama to Mr. Trump, while holding an overwhelming advantage in the smaller number of predominantly suburban precincts that backed Mitt Romney in 2012 and then supported Mrs. Clinton in 2016.

In Michigan, Senator Gary Peters, a Democrat, faces a surprisingly strong challenge from John James, a graduate of West Point who is considered one of the Republicans' top recruits of the cycle. Mr. Peters leads by just one percentage point, 43 percent to 42 percent, among likely voters, a significant narrowing of the race since a Times/Siena survey in June that found Mr. Peters leading, 41-31.

The relatively high number of undecided voters reflects the relatively low profile of the two candidates. Around 20 percent of voters do not have an opinion on either of them. Mr. James's favorability ratings have increased to 45 percent favorable versus 35 percent unfavorable, up from 36 percent favorable and 29 percent unfavorable in the June survey. Part of Mr. Peters's weakness is that he has thus far failed to match Mr. Biden's tallies among nonwhite voters, who disproportionately remain undecided. It remains to be seen whether Mr. James, who is Black, will ultimately make significant inroads among these voters.

A closely fought race in Michigan complicates the Democratic path to flipping control of the Senate, which has looked increasingly plausible as several Senate Republican incumbents have fared worse than the president in surveys. Yet here it is the incumbent Democrat faring worse than Mr. Biden, and a Republican win in Michigan would force Democrats to pick up a win in a state that Mr. Trump won comfortably in 2016, like Iowa or Montana, to win Senate control.

Public opinion polls have been remarkably stable this year, through the pandemic, the economic crisis and social unrest. The surveys of Wisconsin and Michigan were conducted during another tumultuous week in the campaign, and they offered little indication that any of the news had worked to the president's favor.

The surveys began after Mr. Trump was released from the hospital, and there was no immediate indication that his political standing recovered along with his health. Most voters in Wisconsin and Michigan expected that the president would recover quickly from the illness, echoing findings from Times/Siena surveys fielded while he was hospitalized. The president did not appear poised to benefit from the public's sympathy; by at least a two-to-one margin in both states, voters said the president did not take adequate precautions to protect against the coronavirus.

The survey in Wisconsin was conducted entirely after the vice-presidential debate, and attitudes about it fell along predictable partisan lines. Mr. Biden's supporters said Senator Kamala Harris won, 73 percent to 3 percent, while Mr. Trump's supporters said Vice President Mike Pence won by a nearly identical margin of 74-2. Over all, voters thought Ms. Harris defeated Mr. Pence in the debate, 40 percent to 33 percent, with her advantage appearing to reflect little more than Mr. Biden's overall advantage in the presidential race.

The Wisconsin survey was also conducted entirely after the president announced he would not participate in the virtual town hall debate proposed by the presidential debate commission. Wisconsin voters said they supported the proposed virtual town hall format, 58 percent to 34 percent, and said Mr. Trump should have decided to participate in the debate, 70 percent to 21 percent.

This week, the president might be on firmer political ground; the confirmation hearings of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court have begun. A plurality of voters in both states said they supported her nomination and thought the Senate should act on it before the election.

Here are the crosstabs for the polls.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/upshot/polls-wisconsin-michigan-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/upshot/polls-wisconsin-michigan-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Ohio on Tuesday. A New York Times/Siena poll has him ahead in that state and in five others in the Midwest. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 13, 2020

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[***Democrats in Trump Country: They’re Not Shy Anymore About Liking Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6123-NHJ1-DXY4-X185-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** As the campaign enters the final stretch, some Democrats in Trump country are less hesitant than before to express their preference. The surge in enthusiasm reflects an urgency for Democrats desperate to oust the president.

**Body**

As the campaign enters the final stretch, some Democrats in Trump country are less hesitant than before to express their preference. The surge in enthusiasm reflects an urgency for Democrats desperate to oust the president.

LATROBE, Pa. — When Vicki Simon passes the rare fellow Biden supporter in her small town in western [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-pennsylvania.html), she quietly flashes a covert hand signal.

“There’s a secret society of us,” said Ms. Simon, 54, of Scottdale, Pa. “We give each other the peace sign.”

Standing near Ms. Simon as they waited to catch a glimpse of [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/17/us/trump-vs-biden) in nearby Latrobe recently, Mike Sherback, 55, said that he, too, was not typically outspoken about his political views. The two cited the vocal Trump supporters in their conservative communities who sometimes shout down dissenters.

“The Biden supporters don’t like to come out as Trump supporters do,” Mr. Sherback said. “Usually I wouldn’t do this, either. But it’s the biggest election in my lifetime. He needs the support because the Trump people, Trump supporters, show their support whether through radical ways or not.”

As a divisive presidential campaign enters the final stretch, there is evidence that some Democrats deep in Trump country — the kind of voters who avoided political discussions with their neighbors, tried to ignore Facebook debates and in some cases, sat out the last election — suddenly aren’t feeling so shy. It’s a surge in enthusiasm that reflects the urgency of the election for Democrats desperate to oust President Trump, one that could have significant implications for turnout in closely fought battleground states that the president won in 2016.

No one expects [*Westmoreland County*](https://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/632/Community-Profiles), which includes Latrobe and Scottdale, to flip to Democratic control after Mr. Trump [*won it*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/pennsylvania) by more than 30 percentage points in 2016. And no one doubts the passion of the president’s supporters in counties like this across Pennsylvania and the Industrial Midwest. [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/04/upshot/pennsylvania-election-results-ballots.html) in particular is[*home to*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/11/us/politics/trump-white-base-pennsylvania.html) some longtime Democrats who have aligned themselves firmly with Mr. Trump in recent years.

The question is whether Biden-backing Democrats in counties like Westmoreland are engaged enough this year to prevent Mr. Trump from recreating his overwhelming 2016 margins of victory in white ***working-class*** areas, the kind of support that compensated for his losses in cities and suburbs elsewhere last time. If Mr. Biden can reduce Mr. Trump’s support in these regions while producing even bigger numbers in the suburbs and cities than Mrs. Clinton did in 2016, Mr. Trump’s path becomes all the more difficult.

“Even if we just cut the margin,” Mr. Biden said on his [*recent train tour*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/us/politics/biden-ohio-pennsylvania-train.html) through eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania, “it makes a gigantic difference.”

The extent to which Mr. Biden can achieve that goal is uncertain in a highly polarized environment, amid plenty of evidence that Mr. Trump’s supporters in these areas [*have only grown more committed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/11/us/politics/trump-white-base-pennsylvania.html). But pollsters, Democrats and some Republicans on the ground say there are also unmistakable signs of more Democratic energy this year — even in “the belly of the beast,” as Ms. Simon put it — compared with 2016.

“Among those who didn’t show up in Pennsylvania, they were two-to-one Clinton supporters,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “What we’re seeing right now is not the same lack of enthusiasm.”

“Many of these so-called shy Biden voters, who haven’t been talking about it before, are also the voters, the Democratic voters, who stayed home four years ago and now regret it,” he added.

A [*Monmouth poll*](https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/documents/monmouthpoll_pa_100620.pdf/) of registered voters in Pennsylvania last week showed that Mr. Trump’s lead among white voters without a college degree had fallen from 22 points in early September to just nine points this month, suggesting that Mr. Biden was cutting into a demographic that is crucial to the president’s hopes of winning re-election. Multiple recent polls [*have found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/11/us/politics/trump-white-base-pennsylvania.html) Mr. Trump’s standing with those voters down compared with his 2016 result in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Biden has been working aggressively to engage just those voters — and to court their neighbors who feel uneasy about their past support of Mr. Trump. On Saturday, he campaigned in Erie, Pa., in a county that [*supported*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/pennsylvania) Mr. Trump after [*going for President Obama*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2012/results/states/pennsylvania.html) and Mr. Biden in 2012. On Monday he was set to visit Ohio, a state that some Democrats have spent the past four years writing off but that polls show may now be up for grabs.

And his [*train tour*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/us/politics/biden-ohio-pennsylvania-train.html) after the first debate took him through parts of Ohio and Pennsylvania that are closely associated with disillusioned Democrats and committed Trump voters.

His first stop after launching the tour in Cleveland was Alliance, Ohio, where the Republican mayor, Alan C. Andreani, described seeing “as many Biden signs as Trump signs, Biden flags with Trump flags.”

“We seldom get as many signs as we see right now,” said Mr. Andreani, who declined to say how he would vote. On both sides, he said, “a lot of people are engaged.”

Yard signs, while far from definitive, can offer a snapshot of enthusiasm, as they did in 2016, when rural areas of key battleground states were [*blanketed with Trump signs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/us/politics/donald-trump-signs.html). And in a deeply partisan area, they can function as part of a permission structure, of sorts — encouragement for others, in this case Biden supporters, to speak up.

“With an older population, it’s a way of making people feel connected,” said JoAnn Seabol, 70, who coordinates volunteers for the Westmoreland County Democratic Party. “Sometimes they’re surprised by their neighbors, when they see them also put out a Biden sign.”

And when signs are stolen off lawns — which has happened regularly this year, on both sides, as partisan emotions run high — “it’s making Biden supporters more angry and more determined,” Ms. Seabol said, as she sat behind a desk at the Democratic office in Greensburg, Pa.

Rochelle Thompson, 68, said she drove over to the office because her neighbor’s Biden sign had been stolen. She described her neighborhood as “very Trumpy” and said that political discussions could be tense.

But Ms. Thompson also said she was seeing more Democrats publicly airing their views this year than they did in 2016.

“More people are being vocal because they’re really sick of what’s been happening the last four years,” she said. “I’m thinking more people are going to vote Biden than they’re saying.”

A Monmouth poll of Pennsylvania from over the summer [*found that*](https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll_pa_071520/) 57 percent of voters surveyed believed that there was a “secret” Trump vote after the president’s unexpected victory in the state in 2016. But in Trump counties, 32 percent of voters also expressed a belief in a “secret” Biden vote.

In interviews, a number of Democrats in Westmoreland described being reluctant to make their views known in their communities, because they are greatly outnumbered and are reluctant to argue with neighbors, just as some conservatives in big cities or on some liberal college campuses tend to keep their views to themselves.

“We’re biding our time till Election Day,” Rich Seanor, 67, a Biden supporter who works at a liquor store, said as he finished a shopping trip at an Aldi grocery store in Greensburg. “Then we’ll be loud.”

About 10 miles away, in the Latrobe area, Republicans who had made the pilgrimage to a place called the Trump House felt no such reservations about speaking their minds. A mixture of Pennsylvanians and tourists from as far as Florida and Colorado milled around the yard and porch of a converted farmhouse painted to look like an American flag. The spot was designed to be a grass-roots, pro-Trump gathering place, said Leslie Rossi, the owner.

There, she distributes free Trump paraphernalia alongside voting information, and encourages people to change voter registrations and sign up as Republicans.

“Biden can’t get 100 people a day at a rally,” she said from the porch there, hours before Mr. Trump would announce his positive test for the coronavirus. “I get a thousand people a day.”

“The polls are wrong,” she added, “because of what I’m seeing here.”

Representative Guy Reschenthaler, the Republican congressman in the area, said in an interview that he was skeptical that Mr. Biden would do any better in rural areas than Hillary Clinton had, arguing that there was even more enthusiasm for Mr. Trump among Republicans who had doubted him four years ago.

Mr. Reschenthaler cited in particular Mr. Trump’s support for the oil and gas industry and his calls for “law and order” in response to civil unrest.

“Our base wasn’t as excited in 2016 as they are now,” he said. “So I’m actually seeing more excitement from the Republican base for the president in 2020.”

Yet Republican and Democratic energy are not mutually exclusive.

John Petrarca, 61, of Latrobe, served as a Trump delegate to the Republican National Convention in 2016 and agreed that Republicans in his area had only grown more supportive of the president. But in an interview outside the Trump House, Mr. Petrarca said that he was seeing more signs of Democratic activity in the area, too, pointing to Biden advertisements and signs. He didn’t doubt the enthusiasm of some Democrats in the area, he said, noting, “This isn’t Alabama.”

“Biden put more effort into the area this time than Clinton, more money, I’ve seen more ads, signs — I didn’t see Hillary Clinton signs,” he said. “It’s how, like, a Republican would be when Obama was in office. People aren’t afraid to put their signs up because this election is so important to both sides.”

Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: “There’s a secret society of us,” Vicki Simon, 54, said about Biden voters in Scottdale, Pa. Below left, Patty Wood of Unity Township, Pa., picking up a Biden yard sign. Below right, the Trump House, a grass-roots gathering spot for Trump fans in the Latrobe area. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATE SMALLWOOD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12)

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[***Tucker Carlson Dissents as Right-Wing Media Weighs Trump’s Iran Strike; MEDIA MEMO***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XXR-NK21-DXY4-X45Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Michael M. Grynbaum

**Highlight:** Cracks in the conservative commentariat as the White House struggles to form a clear narrative.

**Body**

Cracks in the conservative commentariat as the White House struggles to form a clear narrative.

It was the kind of full-throated critique of President Trump familiar to MSNBC viewers, yet transplanted to the heart of Fox News: [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html), the network’s conservative 8 p.m. host, upbraiding the White House for its attempts to justify the killing of a top military commander in Iran.

“It’s hard to remember now, but as recently as last week, most people didn’t consider Iran an imminent threat,” Mr. Carlson said at the start of his Monday show, going on to mock Mr. Trump’s secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, for saying intelligence agencies had identified an undefined Iranian threat.

“Seems like about 20 minutes ago, we were denouncing these people as the ‘deep state’ and pledging never to trust them again without verification,” Mr. Carlson told viewers, eyebrow arched. “Now, for some reason, we do trust them — implicitly and completely.”

At 9 p.m., Fox News made way for the pro-Trump commentary of Sean Hannity, who declared “the world is safer” after the death of the commander, [*Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html).

But Mr. Carlson’s dissent showed how a right-wing media world that typically moves in lock step with the president has struggled to reconcile Mr. Trump’s surprise escalation with his prior denunciations of open-ended conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In an interview, Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump’s former chief strategist, said that he and other supporters of the president were still hunting for an effective defense.

“This is a very complicated issue, and the people who support President Trump, from Tucker Carlson all the way to Marco Rubio and Lindsey Graham, are really trying to work through this,” Mr. Bannon said on Monday. “What you’re seeing now — live on television, live on radio — is people working through what this means.”

Just as the political world was caught off guard by the killing of General Suleimani, so was the conservative media complex.

As reports of the missile strike in Baghdad that killed the general emerged on Thursday, Mr. Hannity phoned into his Fox News show from vacation to offer vociferous praise. That same night, Mr. Carlson warned his viewers that “America appears to be lumbering toward a new Middle East war.”

On “Fox &amp; Friends” the next morning, the co-host Brian Kilmeade said he was “elated” by the news, only to be scolded by Geraldo Rivera, who pointed to false intelligence peddled by the George W. Bush administration to justify the Iraq war.

“Don’t for a minute start cheering this on,” Mr. Rivera, a Fox News correspondent, told the hosts.

Mr. Bannon, the former chief of [*Breitbart News*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html), now runs [*a pro-Trump podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html), “War Room: Impeachment.” In the interview, he said he was concerned that a burgeoning conflict in Iran could threaten Mr. Trump’s support among “***working-class***, middle-class people, particularly people whose sons and daughters actually fight in these wars,” a group that believed the president opposed significant foreign intervention.

“Why was it necessary to kill this guy and to kill him now and to exacerbate the military issues, given the fact that President Trump looks to us as someone who’s not trigger happy?” Mr. Bannon said, paraphrasing a question he said he was hearing from independent voters.

“That still has to be explained,” Mr. Bannon continued. “I don’t know if it’s the president addressing the nation. I don’t know if it’s the president getting on ‘Fox &amp; Friends.’ But clearly, at some point in time, the president’s got to walk through not just what his logic was, but also where he wants to take this.”

Indeed, part of the problem for conservative media commentators was the lack of guidance from the White House, which has been slow to settle on a public narrative around General Suleimani’s death.

In 2003, as the Bush administration prepared for a conflict in Iraq, White House officials took pains to build support among allies and media commentators for an invasion. In 2020, the Trump administration seems to be attempting the reverse: retroactively arguing its case even as the world grapples with the consequences of a provocative military strike.

Without providing specifics, Trump aides have referred to evidence from intelligence agencies about an imminent threat from Iran — the same intelligence agencies that Mr. Trump and his media surrogates have attacked for three years as biased and prone to fabricating evidence.

The White House press secretary, Stephanie Grisham, is virtually unknown to the public, because she has not held a briefing in her six months on the job and rarely agrees to interviews outside of Fox News. An attempt on Twitter by Vice President Mike Pence to connect General Suleimani to the 9/11 attacks was quickly [*proved wrong*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html).

Mr. Pompeo, dispatched to the major political talk shows on Sunday, argued that “appeasement” of Iran would increase the risk of a terror attack, even as General Suleimani’s death set off enormous anti-American protests in Tehran. That prompted an on-air rebuke from Mr. Carlson, who showed a clip of Mr. Pompeo on his Monday Fox News show.

“The risk of terror is also increased by bombing other people’s countries,” Mr. Carlson said.

Mr. Carlson, a longtime opponent of American involvement in the Middle East, has been more willing than Mr. Hannity to criticize Mr. Trump, though he has not called out the president by name in his recent commentary on Iran. After his Monday segment on General Suleimani, he introduced a five-part series, “American Dystopia,” chronicling urban decay in San Francisco. (The president later [*retweeted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html) a Twitter post by Mr. Carlson promoting the series.)

Mr. Trump, for his part, has done relatively little so far to persuade the public. Aside from a brief and hastily convened TV statement from his Palm Beach resort, he has kept to Twitter, initially posting a caption-less picture of an American flag on the day of the Baghdad strike. On Tuesday afternoon, the president spoke informally to reporters at the White House about the strike.

On Monday, he granted [*his first interview on the matter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html) to the radio show of the conservative host Rush Limbaugh, a Trump safe space with a direct line to the president’s political base.

“I hope this is the greatest year of your life, sir,” Mr. Limbaugh cooed to Mr. Trump at one point, while also venturing that the Suleimani killing had many Americans on edge. “People are being scared to death, their kids are being scared to death, out of their minds, that somehow this is going to start World War III,” he said.

Mr. Trump responded haltingly, as if testing out ideas for his message. “This should have been done for the last 15 to 20 years,” the president said, calling General Suleimani “a terrorist” and declaring that “our country is a lot safer.” Soon, he had veered into complaints about House Democrats and their views on Israel.

Charlie Sykes, a longtime right-wing talk-radio host and a critic of Mr. Trump, said in an interview that the president could still draw on a reservoir of support among his conservative supporters.

“Killing terrorists has always been a great talking point for Republican presidents,” Mr. Sykes said. Mr. Trump’s campaign-trail opposition to the Iraq war, though, complicates matters.

“Trumpism is both isolationist and highly militaristic at the same time,” said Mr. Sykes, who is also a MSNBC contributor. “It’s not dovish — it’s highly militaristic, but it’s selectively militaristic. Being strong is not inconsistent with appeasing the North Koreans or Vladimir Putin.” He paused to laugh. “My head is hurting just thinking about this.”

On Monday night, Mr. Hannity previewed a potential new talking point for the president. “We can’t and won’t be going with boots on the ground in Iran,” he told viewers. “That’s not going to happen, and frankly, it’s not necessary.”

Still, the situation in Iran remains fluid. On Monday, Mr. Bannon [*used his podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/business/media/daily-caller-tucker-carlson.html) to point out the contradictions of the president’s approach, noting, “One of the central building blocks of why he was elected president was to get out of these foreign wars.”

A co-host, the former Trump campaign aide Jason Miller, leaped to the president’s defense, but Mr. Bannon interrupted. “You’re thinking like Republicans,” he said. “Where’s the populist nationalist movement in this? This is supposed to be a new day.”

PHOTOS: From top, Fox News’s Tucker Carlson has broken with other pundits on the right, like his colleague Sean Hannity and radio star Rush Limbaugh. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES; FRANK FRANKLIN II/ASSOCIATED PRESS; ANDREW HARNIK/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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[***For Manchin, a Divided Senate Is a ‘Golden Opportunity’ for Action***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DJ-VNM1-JBG3-60XW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Luke Broadwater

**Highlight:** Frustrated by the dysfunction on Capitol Hill, Senator Joe Manchin III is eager to cut bipartisan deals and check what he views as progressive overreach in the Biden administration.

**Body**

Frustrated by the dysfunction on Capitol Hill, Senator Joe Manchin III is eager to cut bipartisan deals and check what he views as progressive overreach in the Biden administration.

WASHINGTON — A year ago, [*Joe Manchin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) III was ready to quit.

As the most conservative Senate Democrat, he saw nothing but dysfunction and inaction when he looked around on Capitol Hill. “[*This place sucks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html),” he repeatedly declared. As he often has since arriving in Washington, he openly mulled leaving to try to reclaim his old job: governor of West Virginia.

Instead, [*he stayed for a second term*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html). Now, with President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. preparing to govern from the middle in a Congress whose thin majorities will force him to compromise on almost every priority, Mr. Manchin, a centrist, suddenly finds himself at the center of relevance in the nation’s capital.

In his office on a recent afternoon, seated not far from a framed quote from President John F. Kennedy stressing independence from political party, Mr. Manchin, 73, was feeling energized. He paged through a proposal he was developing for a new coronavirus relief deal and said he was imagining a more moderate course for Congress.

“I think we have a golden opportunity to bring the country back together and for us to work in the middle,” Mr. Manchin said excitedly. “I’ll tell you the reason why: The numbers are so close with what the Democratic House members lost. For Nancy Pelosi, she’s going to have to work with people that have a more moderate view than some of the people that pushed her from the left.”

If Democrats are able to win [*two runoffs in Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) in January and take control of the Senate, any plans to enact a liberal agenda — such as [*increasing the number of Supreme Court justices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) — will have to go through Mr. Manchin. Likewise, if Republicans win at least one of the Georgia races, allowing them to maintain Senate control, they will need centrists in both parties to help block progressive items or pass compromise legislation.

That is the situation that Mr. Manchin said he considered more likely. He is already preparing for a power dynamic that he asserted would give him and three moderate Republicans — Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Mitt Romney of Utah — a big role in determining what happens at the dawn of Mr. Biden’s presidency.

With Vice President-elect Kamala Harris empowered to break ties, Mr. Manchin noted that it would take only two Republican defections to hand Democrats a majority on any given measure.

“It behooves everybody to start working together,” he said during a [*wide-ranging interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) in his office. “If they don’t, it doesn’t take many of us to say, ‘Guys, we’ve given all of you a chance. We haven’t done our job for the last 10 years, and we’re going to start.’”

In recent days, Mr. Manchin has been working to corral support for a new coronavirus stimulus package, racing around the Capitol asking his colleagues what price range they are comfortable with and directing his chief of staff, Lance West, to draw up proposals. Mr. Manchin said he thought about $1.2 trillion might be acceptable to finally reach a deal — about half of what his party’s leaders had been pushing for before the election.

He has been in talks with a bipartisan group of senators to try to forge a deal. They include the three Republican moderates, as well as Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana; Senator Angus King, independent of Maine; and the Democratic senators Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Mark Warner of Virginia.

“Something needs to be done before Joe Biden becomes president,” Mr. Manchin said. “I’ve got people who aren’t going to make it to February or March.”

He is also ready to do battle with the progressive left, whose ire he drew when, in an interview this month with the Washington Examiner, he responded to a question about some liberals’ calls to defund the police [*with the phrase, “Defund, my butt.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html)

In response, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the progressive firebrand from New York, [*posted a photo on Twitter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) of her glaring at Mr. Manchin as he applauded during President Trump’s second State of the Union address.

“I guess she put the dagger stare on me,” Mr. Manchin said. “I don’t know the young lady — I really don’t. I never met her. I’m understanding she’s not that active with her bills or in committee. She’s more active on Twitter than anything else.”

That amounts to a sharp insult in a chamber where legislative prowess is prized. Mr. Manchin said he would stand firm against the agenda that the left flank of his party is pushing.

“We’re not going to defund the police, we’re not for the new green deal,” he said. “That’s not going to happen. We’re not for Medicare for All — we can’t even pay for Medicare for some.”

Lauren Hitt, a spokeswoman for Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, said the congresswoman had submitted more amendments than 90 percent of other freshmen — including those promoting fair housing and a tear gas ban that passed the House — and had missed fewer votes than Mr. Manchin. “The congresswoman has earned a reputation as a tough, prepared member in committee hearings,” Ms. Hitt said.

Mr. Manchin is also a staunch opponent of another step for which progressives have advocated, having loudly spoken out against a move to change Senate rules so that the majority could muscle through legislation with a vote of 51, rather than requiring that bills meet a 60-vote threshold to advance. Should Democrats win control of the chamber, the change would allow Mr. Biden to circumvent Republican opposition and push through his policy priorities.

“I can assure you I will not vote to end the filibuster, because that would break the Senate,” Mr. Manchin said. “If you’ve got to blow up the Senate to do the right thing, then we’ve got the wrong people in the Senate.”

Instead, Mr. Manchin said he and a group of like-minded senators in both parties — including many of those with whom he is discussing a new relief package — were eyeing a different change to the rules to empower the rank and file. Their idea is to allow any bill approved by a committee with bipartisan support to advance to the floor. That would dilute the unilateral power of the majority leader — currently Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky — to control which measures advance.

“Before we know definitely who is going to be the majority leader, we should make the changes of how the Senate should work,” Mr. Manchin said of the proposal, which is exceedingly unlikely to be successful.

Still, John C. Kilwein, the chairman of the political science department at West Virginia University, said Mr. Manchin would be “incredibly important” in the event of a 50-50 Senate. His stances would also serve as useful cover for Mr. Biden and Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the minority leader, from criticism they are likely to face for not fully embracing the progressive agenda.

“He dashed progressives’ hopes already of doing away with the filibuster and packing the court,” Mr. Kilwein said.

In some ways, Mr. Manchin is a throwback to a bygone era. A gun owner who grew up in the small town of Farmington, W.Va., and lives on a houseboat while in Washington, he keeps photographs of children killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on his office wall. Teaming up with Senator Patrick J. Toomey, Republican of Pennsylvania, Mr. Manchin tried in 2013 to craft some modest gun safety measures to prevent such mass killings from happening again, but their efforts stalled amid bipartisan opposition.

He often describes having learned to govern with “common sense” from watching small-town officials navigate problems like whether to put in or take out a stoplight.

Charles S. Trump IV, a Republican state senator from West Virginia who has known Mr. Manchin for three decades and is not related to the president, said the senator took after his uncle A. James Manchin, an “icon of West Virginia politics.” The elder Mr. Manchin was an [*entertaining politician who rid the state’s countryside of thousands of junked cars*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) and old tires.

As the state’s ***working-class*** rural white voters — who once voted for Democrats partly because of strong ties to labor unions — shifted to the right, few Democrats could continue to win in West Virginia. The president [*won the state by nearly 40 percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) this year. But Mr. Manchin held onto his seat in 2018, surviving the steepest re-election challenge of his career partly on the strength of the trust he has built with constituents over decades.

Mr. Trump, the state senator, recalled how Mr. Manchin as governor cut short a trip in 2006 to attend the Sugar Bowl in Atlanta, where he planned to cheer on the West Virginia University Mountaineers, when there was a [*mine disaster*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html) back home.

“He came straight home,” Mr. Trump said. “He knew it would be important to the people during a crisis that he was there.”

This year, Mr. Manchin crossed party lines when he became the only Democratic senator to endorse Ms. Collins in her fourth re-election attempt against a strong challenger, Sara Gideon, whom many in Congress expected to win. When [*Ms. Collins defied the polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/us/manchin-voting-rights.html), Mr. Manchin was one of the first to call and congratulate her.

“He’s courageous,” Ms. Collins said. “I admire he does the things he believes are right, even if he gets a lot of grief from the Democratic leader for it.”

Ms. Collins said she looked forward to working with Mr. Manchin on issues such as reducing the price of prescription drugs and a broad infrastructure package. But the obstacles are steep, with powerful groups on both sides of the political spectrum “demanding 100 percent compliance” with their views, she said.

Ms. Murkowski said she hoped a functioning Senate was not “a pipe dream from a bygone era.”

“For those of us more in the moderate camp, it’s a very important role that needs to be played, and I’m looking forward to playing a part in that,” she said. “I’m tired of the bitter partisan divide we’ve seen. I want to try to figure out how we are governing again for all the country, not just for the Republicans.”

PHOTO: Senator Joe Manchin III, Democrat of West Virginia, suddenly finds himself at the center of relevance in the nation’s capital. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 8, 2021

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[***Foods Fit for a Revolution***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1C-9R41-DXY4-X107-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Laurie Wen and Kiran Ridley

**Body**

How the Hong Kong democracy movement feeds on the city's distinct identity.

HONG KONG -- ''Who says I can't sell an ice cream cone and add a gas mask on the side?'' Chung Yiu-wa, the co-owner of Sogno Gelato, said. ''I have a license to sell, and I can attach free gifts if I want. I'm not breaking any laws.''

At first glance, Sogno Gelato, an ice-cream shop in a mall in a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the New Territories, could be mistaken for a tween girl's dream bedroom. The walls are covered with little squares of canary yellow, robin's egg blue and baby pink -- from hundreds of Post-it notes with pro-democracy messages. There is a giant stuffed Winnie-the-Pooh, a cheeky reference to President Xi Jinping of China. Its right eye is covered with a bloodied bandage in homage to a first-aider who was partially blinded by a police projectile during a demonstration.

Mr. Chung, who goes by Ah Wa, and his co-owner have turned Sogno Gelato into a makeshift rear-guard supply station, counseling space and surrogate living room for Hong Kong's democracy movement. The store gives out free ice cream to supporters. It serves late-night meals to battle-worn front liners, including home-cooked dishes dropped off by neighbors. (The menu one recent night: chestnut and chicken stew, pan-fried pork chops with onion, buttered corn.) It hosts know-your-rights workshops. It distributes donated protective gear, including gas masks and bike helmets of the sturdy kind, which many young protesters cannot afford, at least not if they still want to be able to feed themselves.

A few days before Christmas, Ah Wa added a few limited-time-only holiday flavors to the menu: chocolate and rum, Christmas pudding, ginger snap and ''tear-gas.'' He pledged to continue serving the tear-gas gelato -- it's made with black pepper -- as long as the government keeps shooting gas canisters at protesters. Or as long as Sogno Gelato manages to remain open.

The store doesn't take cash donations, so customers will sometimes pay for a HK$32 scoop with a HK$500 bill and say, ''Keep the change.''

Sogno Gelato has no staff. ''The kids run it now,'' Ah Wa said. Many teenagers hang out there partly to avoid political arguments at home. One day, several of them insisted on serving me their special: ''Five Big Snow Balls,'' which in Cantonese sounds almost exactly like ''Five Big Demands'' -- itself an echo of the measures protesters have been calling for, including universal suffrage and an investigation into police abuses.

Many of the regulars refer to Ah Wa, 31, as ''Dad'' and have given him their ID numbers and birth dates: That way, if they are arrested, he can quickly hand over the necessary information to volunteer defense lawyers.

One September evening, a Sogno Gelato regular named Gary -- early 20s, born on the mainland, out of work, recently kicked out by his family -- was on a bus with friends, on his way to meet Ah Wa after a protest. (''I help build barricades. I don't throw things or fight the cops.'') The police stopped the bus and searched everyone on board. Among Gary's things, they found an anti-germ mask, work gloves and something, apparently, more incriminating still. ''He has restaurant coupons!'' an officer said. ''He must be a front liner!'' Gary was arrested.

His friends called Sogno Gelato for help.

At 2 a.m., the police were still recording his statement. ''The lawyer asked if I was hungry, and arranged for Ah Wa to bring food to the police station and hand it over to the cops,'' Gary told me later, at the shop. ''He brought me a Yeung Chow fried rice.''

The lawyer tried to negotiate with the officers to let Gary eat while they continued to question him. ''At that moment, I wanted to cry,'' Gary said. He thought then about the woman who was representing him pro bono: '''You're just my volunteer lawyer; you don't need to act like my family. I can't ask that of you.'''

''Maybe she felt I was about to cry, so she joked with me instead, asking, 'How's the fried rice?' I said, 'It's delicious.'''

If the current protests in Hong Kong have lasted seven months despite minimal concessions from the government and the rising costs -- economic, social, psychological -- of all the disruption and violence, that's partly because sympathetic citizens like Ah Wa have mobilized to organize parallel support systems for the demonstrators. Various shadow networks of caterers, lawyers, health care providers or car-poolers have emerged. There are apps that tell you which restaurants and shops are ''yellow'' (pro-democracy) and which are ''blue'' (pro-police and pro-government).

Protesters and their supporters may disagree over whether violent tactics on the streets will help or hurt the movement overall, or whether what they want for Hong Kong is outright independence, a greater degree of self-determination or just the proper application of the existing ''one country, two systems'' principle, which is supposed to guarantee the city's semi-autonomy. But they are united by the notion that Hong Kong is distinct from mainland China, politically and culturally, that it is their home -- and so its fate should be theirs to decide. This local pride, though it has run deep for a long time, became resolutely political after the Umbrella Movement in 2014.

Before the city's spectacular economic development in the 1970s, many poor Hong Kongers, including waves of refugees from the mainland, eked out a living as street vendors. But as the city's economy soared and more and more people took white-collar jobs, government policies discouraged peddling on the street. Hawking, in turn, became a symbol of a distinct Hong Kong identity under threat, of a local underdog oppressed by an overlord government -- whether colonial British or communist Chinese -- that seems forever unaccountable to the people.

These tensions came to a head on Lunar New Year's Day in 2016, when several proponents of localism -- a movement to preserve the city's unique features, especially against encroachment from Beijing -- called for a gathering to support hawkers selling fishballs and other cart foods in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Mong Kok, claiming the vendors were being harassed by the authorities. That night, there were clashes with police and arrests. Later, some participants whose public profiles continued to rise, like Edward Leung Tin-kei, were barred from running for office, and were tried and sentenced to long prison terms for those Lunar New Year clashes. ''Free Hong Kong! Revolution of Our Time!,'' a mantra of the current protests, is attributed to Leung.

That February night in 2016, now a seminal moment in Hong Kong's democracy movement, is known as the Fishball Revolution.

On July 22, a young pro-democracy activist committed suicide after his relatives kicked him out of the house. That's when Andy Cheng, a 28-year-old working in advertising, decided to step up. ''If your family doesn't want to be your family, come to me,'' Andy thought when he sent out an open invitation for dinner that night on Facebook and Telegram. ''I'll be your family.'' He made coconut chicken soup, scrambled eggs with tomatoes, stir-fried greens and steamed minced pork -- as typical a Hong Kong home meal as it gets. Two people showed up.

By August, he said, he was serving 30 to 40 dinners daily and several people were crashing overnight on the floor of his work space. Andy started calling the office -- a hip loft with gunmetal slate floors and shelves filled with collectible toys -- a ''safe house.'' Soups are the taste of home, according to both Andy's mother and many Hong Kong soap operas, and he makes sure to serve one, slow-cooked, at every meal.

One evening in early October, Andy, wearing Le Corbusier glasses and harem pants, was hosting a hot-pot party. Shoes were piled up by the front door. Dozens of plates lined the large table: thin slices of marbled beef rolled up like cigars, julienne pork collar, enoki mushrooms, Chinese lettuce, dumplings filled with pork and pea pods, slivered grass carp and crispy fried fish skin.

A dozen of us stood close to the table, the better to reach the pot of bubbling broth in the middle; hot pot may be Chinese cuisine's most communal dish. I asked a teenage girl what she preferred. The dumplings, she said -- but only their skins. ''When I eat with my dad,'' she added, ''he eats the fillings for me.''

When I saw her again the following week, her parents had kicked her out, suspecting her of participating in the protests. Her father is a police officer, and the family lives in police housing.

I call her Little Princess at her friend's suggestion, after the nickname of a character in a love story she wrote in 2018. At that time, Little Princess, now 17, had never been to a protest. She didn't join any until last June, when, after the government suspended but did not withdraw the controversial extradition bill that set off last year's crisis, an activist fell to his death from a scaffolding.

The next afternoon, Little Princess was among the two million Hong Kongers who marched against the bill and police violence. On July 1, she was one of several hundred protesters who broke into and briefly occupied the Legislative Council.

Little Princess said her favorite books are ''1984'' and ''Animal Farm.'' Her favorite classes are Chinese literature and history -- especially Russian history (''because Gorbachev reformed a very closed society'') and French history (''because of all the revolutions'').

By September, Little Princess and two other 17-year-old girls were conducting online research on how to make petrol bombs. They bought the materials, put them together and went to a quarry for tests and to practice their throwing. They were preparing for Oct. 1, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, a day that some protesters were announcing would mark ''the end game'' against the authorities.

''The night before, I got scared,'' Little Princess told me. One of the girls in her team WhatsApped them: ''Let's write wills.'' Little Princess said she apologized to her parents in her note: ''I told them this is our future, not theirs. I hoped they wouldn't scold me for doing something for my own future.'' The three also made a pledge: If they survived the next day, they'd go for a special, amazing meal together. Maybe Japanese buffet or hot pot.

One dessert place invites front liners who are low on cash to ''come be food testers.'' A steamed-rice crepe shop offers a free meal to anyone who hands in a yellow Post-it that says, ''I love Hong Kong''; at one burger joint, you're comped a meal if you whisper to a staffer: ''Hong Kong, ga yau!'' -- ''add oil,'' a term of encouragement among protesters. Employees of an e-commerce platform prepay for restaurant meals and groceries, then give out the order numbers to demonstrators so they can claim the food. Sister Cat, a blue-haired grandmother, became famous during the Umbrella Movement for delivering free meals to occupation sites from her traditional diner. Now her Facebook page features a standing invitation for anyone to come share a meal, on the house, for her birthday -- every day.

Mooncakes, round pastries often filled with a pristine, salted egg yolk, can be eaten at any time, but they're most common around Mid-Autumn Festival, an annual harvest ritual held during a full moon. Legend has it that on the occasion of the holiday in 1368, Han Chinese rebels wanting to overthrow Mongol oppressors slipped into the cakes pieces of paper calling for a revolt. The people got the message, rose up and overthrew the Mongol Yuan dynasty. Today, Kristina Sze, the owner of Wah Yee Tang Bakery, doesn't bother hiding her messages inside the cakes; she stamps them on top.

''We're in it Together.'' ''Add Oil.'' One day in July, upon finding out that Ms. Sze couldn't keep up with orders in the lead-up to the holiday, I volunteered to help her out. She picked up a quarter of a bright-orange salted duck-egg yolk, stuffed it inside some lotus-seed paste, wrapped the paste with a pastry skin and handed the ball to me. I rolled it for no more than two seconds, as instructed, and, also as instructed, placed it inside a mold imprinted with an obscenity and the image of a cat raising a middle finger.

When, at the end of the day, the accordion metal gate of Ms. Sze's shop is drawn shut, it reveals a hand-painted mural that could pass for a Hong Kong political philosophy: ''Uphold Human Rights and Eat Good Food.''

By 8 p.m., hundreds of us, some with Santa hats or reindeer antlers, lined up on the tiny street outside Kwong Wing Restaurant, in Tsim Sha Tsui, for Christmas dinner. Riot police stood guard 100 feet away. Earlier, the police had called the restaurant to warn that the celebration could be considered an ''illegal assembly'' -- the implication being that we could all be arrested.

A young woman in a white lacy blouse waited an hour and a half before she could eat, standing on the sidewalk, cold chicken wings and spaghetti from a small paper plate. ''Sure, there's better-tasting food out there,'' she told me. ''But this is the best Christmas feast I've ever had.''

Kitchen Guy, an unemployed chef, had recently become a folk hero after sneaking onto the campus of Polytechnic University during a police siege to cook for protesters trapped inside. Kwong Wing Restaurant offered him a job. No thanks, he said, but I'd really like to help cook a free Christmas dinner for our comrades. Kwong Wing agreed, and a dozen other restaurants volunteered to co-sponsor the event. Then on Christmas Eve, news broke that Kitchen Guy had been arrested at a protest.

On Christmas night, he was still in detention, but the dinner went ahead anyway. The food was free. Most people left hefty tips to contribute to Kitchen Guy's legal defense.

''Comrades from everywhere are bringing more food to the dinner,'' someone posted on Facebook during the evening. ''The more we eat, the more food there is! The more you arrest, the more people will come out to cook for our comrades!''

One man supports the protesters. A restaurant supports him. Other restaurants support the restaurant. Protesters support all of them. Good food or bad food, the Hong Kong democracy movement feeds on solidarity, and solidarity, it seems, grows exponentially.

Laurie Wen, an activist, is writing a book about Hong Kong's democracy movement.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/09/opinion/sunday/hong-kong-protests-food.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/09/opinion/sunday/hong-kong-protests-food.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Homemade samosas for a pro-democracy protestor in Hong Kong (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIRAN RIDLEY)

**Load-Date:** January 20, 2020

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[***Trump Defectors Help Biden Build Leads in Wisconsin and Michigan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6123-K5F1-DXY4-X16H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1723 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** New polls show Biden is gaining in the Northern battlegrounds among white voters.

**Body**

New polls show Biden is gaining in the Northern battlegrounds among white voters.

[Read our profile detailing [*Joe Biden’s road to the White House*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html) and presidency.]

Joseph R. Biden Jr. holds a significant [*lead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html) in the pivotal states of [*Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html) and Wisconsin, with President Trump so far failing to retain the overwhelming advantage he enjoyed among white voters there in 2016, according to surveys from The New York Times and Siena College on Monday.

Over all, Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump by eight percentage points in Michigan, 48 percent to 40 percent, among likely voters. His lead in Wisconsin was slightly larger, 51 percent to 41 percent.

The new results, along with recent [*Times/Siena surveys*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html) from elsewhere in the Northern battlegrounds, suggest that the president has not yet managed to reassemble his winning coalition across the region. He faces modest but significant defections among white and independent voters, while facing a groundswell of opposition from those who voted for a minor-party candidate or didn’t vote at all in 2016.

The president’s [*path to re-election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html) is narrow if he doesn’t win either Wisconsin or Michigan. If Mr. Biden puts those two states in his column, along with the states carried by Hillary Clinton in 2016, he will hold 258 electoral votes, putting him on the doorstep of the 270 needed to win.

Nonetheless, the Trump campaign appears to recognize that the two states no longer represent his likeliest path to re-election. Over the last month, the campaign has reduced its television ad spending in the two states in favor of an apparent push to sweep Arizona, Florida and Pennsylvania, where Times/Siena surveys conducted since the first debate show the president trailing by somewhat narrower but still significant five-to-eight-point margins.

Four years ago, Mr. Trump’s strength among white voters without a college degree helped him breach the so-called blue wall of traditionally Democratic Northern battleground states, including Michigan and Wisconsin. The new surveys show him well short of matching 2016 levels of support among white voters, leaving the president with a daunting deficit with just [*three weeks until the election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html).

Over all, Mr. Biden leads by eight points among white voters in Wisconsin and trails by just one percentage point among white voters in Michigan.

While Mr. Trump’s surprising victory in 2016 lent him an aura of political invincibility, an Upshot analysis of more than 5,000 respondents to Times/Siena results surveys in the Northern battleground states suggests that his winning coalition was always a fragile one. The president’s margin of victory was extremely narrow, and he failed to reach 50 percent of the vote in each of the decisive states. He also did so against an unusually unpopular opponent, Mrs. Clinton.

In the years after her defeat, Democrats agonized over whether their best path to the presidency was to lure back the white, ***working-class*** voters who’d defected to the president, or to increase turnout among Democratic voters who may have stayed home or supported minor-party candidates like Jill Stein. The Times/Siena surveys suggest that Mr. Biden is succeeding on both fronts, by at once peeling off a modest but crucial sliver of the president’s former supporters and benefiting from a significant advantage among voters who either backed a minor-party candidate four years ago or didn’t vote at all.

Over all, recent Times/Siena respondents in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Ohio indicate that they backed Mr. Trump by a 2.6-point margin in 2016, the same as his actual 2.6-point margin of victory across the Northern battlegrounds. Now, they back Mr. Biden across all six states.

How the Northern Battlegrounds Have Gone From Trump +3 to Biden +6

People who have switched sides since 2016 make up less than 4 percent of registered voters. But they effectively pack twice the punch of other voters, as they have both deducted a vote from their former preferred candidate and added one to the candidate they now support. Alone, these switches would be enough to give Mr. Biden a fairly comfortable victory, even without any change in the composition of the electorate or in the attitudes of voters who back a minor-party candidate.

Although the sample is small, the president’s Midwestern defectors appear to be surprisingly representative of his supporters over all, at least demographically. They are only slightly likelier to be women, college graduates or suburbanites.

Mr. Biden also holds a significant lead among respondents who say they backed a minor-party candidate, like Gary Johnson or Jill Stein.

Mr. Biden’s lead is largest among the former supporters of Ms. Stein, who say they back him, 59-9.

Mr. Biden’s lead among the former supporters of Mr. Johnson is smaller, 38 percent to 14 percent, with this year’s Libertarian nominee, Jo Jorgensen, winning 29 percent of their support.

Mr. Biden’s lead would expand further to seven points if registered voters who didn’t vote in 2016 turned out. Of course, not everyone will vote in the end, but he holds a 48-34 lead among this group.

Put it together, and Mr. Biden leads by six points across the Midwestern battlegrounds, a significant improvement over Mrs. Clinton’s nearly three-point deficit across the region four years ago. It’s almost exactly the same as Barack Obama’s six-point victory in the same states in 2012.

But while the results seem to represent a restoration of the traditional Democratic coalition in the Midwest, a closer analysis reveals that the president’s breakthrough victory in the region four years ago has had a lasting effect on the region’s partisan loyalties and political geography.

Unlike in 2012, self-identified Republicans now outnumber Democrats in Times/Siena polls of Wisconsin, Michigan and even Pennsylvania, where the Democratic registration advantage remains significant but has dwindled in recent months.

Instead, Mr. Biden leads with an overwhelming advantage among independent voters, who back him by 20 percentage points in both states.

And though Mr. Biden’s gains among white voters are broad, spanning both those with and without a college degree, he fares far better than Mr. Obama did among white college graduates, while faring worse among those without a four-year degree. As a result, Mr. Biden still trails narrowly in the precincts that flipped from Mr. Obama to Mr. Trump, while holding an overwhelming advantage in the smaller number of predominantly suburban precincts that backed Mitt Romney in 2012 and then supported Mrs. Clinton in 2016.

In Michigan, Senator Gary Peters, a Democrat, faces a surprisingly strong challenge from [*John James*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html), a graduate of West Point who is considered one of the Republicans’ top recruits of the cycle. Mr. Peters leads by just one percentage point, 43 percent to 42 percent, among likely voters, a significant narrowing of the race since a Times/Siena survey in June that found Mr. Peters leading, 41-31.

The relatively high number of undecided voters reflects the relatively low profile of the two candidates. Around 20 percent of voters do not have an opinion on either of them. Mr. James’s favorability ratings have increased to 45 percent favorable versus 35 percent unfavorable, up from 36 percent favorable and 29 percent unfavorable in the June survey. Part of Mr. Peters’s weakness is that he has thus far failed to match Mr. Biden’s tallies among nonwhite voters, who disproportionately remain undecided. It remains to be seen whether Mr. James, who is Black, will ultimately make significant inroads among these voters.

A closely fought race in Michigan complicates the Democratic path to flipping control of the Senate, which has looked increasingly plausible as several Senate Republican incumbents have fared worse than the president in surveys. Yet here it is the incumbent Democrat faring worse than Mr. Biden, and a Republican win in Michigan would force Democrats to pick up a win in a state that Mr. Trump won comfortably in 2016, like Iowa or Montana, to win Senate control.

Public opinion polls have been remarkably stable this year, through the pandemic, the economic crisis and social unrest. The surveys of Wisconsin and Michigan were conducted during another tumultuous week in the campaign, and they offered little indication that any of the news had worked to the president’s favor.

The surveys began after Mr. Trump was released from the hospital, and there was no immediate indication that his political standing recovered along with his health. Most voters in Wisconsin and Michigan expected that the president would recover quickly from the illness, echoing findings from Times/Siena surveys fielded while he was hospitalized. The president did not appear poised to benefit from the public’s sympathy; by at least a two-to-one margin in both states, voters said the president did not take adequate precautions to protect against the coronavirus.

The survey in Wisconsin was conducted entirely after the vice-presidential debate, and attitudes about it fell along predictable partisan lines. Mr. Biden’s supporters said Senator Kamala Harris won, 73 percent to 3 percent, while Mr. Trump’s supporters said Vice President Mike Pence won by a nearly identical margin of 74-2. Over all, voters thought Ms. Harris defeated Mr. Pence in the debate, 40 percent to 33 percent, with her advantage appearing to reflect little more than Mr. Biden’s overall advantage in the presidential race.

The Wisconsin survey was also conducted entirely after the president announced he would not participate in the virtual town hall debate proposed by the presidential debate commission. Wisconsin voters said they supported the proposed virtual town hall format, 58 percent to 34 percent, and said Mr. Trump should have decided to participate in the debate, 70 percent to 21 percent.

This week, the president might be on firmer political ground; the confirmation hearings of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court have begun. A plurality of voters in both states said they supported her nomination and thought the Senate should act on it before the election.

Here are the [*crosstabs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden.html) for the polls.

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Ohio on Tuesday. A New York Times/Siena poll has him ahead in that state and in five others in the Midwest. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2020

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[***Coronavirus, QAnon, Trump: Your Monday Briefing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6121-4CX1-DXY4-X0R5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 11, 2020 Sunday 01:07 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1745 words

**Byline:** Natasha Frost

**Highlight:** Here’s what you need to know.

**Body**

Here’s what you need to know.

(Want to get this briefing by email? Here’s the [*sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).)

Good morning.

We’re covering the steep increase in coronavirus cases in Europe, the growing popularity of QAnon among Germany’s far-right fringe and the latest investigation into Trump’s tax returns.

A second coronavirus wave in Europe

More than six months since the start of the pandemic, European countries such as France, Spain and Britain are [*reporting daily infection numbers*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) comparable to — and sometimes far beyond — those of their first peaks. New restrictions to curb transmission of the coronavirus have sometimes been [*met with resistance*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), amid what public health officials describe as “pandemic fatigue.”

Even Germany, much praised for its testing and contact-tracing capabilities, reported a record 8,000 new infections on Saturday, by far its highest single-day number, though the country’s seven-day average of new daily cases remains [*far below its spring peak of almost 5,600.*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing)

Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany said on Friday that more restrictive measures would follow local ones, including an 11 p.m. curfew on bars in some places, if infections did not slow in urban hot spots. “We will go back to partying, to having fun without corona restrictions,” she said. “But right now, other things are more important.”

Here are our [*latest updates*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) and [*maps*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) of the pandemic.

In other developments:

* [*More than one million new coronavirus cases were reported around the world in the past three days*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), as France, Russia, Nepal and several American states set records for the highest daily number of new infections.

1. The [*Israeli military began treating civilian coronavirus patients*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) for the first time on Sunday, deploying to an overstrained hospital in the port city of Haifa and opening two Covid-19 wards in an underground campus.
2. Outbreaks at farms have made Canadians question how well [*vulnerable migrant workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) are being protected.
3. Britain, which recorded over 15,000 cases on Saturday, is expected to announce a plan on Monday to rank areas in tiers; places where the virus is spreading would require tighter restrictions.

QAnon gains traction in Germany

The U.S. conspiracy theory has [*found fertile ground among Germany’s far-right fringe*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). The country has the largest QAnon following — an estimated 200,000 people — in the non-English-speaking world, and it has quickly built audiences on YouTube, Facebook and the Telegram messenger app. People wave Q flags during [*protests*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) against coronavirus measures.

The mythology and language that QAnon uses — including claims of ritual child murder and revenge fantasies against liberal elites — conjure ancient anti-Semitic tropes and putsch fantasies that have long animated Germany’s far-right fringe. Now those groups are seeking to harness the theory’s viral popularity to reach a wider audience, among them vaccine opponents, fringe thinkers and ordinary citizens who question the threat of the pandemic.

A wider view: Officials are baffled that a seemingly wacky conspiracy theory has resonated in Germany. Polls show that trust in the current government is high, while the far-right Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, has been struggling.

Revelations from Trump’s tax returns

[*The latest Times investigation into President Trump’s tax data*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) and other records found that more than 200 companies, special-interest groups and foreign governments had patronized the president’s properties, funneling in millions of dollars while reaping benefits from him and his administration.

Just 60 customers with interests at stake before the Trump administration brought his family business nearly $12 million during the first two years of his presidency, The Times found. Almost all saw their interests advanced, in some fashion, by Mr. Trump or his government.

Analysis: “As president, Mr. Trump built a system of direct presidential influence-peddling unrivaled in modern American politics,” writes an investigative team that has been covering the president’s finances and taxes for almost four years.

Go deeper: Here are the investigation’s [*key findings*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) and [*a note from our executive editor*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), Dean Baquet, that includes links to all the team’s work.

If you have 6 minutes, this is worth it

Amazon among the vineyards

The Gard, an agricultural region in the South of France, has one of the nation’s highest unemployment rates. A giant Amazon sorting center [*planned for construction*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) near the medieval-era village of Fournès would bring hundreds of jobs — as well as an explosion of traffic and pollution.

“The struggle against Amazon here is symbolic of a much bigger question: What kind of a society are we going to have?” a local beekeeper said. “If it is one dominated by a monopoly that uses people, threatens the environment and only cares about consumerism, that’s a world that we don’t want.”

Here’s what else is happening

Kyrgyzstan: Lawmakers in the Central Asian country selected Sadyr Japarov, a convicted kidnapper who was sprung from jail by protesters just days ago, [*to be the new prime minister*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). The arrangement may help calm street violence, but it has stirred alarm that criminal elements have prevailed in a power struggle set off by disputed parliamentary election results.

Belarus: The women who have led a movement to oust the country’s embattled leader, Aleksandr Lukashenko, may ultimately be unsuccessful, but they have already shattered [*deeply entrenched gender stereotypes*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) built up over generations.

French Open: [*Rafael Nadal*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) routed Novak Djokovic in the final to win his 20th Grand Slam singles title and tie the men’s record held by Roger Federer.

North Korea: In a nighttime military parade in Pyongyang on Saturday, the country rolled out what appeared to be its [*largest-ever intercontinental ballistic missile*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). The move seemed to be aimed at displaying North Korea’s advances in military technology, but it was not immediately clear if the new missiles were real or mock-ups.

Snapshot: President Trump said he was “feeling great” as he spoke from a balcony to hundreds of supporters at a White House event on Saturday. Mr. Trump said in an interview on Sunday that he was now[*“totally free of spreading” the coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) as he prepared to resume campaigning for the Nov. 3 election.

Lives Lived: The Persian classical music singer Mohammad Reza Shajarian, who popularized the genre for a new generation only to be blacklisted by Iran for supporting antigovernment protests, has [*died at 80*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

What we’re reading: [*This article in The Washington Post*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), which Stacy Cowley, a business reporter, calls “a heartbreaking story of how a coronavirus denier became a believer.”

Now, a break from the news

Cook: [*Roasted cauliflower with pancetta, olives and crisp Parmesan*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) is not a side dish but dinner, according to our Food writer Melissa Clark, “and a satisfying one at that.”

Watch: Kiyoshi Kurosawa’s [*“Wife of a Spy”*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) touches on the Imperial Army’s testing of biological and chemical weapons on human subjects in Manchuria before and during World War II. The film garnered Mr. Kurosawa the best director award at the Venice Film Festival.

Do: Stretching and meditative movement like yoga before bed can improve the quality of your sleep. Here is a short and calming routine of [*11 stretches and exercises.*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing)

Feeling listless? [*At Home has our full collection of ideas*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) on what to read, cook, watch and do while staying safe at home.

And now for the Back Story on …

The animals hogging Isabella Rossellini’s limelight

The idea: a portrait session with the actress that involves sheep, dogs and chickens. She was totally game. Thankfully, so were the creatures. In [*this Times Insider piece*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), excerpted below, the reporter Libby Peterson describes what went on behind the scenes of [*this profile*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

Shooting Isabella Rossellini can be a photographer’s dream.

“She’s just so far out and wild and game and beautiful and so much herself,” said Jessie Wender, a photo editor for The Times’s Culture desk, who sought to commission photographs that would capture the actress’s untamed spirit: portraits that would include sheep, dogs and chickens, all co-stars in the production.

Ms. Wender called on the photographer Camila Falquez, known for her distinctly formal yet whimsical portraits. “I was just excited to see what they would do together,” Ms. Wender said. “Camila is so good at creating these worlds with people.” Ms. Falquez would have only 45 minutes to create that world from the actress’s garden, while keeping a safe distance and wearing P.P.E.

“I didn’t know what was going to happen,” Ms. Falquez said, “so I decided to light a little candle in my altar and ask for the best.”

Despite an ominous forecast for rain, drizzle gave way to an overcast sky that served as one huge, soft source of natural light, the best condition for an outdoor shoot. The animals, unperturbed by the photographer at work, ambled up to smell the camera and followed Ms. Rossellini around the house.

“I can’t believe this; I love my job,” Ms. Falquez recalled with a laugh.

For one shot, Ms. Falquez said, Ms. Rossellini was excited to put a doll on her head. For another, Ms. Rossellini fetched a chicken to hold.

Ms. Falquez had been ruminating on the effects of the pandemic for months. On that day, she recalled thinking about how unifying it seemed. “What’s beautiful is that Isabella Rossellini is changing how she does her thing. Even that woman,” she said. “We’re all in this together for real. And actually, I’m really happy with the photos. It’s art evolving through a lot of pain and challenges. It’s all of us.”

Thanks for starting your day with The Times. See you next time.

— Natasha

Thank you

To Theodore Kim and Jahaan Singh for the break from the news. You can reach the team at [*briefing@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

P.S.

We’re listening to “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).” Our latest episode is about the campaign for Pennsylvania’s ***working-class*** voters.

Here’s our [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), and a clue: “Oolong and so on" (Four letters). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

The word “longwool” — a particularly shaggy breed of sheep — appeared in The Times for the first time over the weekend, according to the Twitter account [*@NYT\_first\_said*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

The new season of the “Modern Love” podcast kicks off on Wednesday, with new episodes every Wednesday. [*Listen to the trailer*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Au Chat Noir, a bar in Paris, is closed. France has reported a staggering number of new infections and put Paris and five other cities on maximum alert.  (PHOTOGRAPH BY Thomas Coex/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 12, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Anne Applebaum; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G6-C5M1-JBG3-61F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 12:17 EST

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 10221 words

**Highlight:** A conversation with the writer and historian Anne Applebaum.

**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Anne Applebaum. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: I’m Ezra Klein. This is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

So much of what we imagine to be new is old. So many of the seemingly novel illnesses that afflict modern society are really just resurgent cancers, diagnosed and described long ago. That’s how Anne Applebaum, the Pulitzer Prize winning historian and journalist at The Atlantic, begins her introduction to a new edition of Hannah Arendt’s 1951 classic, “The Origins of Totalitarianism.” Why do people keep going back to this book? What is it about Arendt that matters, and that keeps mattering decade after decade? I think it’s this. Arendt was the master theorist of liberalism’s most fundamental blind spot, its inability to account for or even understand the appeal of its shadow, of illiberalism. And look around today, it’s still happening — look at Putin, look at Trump, look at Xi. Look at how deeply liberals underestimated all of them, and the appeal they would have and continue having, even when they failed the very movements they promised to help.

This is not a lesson that’s been learned. So Arendt is interested in what makes people and societies vulnerable to this kind of takeover, takeover by totalitarianisms in the moment she’s writing, but I’d also say in our moment to authoritarians, to demagogues, to con artists. And our diagnosis is fundamentally about the weaknesses of liberal societies, the way liberal, political and economic systems can paradoxically open the door to the figures they fear most, to the passions and yearnings they refuse to understand. Reading Arendt today can be a little disorienting, because some of — much of, in fact — what she writes is dated. It reads strangely. And then every so often, you tumble into these paragraphs or pages of this startling insight. It’s like watching a black and white T.V. that every once in a while flashes a hyper vivid picture of your own future across the screen. And so I wanted to have Applebaum on to talk about those moments of technicolor prescience, and what we can still learn from our Arendt today.

As always, my email is [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com) If you have guest suggestions, if you have reading or watching recommendations, if you just have feedback, shoot us an email.

[MUSIC]

Anne Applebaum, welcome to the show.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Thanks for having me.

EZRA KLEIN: So what’s striking to me, reading “Origins of Totalitarianism” and Hannah Arendt today for this conversation, is how focused she is on what makes seemingly liberal societies vulnerable to totalitarian, or now maybe more authoritarian takeover, and how she sees liberalism itself as creating a lot of those vulnerabilities. So what does she see that liberals often miss?

ANNE APPLEBAUM: I agree with you that that’s one of the most interesting things about her. And of course, what’s also interesting is that she was observing liberal societies of the 1940s, which we now are nostalgic about, and we imagined to be so much more solid and deep and rich than our own. She talks about loneliness in a way that’s important and unusual. And by loneliness, she means individuals who are cut off from other people. And so whether that’s through the intervention of dictators, whether it’s through — she talks about Stalin actually using the purges, using these periodic assaults on society as a way of creating fear between people and creating distance between people. But there are — of course, there are other sources of this kind of radical loneliness, and loneliness meeting people who are not connected to institutions. They’re not part of groups. They’re not part of churches. They’re not part of civic organizations.

And people who aren’t connected to other people in society, she believes, are much more liable to be persuaded by forms of totalitarian or autocratic propaganda. I think sometimes that her idea of human nature is a little over simple. I think people can do many things at once. They can be susceptible to propaganda in the morning, and they can think about something else in the afternoon, so they’re — sometimes it’s more complicated than that. There’s a quote from her, where she says what prepared men for totalitarian domination in the non totalitarian world is the act of loneliness, once a borderline experience — so once, something that only elderly people experienced — and now, it has become an everyday experience. And here, she’s talking about modernity, the way in which people move around more often than they did, the fact that people work in anonymous factories, and not at home or not in communities.

And of course, all of that is as bad today, if not worse, than it was then. Almost every form of modern technology, almost every economic change and every technological change, often has the impact of separating people even more from one another — even new forms of entertainment, where we watch movies by ourselves on Netflix, rather than in movie theaters. We consume the news not by watching newsreels all together, or by sharing conversation with our neighbors, but by looking at our telephones. The way in which technology and modernity increased separations between people, all of these things are what she sees as a prelude to what she calls totalitarianism, and we call other things.

EZRA KLEIN: So before jumping into this, I agree with you on her view of human nature. And I find this often when I read 20th century thought classics, for lack of a better term. You’ll be reading, and compared to what we impose on academics today, it’s a lot of thoughts, it’s a lot of speculating about how things may or may not be. And sometimes, you’ll read these passages of just startling insight, where you feel they’ve got into something that studies and empirics can’t get you to. And then for much of the rest of it, you’ll be reading along, thinking, well, that might be true. I mean, it’s an interesting argument, but how would one really, really know? And I certainly had that experience reading Arendt for this. But I think, like you do, that her description and discussion of loneliness is really quite important. And so I want to zoom in on that a bit. She says towards the end that what makes a society vulnerable to takeover is loneliness.

And she describes it, to use her definition, as “the experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of man.” And that word, belonging, struck me as really rich. And I’d like to know how you understand it, because you mentioned civic institutions and ties. But it also seems to me she’s speaking in an almost metaphysical way, of belonging to a shared sense of meaning. Belonging to a story, feeling a place for yourself, whether that place is literal as in a church, or just conceptual, as in part of the narrative of your own country and the time in which you live.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Yes, I do think she’s pointing at something quite important, which is that human beings need to be in a narrative, as you said — we would now call it — or part of a community, as others would call it, part of a world where we share values with other people and we feel reinforced by that experience. The thing I think that we’ve learned in the last few years is that that experience and that narrative don’t even have to be real. So I think people are genuinely nostalgic for past institutions, or what they imagine past institutions to have been. So they’re nostalgic for small communities that they think they remember from when they grew up, when life was simpler and everyone believed more or less the same thing. They’re nostalgic for, I think, an experience of religion that doesn’t always exist anymore, you know, where everybody in a single community went to the same church and thus believed the same thing.

They’re nostalgic for those things, even if at the time — if you turned back the clock to the 1950s, which is, of course, as I said, when Arendt was writing, you might have discovered that the church where everyone believed thing ever the same thing was not that far away from a Black church, for example, where the community believed things that were very different, or felt things that were very different. So sometimes it’s imagined. And I think in the modern world, we now see that people are capable of being part of communities that exist only online. It’s a big change, technologically. I mean, maybe it’s not really a change in human nature, because the same thing took different forms earlier on. But I mean, QAnon is an excellent example of a community of belief.

Once you accept the basic premises of QAnon, you know, that there is a conspiracy, that American elites are involved in massive pedophilia scandals and complicated relationships with one another that involve abusing children, when you believe that there is a prophet out there named Q who’s going to tell you what happens in the future, and is going to shape reality for you — once you’re inside that world, you are constantly reinforced. So you join it. When you post things about it inside that community, people write back with enthusiastic acceptance and admiration. You read other people who believe the same kinds of things. You form a group that feels very strongly that all of this is true, and that you have — even more importantly, that you have access to special and secret information that most Americans don’t have. So you’re a community that has special knowledge. You’ve been gifted with this special access to a different reality.

And once you’re inside it, it’s extremely powerful. And it turns out that it’s more powerful than the real reality. And actually, Arendt anticipates this. She writes why propaganda is effective, because many people do not believe in anything visible in the reality of their own experience. They do not trust their eyes and ears, but only their imaginations. So it turns out this is a very old human property. It goes back a long way. Human beings have probably have always been like this. But in the modern world, it’s a feeling that can be evoked not by churches and priests, or by civic institutions and congregations and real life organizations, it can be evoked online. And that means it’s much easier to create these kinds of communities, and to give them that reinforcing power, because when people are surrounded all the time by the same images, the same messages, when they see them on their phones and their laptops and so on, it has the effect of seeming more real than what they can see out the window.

EZRA KLEIN: It’s really interesting the way that the digital world plays into this, because as you’re saying, it can be both a salve for loneliness, a place you can find community when you can’t find it elsewhere. And then, I think, on the other side, it can be a very sharp accelerant of loneliness. And it reminds me of some things that Arendt writes towards the end of the book. She writes that “loneliness is not solitude. Solitude requires being alone, whereas loneliness shows itself most sharply in company with others.” And she goes on to give this definition from Epictetus, the philosopher, who says that “the lonely man finds himself surrounded by others with whom he cannot establish contact, or to whose hostility he is exposed.”

And a description of loneliness as being surrounded by others with whom you cannot establish contact, or whose hostility you are exposed, actually strikes me as a very good description of what being online and being in social media often feels like for people. To the extent you establish contact, it’s not the kind of generative, nourishing contact you really want. And you’re constantly either exposed to hostility or on the knife’s edge of being exposed to it. And so what superficially looks like a way of coming out of loneliness, at least you’re there on Twitter with everybody, in fact is a more intense experience of it.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: I think that’s right. The experience of watching things online or communicating online with people who then don’t exist when you put your phone down, or shut your laptop, can be profoundly alienating. You’re deeply absorbed in something that — you immediately have a contrast with the real. So there is this kind of double edged aspect of online life, that on the one hand, the more you’re absorbed in it, the more you’re cut off from real people and real experiences. On the other hand, the more you’re cut off from real people and real experiences, the more attractive a QAnon like community would be, because it seems to offer a substitute for those things that you’re missing. So I think that the experience of being online — it’s not just social media, it’s also other forms of communicating, and being, and watching, and being entertained online — I think the more you’re absorbed in it, the more cut off are, and the more liable you are to find attractive something very different.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to bridge to then how this kind of loneliness becomes a vulnerability for societies in the face of authoritarian or totalitarian challenge. I think we’ve all observed that there’s something here that is connected. I was thinking while I read all this that some of the older people in my life who have drifted right, or when I go and report with right wing thinkers who have become much more radicalized in recent years — something I hear again and again is that sense of non belonging, this feeling the world has changed too much for them to find a place in it, or that its mores have changed in a way where they feel like people are hostile to them and what they think. So there’s some connection there. But how do you understand the actual vulnerability? Why does loneliness like that create fertile ground for much more dangerous political movements to take hold? Draw the final mile of this for me.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: So first of all, the phenomenon that I just described, which is the phenomenon of people being easily attracted to conspiratorial or radical movements that have a coherent ideology, and that are accessible online, and that seem to solve the problem of loneliness — because if you’re part of one of those movements or groups, then you feel connected to people in a way that you normally don’t. The movements offer that kind of belonging. And I think, also, the real life version of them offers that. Just to take an example, I mean, if you are in a white supremacist movement, you have actual meetings. You do military training together. You have projects that you do on the weekends. You plan things together. You map out a future. You know, you’re part of a group that has a project, and you’re hooked into that project in a way that you might not have found in other forms of your community.

A few years back, I wrote about a political party called Jobbik in Hungary, which was actually, before Fidesz, before the sort of main center right party in Hungary became more autocratic, which it is now, Jobbik kind of led the way. And what Jobbik started out with — what it started as, rather — was as a paramilitary organization. It literally just organized marching events for men on the weekends. And it was very, very successful in rural parts of Hungary where there wasn’t anything else to do. Jobbik created this sense of belonging. There was a group activity people could do together, and that offered entertainment and connection and bonding in a way that ordinary movements didn’t. I mean, there’s another aspect to this, which is a little bit separate, which is another thing that these movements often do successfully, is they attack and undermine existing morality. So they mock and make fun of not just the current political setup, but you know, the morals of normal people. They set themselves up as something outside of normal morality.

And that means they admire different things. So they admire violence, or they admire power in an old fashioned form, or they admire old fashioned kinds of hierarchies, male-female hierarchies or racial hierarchies that are now taboo. And they offer people the chance to break taboos, and once again, be in some kind of special and enlightened community. And as Arendt tells us, that’s really nothing new. The phenomenon of wanting to break with the bounds that normally hold us, the bourgeois rules of behavior and values, and wanting to be outside of those things, this is something that those kinds of movements can also offer people. So it’s a community outside of normal communities. It’s not just an ordinary church group or an ordinary — I don’t know, some kind of charitable organization. This is a community that breaks the rules, exists outside of institutions, and offers you a full experience of entertainment, connection, comradeship, that almost nothing else can.

EZRA KLEIN: I think her description of what that kind of rule breaking, that gleeful defiance of normal ideas of morality and virtue offer people in these movements was absolutely my favorite part of the book. And I want to read a quote from her on this. She writes, “Since the bourgeoisie claimed to be the guardian of Western traditions and confounded all moral issues by parading publicly virtues which it not only did not possess in private and business life, but actually held in contempt, it seemed revolutionary to admit cruelty, disregard of human values, and general amorality, because this at least destroyed the duplicity upon which the existing society seemed to rest.”

And I read that, and I thought it was the single best description of how a lot of people I know on the right, who believed totally different things about how you should comport yourself in public a couple of years before, ended up responding to Trump — that yes, he is cruel and bullying and vulgar and unkind. But you know what? It just shows. It just goes to show how sick our society has become that we needed someone like that. And they began to take an almost delight in it. He’s our fighter. Arendt’s sense of this seems to me to be very, very perceptive.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: There are a couple of things I liked about that also. One was that she quotes that in the context of also explaining why so many elites have gone along with these new ideas and movements in that time. And she talks about this alliance between the elite and the mob, which is an unfortunate word, but she has a specific meaning for it — but elite and the mob rested largely on the genuine delight with which the former watched the latter destroy respectability. So people who are in the elite but suspect the elite of being duplicitous or being hypocritical, or of not living up to its own morality, or being corrupt, then see anybody who breaks up those things as somebody who has to be applauded. And I think the more corrupt the society, or the more people sense it to be corrupt, the more you get this phenomenon.

I mean, modern Washington, with its lobbyists, with its really ridiculous rules about money — I have European friends who come to America. And when they learn how the American political system works, and how important money is for congressional campaigns or senatorial campaigns, they’re often really shocked by it. And once people understand how corrupt, how dark money works, how lobbyists work, once they understand that, they can often feel so much disgust for the system that they think, well, you know, anybody who wants to smash that is right. And that was why Trump’s language about destroying the swamp was so successful, because people intuitively believed it was a swamp. They saw that there were things wrong with it. But rather than trying to reform those things, which sometimes can seem unreformable, they came to the conclusion that they should be broken altogether. And never mind that Trump was the swampiest creature in America. I mean, he ran the White House as if it were an adjunct to his private business, which is something that has never been done before in American history, at least not at that scale. But that didn’t bother his followers, because they thought, well, he’s simply doing in public and openly things that were done privately in the past.

I remember having a conversation — must have been about 2017 or 2018. I was in Texas, and I sat next to some people at a dinner. And they were pro-Trump, and we started talking about that. And I asked them, you know, aren’t they bothered by Trump’s corruption? They said exactly that. No, he’s just doing in public what everybody did in private. And although, of course, that’s not true — Obama was not running a business out of the White House, and George W. Bush was not running a business out of the White House — the impression that Washington is somehow corrupt was so deep and so broad that Trump was seen as just a smarter guy who was doing it openly. So I think the impression that the system needs to be smashed, that the hypocrisy needs to be exposed and that anybody who does that is good, even if they’re offering a completely different set of values, is clearly something, again, that’s very powerful, a powerful human phenomenon that we have now, and we also had in the 1930s.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: So there’s corruption, which we’ve been talking about — dark money and running businesses, and enriching yourself — but there’s also something else in that Arendt quote about virtue. To use it again, she says, “The bourgeoisie claimed to be the guardian of Western traditions, and confounded all moral issues by parading publicly virtues, which it not only did not possess in private and business life, but actually held in contempt.”

I’ve been doing this series for the show on the populist right, and so I’ve been spending a lot of time in what people on the populist right have been writing. And I’m really struck by the potency of this exact thing, this feeling that society’s current elites — like, what they like to call often, like, the managerial class, or liberals, or whoever it might be — that they’re out there telling you, you’re racist, you’re sexist, you’re bigoted, you’re backwards, you’re deplorable.

And there they are, taking millions of dollars from Goldman Sachs and jet setting all around the world, and telling you how bad climate change is while they fly in their private jets and have their big mansions. And you know, you can poke holes in this, but there is something, I think, to the power at least of this feeling, the power of what it feels like to believe that you’re being judged morally suspect by people who are themselves morally suspect, but simply control the mechanisms by which virtue is assigned.

And that — out of that comes a real desire for somebody who says, screw those mechanisms, screw who decides whether or not you’re virtuous, or kind, or good. I’m going to break this whole thing wide open.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: One of the things I dislike deeply about the populist right in America and elsewhere is that it conflates a lot of things. I mean, it’s not necessarily the same people who are accusing people of being racist and sexist — that’s not necessarily the same people who are advocating for climate change policy, and it’s not necessarily the same people who are doing other things that. They tend to talk about an amorphous class, or an elite, which in fact they’re often part of.

The loudest populists in America at the moment are all graduates of Ivy League schools, or most of them are. So they try to create the image of an amorphous elite that has all these properties and qualities, and is hypocritical and does all these bad things —

EZRA KLEIN: You don’t find Peter Thiel to be an authentic tribune of the ***working class***?

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Peter Thiel, Laura Ingraham, graduate of Dartmouth, JD Vance, graduate of Yale Law School. They’re all from the same elite, but they’re one part of the elite turning against another part of the elite. But some of that is it’s a fake elite. I mean, it’s not consistent. I mean, the thing they’re pointing to doesn’t have any consistency. It’s not one group of people. You find this when people talk about, oh, the mainstream media said x or y.

I mean, what’s the mainstream media? Something might have been in The New York Times, but it might have been denied by The Washington Post, or it might have been in Politico, but not on NBC News. And to say the mainstream media thinks or does x or y is almost always wrong. And so it’s a way of robbing the story of nuance. And whenever you rob it of nuance, you make it much easier to attack. And it’s a little bit like that with attacking the elites.

EZRA KLEIN: This gets to something that is also big in Arendt’s thought, which is this interesting intersection of cynicism and gullibility, which I think are two conditions people often think of in tension with each other, right? If you’re cynical, you can’t be gullible. If you’re gullible, you’re definitely not cynical. But her argument is that they play off of each other. They coexist in a way that’s really important to these movements. Can you talk a bit about that?

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Well, cynicism, which is very close to nihilism and very close to apathy, are emotions that are often deliberately created by autocrats. For example, it is the policy of Putin’s Kremlin, of his propaganda, to make Russians apathetic. And how is that done? That’s done by offering them contradictory and sometimes ridiculous pieces of information that don’t make sense.

The best example, famous example of this, was after the crash of MH17, the Malaysian plane that crashed in Ukraine in 2014 that was shot down accidentally by Russian soldiers, the state came out with completely different explanations. And sometimes, even the same television presenter would give one explanation and then a different explanation an hour later. And this kind of multiplication of explanations meant that people were totally disoriented. They said, we have no idea what happened, and we can never know.

I actually saw a kind of man on the street interviews that were done in Moscow a few days later. And people’s attitude was, we have no idea. Well, it’s impossible to find out, and so — and I think that was an attempt to create cynicism and create nihilism, and also to work on people’s gullibility. So the idea is that people who feel less oriented, or they feel unable to be certain, you know, what the truth is, you offer them many different explanations, and they then become cynical.

So both of them come from the same thing, which is the fear that they can’t know something, or the impression that it’s impossible to know something. And as I said, they’re useful to autocratic regimes or to authoritarian movements because they lead people to feel that they’re powerless. If you don’t know what happened and you feel that you can never know what happened, then how can you do anything about it? And so I think these are sort of parallel and related feelings.

You know, I’ll accept anything, but I’m at the same time skeptical of everything. Alongside loneliness, this is a kind of precondition for autocracy.

EZRA KLEIN: And this gets to the famous Arendt quote, that this mindset is everything was possible and nothing was true, which now is applied very often to Vladimir Putin’s Russia. There’s a great book by Peter Pomerantsev that takes its title from that quote. But I think there’s something here too about liberalism, and the way it is offended or disbelieving of this mindset, that it thinks people would be themselves repelled by this way of looking at the world.

I think of this a little bit as the fact checker’s fallacy, that if you can prove, or think you can prove, that somebody who claims to tell the truth is lying, that you will deeply damage their relationship with those who trust them.

And we’ve seen over and over again that’s not really true, but I think it gets to something in Arendt’s thought that once people hit a certain level of cynicism, not only do they not care if their leaders are lying, they think lying is how the game is done.

And so to lie well, and to lie effectively, is actually part of proving that you can be the leader of this movement, that you can survive in this dog-eat-dog world, you know, where the institutions are all controlled by a cabal of your enemies. But it really reverses, I think, a lot of the rules under which more traditional liberal politicians like to think politics, but also voters, operate.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: It’s funny. Those rules are modern rules. our assumption that people are reasonable, and that you can win any argument through rational argument — Tony Blair used to say have this thing, if I could just get two people in the room at the same time and get them talking to one another, they would agree. I could come up with a compromise. Bill Clinton had that as well, this belief that you could solve problems through rational conversation and discussion.

Actually, the founders of the United States of America, the people who wrote the Constitution, didn’t believe that. They were much more skeptical about human nature. While they were writing the Constitution, many of them were talking about and reading histories of ancient Rome and especially the Roman Republic. And they were actively worried about a Caesar coming to power. And there’s the famous Alexander Hamilton quote about, you know, someday a demagogue will come to power and people will fall in behind him. And they’ll gullibly believe whatever it is that he says.

And some of the even more irrational elements of the American Constitution, the ones that don’t work so well now, like the Electoral College, some of them come from the Founding Fathers’ attempt to head off that problem. And that was — well, that was what the original idea was, even if it doesn’t work that way anymore. So really, what we’re talking about is a modern form of liberalism, which became idealized.

I reckon that this is due to the success of the United States since the Second World War. So we became a society that was the richest, the most prosperous, the most powerful, the most culturally attractive society in the world. And we simply were that way for many decades. And that gave us the assumption that we’ve found the solution, we found the best of all possible worlds. Within this system, everything can be resolved reasonably, and there aren’t any challenges to it that are serious.

And we forgot that there is another side of human nature, described — that the Founding Fathers knew perfectly well, and that other liberal societies in the past were very wary of, and that Hannah Arendt described so beautifully in this book, as did others, which is that there are other impulses in human natures. There’s an attraction to the irrational. There is a desire to smash whatever the existing system is, that we’ve just talked about.

All of those things, I think, were forgotten by 20th and 21st century liberals. And it’s worth now remembering them.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that point, that a lot of the premises by which politics is understood or looked at today, are relatively modern. And another one Arendt takes aim at, that I want to get to before trying to wrap this into one theory, is the idea that politics is about self-interest. At one point, she calls it supposedly the most powerful force in politics. And that dominates a lot of normal political thinking, certainly in the United States.

It’s certainly somewhat behind the idea of imposing these sanctions on Russia, that if you can just make people feel their leaders are not doing the work of making their material position better, they will abandon those leaders. And I think Arendt’s view is that self-interest is much weaker than people think, and people are willing to sacrifice quite a lot of material gain to be part of these larger movements. How do you understand that tension?

ANNE APPLEBAUM: So I think this is a really profound insight. And it’s not really an insight about liberalism, per se. It’s an insight into something else, which is economism, which is a word that’s used to talk about one of the directions that liberalism went in the 20th century, but especially after the Second World War, in which — the idea was that all of politics is really about prosperity and wealth. So it’s not quite self interest, it’s about making people wealthier.

And actually, our politics in the last several decades, up until a few years ago, were divided that way. We were divided into a party that wanted a smaller state and a party that wanted a bigger state, one party that wanted more welfare spending, one wanted less. But these were all arguments about economic well-being, one way or the other. And one of the insights, not just of populists — but one of the insights, for example, of George Orwell, was that often those arguments can become trivial to people, or unimportant.

Orwell wrote a famous essay in — I think it was published in 1941. It was at the time that “Mein Kampf,” Hitler’s book, was published in Great Britain. And he did a very short review, which is worth reading, in which he describes the book and so on. And then he says at the end, the thing about this horrible book is that I also see its appeal. So here we are in Great Britain — and he was a socialist, of course, and we’re all worried about things like hygiene and water quality, and access to birth control, which was an issue at that time.

And he’s offering people something completely different. And the expression he uses is guns, flags and loyalty parades. So he’s offering people a way of being part of a spectacle. And the rest of us are over here arguing about things that can often seem trivial. And it is, of course, not necessary for liberalism to be about for futile things, or for those to be the main political arguments. But in recent years, they often have been.

I mean, in a way, the height of this was really the era of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton. They were both excellent leaders. They were both excellent speakers. And they were both policy wonks who absolutely believed that if they could just get people in the same room and have them talk to one another, they would soon see the light, and rational conversation would solve all problems, and what people really wanted was better policies to deliver better things.

And that worked for a while, until it didn’t. And the insight of Orwell, and the insight of a number of autocrats, and the insight of some — in other parts of the political spectrum, too, actually, I might even include Bernie Sanders in this — is that people also sometimes want something more. They want to be part of a movement. They want to be part of a big change. They want to be on the cutting edge. They want to be marching in the parade. And when liberalism shrinks to being only about economics, that’s what can happen.

EZRA KLEIN: You know what this reminds me of, is Donald Trump’s contempt, very, very often stated, for the other politicians, whose rallies are not very well attended, or who don’t do that many rallies. He had this towards Hillary Clinton. He very much had it towards Joe Biden. And it’s something that I think a lot of his political opponents laughed at a bit, his tendency to overstate the importance of his rallies, his preference to thinking about them rather than, say, polling, where he maybe was behind.

But I think from this perspective, this might reflect Trump understanding something that still is important in politics, which is that to really have a kind of vibrancy, a movement requires that feeding of the communal soul or mass. And that when he understood that he had it and his opponents didn’t, that maybe doesn’t mean he’ll win, or he’s got everything, or he’s widely popular, but he’s right that he has something important that they don’t.

When he understood there to be an enthusiasm gap, that he was seeing something there that was too often derided by those who didn’t want to see the importance that might have carried.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: It’s not just enthusiasm. It’s the sense of being part of some sweeping change. I mean, I actually think this was something that Barack Obama had.

EZRA KLEIN: Absolutely.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Particularly during his first campaign, the sense that there was a movement sweeping the country, and that it was hope and change, and that it was going to make things different, I think people wanted to be part of that, even people who didn’t agree with everything that he said or thought. The Republican Party understood that, which is why they became so dedicated to stopping him in any way they could, using whatever tactics were possible, because they saw exactly how powerful that kind of feeling is and can be.

I don’t think all politicians have to be that. And also, there are other moments in history you can see where people get sick of that. I mean, there’s a way in which sometimes people, after the experience of a very charismatic president or a very charismatic leader in powerful a long time, they just want someone who can pick up the pieces and make the trains run on time and pay people’s salaries. So it’s not something that people universally want, and they don’t always want it.

But they do sometimes want it. And they especially want it in periods when politics has become very technocratic, and very boring, and very focused on policy. And then, people begin to feel the need for something bigger.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, I think it’s correct to understand this as an ache and a desire more than an always winning strategy in politics. And that’s always something that Obama worried about. I mean, they — he became very concerned this would become a liability for them. But I do think it’s something that Arendt gets at in an interesting way. And I want to generalize it to something she’s saying here, and this goes to this point about self-interest in politics, which is that people communicate on many levels aside from the literal.

That’s true for what they’re saying, and its truth value. It’s true for what politics is supposed to be about, right, not just self-interest, but a story. Something that I really read in her, and that I’ve seen in a lot of studies of anti liberal thinkers, is this sense that people need myths and spirit and stories and communion and narrative to thrive, not just for politics to work, but for them to thrive. And that — I see Arendt as identifying this as something that liberalism, when it is in its governing mode, begins to lose.

That, as you say, it becomes about technocratic governance. And if at one point it had these big stories, and I think you’re right to note, say, a Barack Obama as somebody who told these stories, but also liberalism in its post-war period as an answer to two devastating wars has thrilling dimensions to it. But when it moves into the governance mode, it not only doesn’t really communicate on these levels, but begins to be condescending to the idea that one would communicate on these levels.

And people who prefer a religious way of understanding the world often feel this, but I also just think in general, there’s a tendency to miss the importance of myth in politics.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: I mean, I absolutely agree with you. The importance of myth, the importance of feeling of unity, the importance of history and giving people a version of history that is reinforcing as well as just merely educating, all those things are really important. A really interesting example of this is with us right now. And we see it in the popularity, the incredible popularity, actually, of the Ukrainian president in the rest of the world, and especially in the democratic world.

Why is Zelensky so popular — because he’s seen as somebody who is speaking for and defending a liberal society, one which is profoundly tolerant, in which people can speak more than one language, and they can have different religions, and they believe in freedom and the rule of law. And yet, he’s doing it with a military campaign, and in this vigorous and extremely brave way.

The sight of that is what’s inspiring these mass marches around the world, and the fact that everybody wants Ukrainian flags hanging from their flag poles, or stuck onto their Twitter accounts. It’s the appeal of that liberalism, but liberalism with this kind of muscular bravado attached to it that people miss and that they admire in Ukraine right now.

EZRA KLEIN: But also liberalism under threat, or liberalism attached to a mission — I think Zelensky, for the remarkable nature of his leadership in this period, is a really interesting example of this, because I’ve been trying to go back and read political analysis and reporting in Ukraine the last couple of years. And it’s so striking coming from where I’m coming from, which is this moment, to read Zelenskyy framed as a compromiser, as kind of uninspiring, as somebody who people feel is going to be too diplomatic or too submissive to Russia.

There are all these pieces just of a kind of exhaustion, a frustration that, you know, the revolutions have amounted to only this. And then Russia actually invades, and Zelensky becomes this world historic figure. But the fact that these two periods could exist in one man, I think, speaks to something that’s really profound here, which is that — and one reason that totalitarians so often, and authoritarians so often actually do launch wars, which is that it is hard to sustain the inspiration that comes from life or death stakes without life or death stakes.

And so either they are imposed upon you, or sometimes they are chosen — this is a big point in Arendt’s work, that totalitarians often create the world they tell people is inevitable. But that there’s something about the difficulty of sustaining this in times of normalcy that leads people to crave abnormalcy. To use the famous Chris Hedges book title, war is a force that gives us meaning.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: I think, unfortunately, that’s absolutely true, and that’s also something very fundamental about human nature. Arendt writes at one point about the totalitarian — I think she’s talking specifically about the Nazis, actually — she talks about them in the 1930s, artificially creating civil war conditions. In other words, they sought to increase the feeling of violence so that people would feel more safe inside their movement than outside it, but also to create exactly what you said, which is this life or death stakes.

There was a moment when the Trump administration sought to do that too, I think, when they sent DHS police, or whatever they were — they were sort of armed men from different parts of the Border Guards and the Coast Guard, and so on, when they sent them to Portland, Oregon to fight with protesters. It was a classic piece of the authoritarian playbook, because it created scenes of violence in which the state was pushing back against what was shown as crazy radicals to Trump supporters.

And it was exactly an attempt to create that sense of threat. You know, we are threatened by these protests, and we are pushing back with power and strength. So unfortunately, that is something that has a deep appeal to people, the sense that we are fighting something that threatens our very security and our safety, and we need to band together to do that. And that’s something that simply motivates people more than anything else.

EZRA KLEIN: And to use a more modern example, too, I mean, this has very much been Vladimir Putin’s rhetoric on Ukraine all along.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Absolutely. I mean, this is one of the reasons for his war in Ukraine. He needs to create the sense that an outsider is threatening Russia in order to justify his rule, so he’s somebody who is profoundly corrupt, and is known to be corrupt, and who runs a very unfair and unequal society, and one that has actually been getting poorer in recent years, which he also knows.

And so what has he sought to do? He sought to create an enemy, and the enemy is a combination of Europe, which is degenerate and threatening our values, and America, which is violent and is prepared to attack us. And then Ukraine, which is a kind of proxy for both of those things — you know, Ukraine, he describes Ukraine as a fake state, and we need to attack this state, because Ukraine is the symbol of this degeneracy and this violence that are coming from outside.

And absolutely, he’s created this war as a part of his attempt to stay in power, and as a way of crushing what remains of the pro-democracy movement, and essentially, anti-Putin movement inside his country. He’s trying to create a rally around the flag sentiment and a feeling of unity in the face of this war. Another question is, can it work? I mean, it looked initially like it might work, but I wonder whether as the costs grow higher, and as he starts losing, whether it will succeed. But that’s another issue.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, I do think a relevant one — not necessarily to predict the course of the war, but there’s been a line of commentary and analysis, which is argued something like, Vladimir Putin, geostrategically, was afraid of NATO, had always said it would be a real problem if Ukraine joined NATO, and launched this war, on some level, on those grounds. And look what he got. He strengthened NATO, he brought Europe closer together. He has expanded the number of countries who want to, and might join NATO.

So it has all backfired on him.

But I do think another way of looking at it, from this more Arendtian perspective, is that Putin needs, wants, the foil of NATO. And actually, making NATO into more of an anti-Russian force, in some ways, backs up his narratives — actually making the West more directly contributing, or even driving the decline in Russian living standards, the impoverishment of Russia. Actually, making the West more anti-Russian fits his narrative.

And so on the one hand, if you take him geostrategically, this is all a profound failure. If you take him narratively, in some ways, it’s not. He has created something much closer to the world he has told Russians they are living in, and the world he has told them he is the only answer to.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Yes, I mean, I always thought that his creation of NATO as a big enemy was always fake. I mean, he knew it was fake. The Kremlin knew it was fake. NATO has not been capable of attacking Russia in many years. Until 2014, there weren’t even any American or Western — other Western European troops in the Eastern native states, so yes, it was always fake in that sense. It was always designed for internal consumption.

Unfortunately, some Westerners rather gullibly believed it — while we’re on the subject of gullibility. But yeah, no, I take your point, that reinforcing NATO, and even provoking NATO to be involved, might help him rhetorically. I do wonder whether Russians are — have been prepared for the sacrifice this time, and not just the economic sacrifice, but the sacrifice of young men, mostly, that this is going to entail. I mean, there’s an oddity in Russia, which is that it’s very strange, really, that Putin has not told the Russians yet that they’re at war.

He’s still describing this as a special military operation. He’s still not explaining to people what’s happening. He’s barely acknowledging that there have been any losses. And that leads me to believe that there’s still some ambivalence. I mean, I think they believed the war would be over very fast, so they didn’t expect this circumstance. So I’m not sure that saying this is exactly what he wanted is exactly correct.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that gets to, in some ways, the liberal counterargument to a lot of this, which is that eventually stories run out and reality takes hold, that you can tell people an alternative story for some time, and they’ll believe it for some time, but the more that they actually have to live under it, which is different than when you’re simply an opposition movement or a conspiracy theory — the more they actually have to live under the consequences of your story, the more something else actually takes hold.

And over time, the consequences for their lives become if not dominant, at least relevant.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Yeah, so I mean, reality can undermine and change that kind of narrative. I mean, that’s actually — that is how the Soviet Union fell. The Soviet Union had this very consistent and actually inspiring narrative, one that was much more inspiring than what Putin offers people, about international brotherhood and peace, and so on. And of course, it was hypocritical. And of course, it wasn’t true. And for a lot of people who lived inside that system, it still had a deep appeal.

The problem with it was is that it also had an economic narrative that said, and we are getting richer and richer, and the West is getting poorer and poorer, and we are getting closer and closer to communist utopia every day. And people could — all people had to do is walk outside and look around themselves, and walk into an empty shop. And they understood that it wasn’t true.

And so communism essentially fell because the narrative no longer worked.

And it didn’t work for ordinary people, and it didn’t work for the elites. Nobody wanted to defend it anymore. And so when the Berlin Wall fell, the Soviet Union could have invaded and protected East Berlin. And they talked about doing that, but nobody had the conviction anymore that would work, or that it was a good idea. I mean, it’s as if the idea failed, and from the failure of the idea, all these other consequences followed.

So yes, it’s profoundly true that reality can contradict a propaganda narrative, although the Soviet Union was around for a long time. It can take a long time for that to happen.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: The good news, in a way, is that Arendt was wrong in her time. So she envisions that the post-war world is going to be even darker. But instead, we get European integration. We get the rise of social democracies. Liberalism does triumph over communism. So to be more optimistic here towards the end, what did Arendt miss? What did her analysis of the strength of totalitarian movements and the weakness of liberal democracies get wrong?

ANNE APPLEBAUM: It’s funny. When I reread Arendt, I wrote an introduction to the recent edition of Arendt, as you know. And when I reread it, while working on that introduction, that was my first reaction — was this is so pessimistic, and it’s so dark. And she foresaw so many awful things happening that didn’t happen. And why not? And my guess is that she underestimated the creativity of Western societies, of Western democracies, and American democracy.

She and a lot of other similar intellectuals had a lot of disdain, for example, for Hollywood, and for American entertainment and American popular culture. And they miss some of the good aspects of it, you know, the power of it, the storytelling ability, the strength that — she missed the way in which democratic societies would be so much more innovative economically, but also kind of sociologically, that problems would be solved in ways that they couldn’t be solved in autocracies.

And the way in which Western economies and societies simply became so much more sophisticated than totalitarian dictatorships, and they became able to solve problems that the dictatorships themselves barely could even know existed — all of that, I think, she just underestimated. Coming from 1930s Germany, she saw America in a much darker way than I think she should have done.

EZRA KLEIN: And in that same preface, though, you write something that is a little bit more pessimistic, which is that the origins of totalitarianism forces us to ask not only why Arendt was too pessimistic in 1950, but also whether some of her pessimism might be more warranted now. So why do you think it might be more warranted now, that the world we’re in might be better described by her than the world she was in?

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Partly because we’ve lost some of that ability to innovate. I don’t mean in terms of technology, I mean in terms of politics and bureaucracy and political change. We see it seems so hard to fix anything now, in a way that it wouldn’t have seemed so hard in the 1940s. I also do believe that social media, as we discussed at the beginning of this conversation, has created new divisions between people that are much harder to surmount.

And the mere fact that people don’t disagree anymore just about their opinions, but they disagree about what happened yesterday. And we can’t agree on our problem. And if we can’t define the problem, then we can’t solve it. I mean, this is the problem that the Soviet Union had. I mean, there was so much lying and so much dishonesty that they couldn’t analyze what was wrong with their society. And I worry that we can’t analyze what’s wrong with ours for different reasons, because we live in a different echo chambers, and they don’t intersect.

So I worry a lot about something that Jonathan Rauch has described as the sort of breakdown of what he calls the constitution of knowledge, the way in which we are able to know things, and then by knowing them, advance our knowledge. I worry that she intuited some of that in the ’40s, and then it was fixed in postwar America in ways she didn’t anticipate. And I worry that some of those systems, whether it’s universities or the news media, or other ways of knowing things — whether those things aren’t breaking down now.

EZRA KLEIN: I almost think of that as a quite optimistic way of thinking about the problem in liberalism, which is — to sum up our conversation here, one way of looking at it is that these external challenging movements are able to tell these world historic, almost mythic stories. And because they’re not bound in any way by truth, because they’re not bound by what they can deliver, they can say almost anything, and that liberalism somehow needs to come up with a counter story.

But you’re actually suggesting, I think, something different and more plausible, which is that liberalism and liberal democracies and governments need to do what they actually do well, which is govern — that while it is true that self-interest, even broadly described, is not all of what politics is about, and certainly not material self-interest, it still does matter. And being able to deliver on that, and being able to govern effectively, is one of the better ways you might have of keeping some of these contrary movements at bay.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Historically, it’s one of the answers that people have given. A few months ago, I spent some time looking at how civil wars are resolved, and civil conflict. And I got very wrapped up in Northern Ireland for a variety of reasons. You know, it wasn’t a full war. It was just a civil dispute. And how did communities eventually reconcile themselves to living next door to one another, who had incompatible views of the state, they lived in — some believed it should be Ireland, some believed it should be Britain.

And that was not a resolvable conflict. I mean, or not easily resolvable. And one of the answers was these various community projects were created, and so people could argue about where the community center was going to be located, and what it would do, or where the bridge would be built, and which neighborhoods would be affected by the new road works. And people could disagree about those things, but at least they wouldn’t kill each other about them, because there were arguments that people can have that are not existential.

So a lot of effort was made in Northern Ireland — and this is also something that was tried in other post-civil war, post-conflict zones, where they try to get people to talk about practical solutions that don’t have existential answers. You don’t have to kill your opponent to solve them. I thought for a long time that was one of the answers in the United States, although, I heard a — I had a very depressing conversation a few days ago with somebody who works in the Biden White House, who was talking about the new infrastructure bill.

And he said, you know, everybody criticizes us for not talking enough about it. These are concrete, practical solutions to things that people say they care about, like the bridge falling down, or the road having potholes. And we are going around the country, and we’re making announcements about investments, and nobody appears to be interested.

I worry that Americans, especially in the area of national politics, are so caught up in the culture wars, and in these — as I said, these existential arguments — that it’s very hard even to get people interested in the business of governing, or the business of building.

And that’s a very dangerous moment. It’s certainly — as I say, it’s a traditional argument. It’s what many people have argued for years would be a way to solve these kinds of conflicts. But can that still work in a time when people aren’t even focused on the outer world? They’re just focused on online, or theoretical conflicts between narratives.

EZRA KLEIN: I do think there are a couple of interesting questions there. One is, in a nationalized media world, you just get a lot less attention to what’s fundamentally a local or regional story about an investment in the highways, or train lines, or something. But on the other hand, I wonder if that was ever such a big point of public attention, but what was maybe different was things got built. I am, compared to some other people on this, I’m skeptical that you get credit for infrastructure you’re building.

I think you might get credit for infrastructure you’ve built, and that’s particularly new things. So I know a lot of the infrastructure bill, in part because it is hard to deliver on new infrastructure because of how much difficulty we have in this country building things quickly, on budget and on time, went into repair. But I think you don’t get probably that much credit for repair. And on the other hand, things that should have been signature projects, say, California High-Speed Rail, don’t really happen, or they’re very, very hard to make happen, because of all the difficulties, we have building.

So I think there’s a bit of a tension between the trying to use modest infrastructure projects as an answer to the fact that the federal government is having a lot of trouble doing very big things, and at the same time wanting credit for the federal government actually doing things, which comes when people see big, headline things happening, I think, not so much when their roads get a little bit better, and the bridge is reinforced in a way they don’t understand.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Maybe. I mean, that would be one explanation. It’s more satisfying explanation than it’s because people are caught up in online conflicts that they care more about. I mean, it’s certainly true in the U.S. that local and even state level politics are often better than national politics for exactly this reason, because local politics is often about concrete and particular things, and not about, as I said, existential conflicts that have no solution.

That might deteriorate as national level arguments penetrate lower. But generally speaking, politics are better when they’re about things that people can see and touch, rather than celebrities arguing on television.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that’s a good place to come to a close. So always, our final question, what are three books you’d recommend to the audience?

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Number one is a book that just won the Pulitzer Prize. It’s called “Cuba: An American History,” by Ada Ferrer. And what I really liked about it was that it’s not a right wing or left wing story of Cuba, it’s about Cuba, and its intimate and very complicated relationship with the United States. And it’s full of things you haven’t thought about it. Cuba was a slave state past the time when America was, and so it became a place that was where former secessionist Jefferson Davis went on holiday.

It played all kinds of roles in American history, and vice versa, and it’s very worth reading.

I would also recommend a novel called “The Lincoln Highway” by Amor Towles, which is a really amazing piece of Americana. It’s a story that doesn’t bear — I can’t sum it up for you, but it gives you many different perspectives on America of the 1950s, from very many different kinds of people. And it’s told in a way that’s un-putdownable — slow start, but then un-putdownable.

And then I would say the third thing I recommend is Hannah Arendt’s “Origins of Totalitarianism,” if you haven’t read it. It’s a very long book. You don’t have to read all of it, but the sections in the second part that focus on mass movements and propaganda and dictatorship, you’ll find them revelatory, because they sound so much like things that are happening today, as we’ve just discussed.

EZRA KLEIN: Anne Applebaum, thank you very much.

ANNE APPLEBAUM: Thank you.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Annie Galvin, Jeff Geld and Roge Karma. Fact checking by Michelle Harris, Rollin Hu, Mary Marge Locker and Kate Sinclair. Original music by Isaac Jones, mixing by Jeff Geld. Audience strategy by Shannon Busta. Our executive producer is Irene Noguchi. Special thanks to Kristin Lin and Kristina Samulewski.

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[***In Europe, Millions of Jobless Fall Through Cracks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60KN-K791-JBG3-60CK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Liz Alderman

**Body**

Government efforts to subsidize wages and prevent layoffs have kept many in jobs, but they aren't sheltering an army of precarious workers.

PARIS -- Thierry Hombert stepped onto the balcony of his sparsely furnished apartment and took one last long look around. When the coronavirus hit France, the short-term catering gigs on which he lived for a decade disappeared, and he was now selling his home to make ends meet.

While millions of employees across Europe have been cast lifelines by government furlough programs meant to limit mass unemployment, Mr. Hombert and legions of other workers on precarious irregular contracts were excluded from that support.

''It's people like us who are falling through the cracks -- and we are many,'' said Mr. Hombert, 50, who worried about finding himself out on the street. ''We're the ones being left behind.''

The furlough programs, widely credited with sparing over 60 million people from layoffs in Europe, have a major drawback: They don't shelter millions of workers who aren't on company payrolls, including the newly self-employed, freelancers and people on the kind of short-term contracts that employers have used en masse since the 2010 financial crisis to reduce labor costs.

These people generally have reduced access to unemployment benefits, which are far less generous than the furlough programs.

Around 15 million people in the European Union were unemployed in June, a rise of 700,000 since April, according to Eurostat, Europe's statistics agency. Heavily seeding those ranks are people who had been on work contracts. They account for around four out of 10 workers in the industries hardest hit by Covid-19, including tourism, catering, restaurants and services where there is direct contact with other people, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

These workers face bleak prospects for new employment in Europe's deep recession, and have fewer social protections than furloughed employees, including scant access to sick leave, exposing many to steep income losses and the threat of further precariousness.

Mr. Hombert is among those who have taken a heavy hit. For 10 years, he forged a career in the catering industry by working on a relentless cycle of daily and hourly contracts.

On a typical day, he woke at 5 a.m. to work a business breakfast at one end of Paris, then headed to another part of town to service a glittering political or social dinner ending after midnight. Grabbing a few hours of sleep, he headed to a fresh gig in the morning, where he signed new temporary contracts all over again.

The work pulled in 3,000 euros ($3,500) a month -- enough to pay living expenses, his ?1,000 mortgage payment and support for his two teenage children. But his savings were liquidated last year when he and his wife divorced and he bought her share of the apartment, in Fresnes, a ***working-class*** suburb south of Paris.

When the pandemic wiped out his contracts, the catering firms that employed him put only permanent staff on furlough, reaping a subsidy from the government for not firing them.

Europe's furlough subsidy programs don't extend the same benefit to contract workers, throwing Mr. Hombert into an uncertain future.

His jobless benefits, which are less than half his normal income, last for only 180 days under unemployment rules governing the catering industry. After they expire in mid-August, he will go onto France's basic welfare, which provides around ?600 a month, not enough to take care of his expenses.

''Covid-19 has created a huge financial crisis,'' said Mr. Hombert, who traded in his car, cut back on all but the basics and scrapped plans to take his children on vacation. ''You try to plan two months out, but you can't even do that,'' he said. ''Then you find yourself having to sell the apartment to get by.''

But engineering less pain may prove impossible. In Britain, the government also acted quickly to protect the economy, and was lauded for the scale of its measures. A plan to pay up to 80 percent of workers' wages was announced before the nationwide lockdown went into force in March. By the middle of July, 9.5 million jobs had been furloughed.

Still, more than one million people have fallen through the gaps in these support programs, including the self-employed and short-term workers, according to a parliamentary select committee report.

Thousands have found a collective voice online using the hashtag #ExcludedUK, whose founders conducted research showing that at least three million people are receiving little or no support from the government.

Sonali Joshi, one of the founders, owns a film company working with Asian cinema. As the director of the company, she gets most of her income from dividends, making her ineligible for the government's self-employment income support program. The parliamentary report estimates there are 710,000 others like Ms. Joshi locked out of aid this way.

''We're stuck in this situation of real uncertainty,'' Ms. Joshi said. ''Four months have passed already, but we don't know how to recover in many ways without the support that really should be there.''

Ms. Joshi faced unappealing options, including putting herself on furlough to earn about 500 pounds ($637) a month, or continue working, though all of her projects were on pause. In the end, she chose furlough. But with business down, she can't give any new projects to the 200 freelancers who work with her.

The situation will grow bleaker in autumn, when many of Europe's furlough programs expire and a tsunami of new layoffs hits. Airbus, Renault, British Airways and other European corporations have announced huge downsizing despite taking government furlough subsidies. In France alone, President Emmanuel Macron has warned of one million more jobs lost.

''In September, when you will have large numbers joining the unemployment system with good employability in front of people who've been unemployed since the beginning of the crisis, it's going to be a drama,'' said Christophe Catoir, the president for France and Northern Europe at Adecco, Europe's biggest temporary employment agency.

European governments have sought to cushion the blow by expanding some protections for nonstandard workers, easing access to paid sick leave, and introducing or increasing unemployment benefits. In France and Denmark, temporary income replacement programs were extended to the self-employed. Germany and other countries began funding paid furloughs for people contracted directly with temporary employment agencies.

The support goes only so far. At Adecco, 78 percent of temps lost work during France's quarantine and received furlough pay for the duration of their short-term contracts, which in France average around seven days. But when the contracts ended, they scrambled to find new work even as employers stopped hiring.

Governments are trying to help people like them by pumping billions into retraining for the unemployed. But the programs can sometimes feel futile for those who need fast access to new jobs.

When Mr. Hombert applied at the unemployment office for work assisting elderly people and cleaning their homes, he was told he would need two years of training. He also finds himself in competition with younger workers for summer jobs at do-it-yourself stores and other big shops.

''At age 50, trying to find work is almost impossible,'' he said. ''Jobs don't go to us.''

Landlords won't rent to Mr. Hombert because he has no job, and he faces a wait of up to four years for public housing. Without a home, he worries he won't be able to host his children, who stayed with him every other week after the divorce.

''It's hard to live,'' Mr. Hombert said, his voice faltering. ''You hear stories about people winding up on the street and you think, 'That could be me.' It's frightening.''

Enrico Bergamini, the author of a report on inequality arising from Covid-19 for Bruegel, a think tank in Brussels, said government policy responses to the crisis still left too many facing unprecedented vulnerability.

''The issue will be how do we recover from this shock, which is widening inequality gaps,'' Mr. Bergamini said.

''Workers are unprotected and vulnerable because we let them be.''

Eshe Nelson contributed reporting from London, and Théophile Larcher from Paris.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/business/europe-precarious-workers.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/business/europe-precarious-workers.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: When Thierry Hombert lost his job after the pandemic hit, he had to trade in his car and put his apartment on the market. Mr. Hombert and legions of other contract workers were excluded from government furlough programs. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA MANTOVANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B1)

Above, holding ties as if they were nooses, contract workers from the food, catering and events industries held a protest in Paris in June after they were denied furlough benefits. Left, freelancers seeking government support demonstrated in Seville, Spain, in June. Below, people lined up in front of London's National Gallery for free meals distributed by a charity in May. The situation will grow bleaker in autumn, when many of Europe's furlough programs expire and a tsunami of new layoffs hits. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCOIS MORI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

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**Length:** 1441 words

**Byline:** By Dana Rubinstein

**Body**

New York seems to be missing the kind of civic leadership that helped the city recover from previous financial and psychic crises.

Waves of death and joblessness, hunger and economic depression -- all at a scale rarely rivaled in New York City history.

Shootings and homicides have risen from last year. Civil unrest has seldom been higher. And some of those who could afford to leave the pandemic-stricken city have done so: Between March 1 and May 1, some 5 percent of New Yorkers fled town.

And to hear New York's leaders tell it, they understand why.

''Crime is up, a lot of people have left,'' Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo told reporters last month.

''The city,'' he said, ''is in very troubling times and we are seeing deterioration on a number of levels.''

When New York City has been confronted by crisis, from the near-bankruptcy in the 1970s to the physical and psychic devastation after the Sept. 11 attacks, its recovery has been aided by a civic champion -- a leading elected official who can persuade people and businesses to stay, and help convince Washington to do more to speed the city's recovery.

But this time around, New York seems to be missing that type of voice.

A native New Yorker resides in the White House, but President Trump seems to take special pleasure in tarnishing the image of the city that helped created him.

''It's turned out to be a hellhole, and they better do something about it because people are leaving New York,'' Mr. Trump said in July, not quite a year after changing his primary residence from Manhattan to Palm Beach, Fla.

Mayor Bill de Blasio could fill the role, but he has never been one to extol the city's virtues. His initial campaign for mayor was based on portraying New York as a place that had failed ***working-class*** New Yorkers; Mr. de Blasio tends to avoid marquee events, cultural institutions and the type of civic boosterism expected of big-city mayors.

Yet New York's economic future may well depend on appealing to the New York loyalties of the very New Yorkers whom Mr. de Blasio has had such a hard time connecting with.

''The guy's not running for re-election,'' said Scott Rechler, the chairman and chief executive of RXR Realty, which controls 25.5 million square feet of commercial real estate in New York City. ''He's done.

''So this is where the guy stands up and helps lead in these difficult times in a way that puts the partisan politics to the side and focuses on running the city and helping build a path to the city's future.''

The stakes are significant. If wealthy New Yorkers cut bait and flee, or if corporate titans with global reach drastically diminish their footprints in the financial and cultural capital of the United States, New York City's tax base could erode, potentially undermining the city's ability to fund the schools, food pantries and public housing on which so many New Yorkers rely.

The tax base ''will shrink and New York's ability to pay for services will also shrink, which will reduce quality of life and the level of public service and make New York City all around a less attractive place,'' said Maria Doulis, vice president of the Citizens Budget Commission.

The losses already being experienced by New York have drawn comparisons to the economic crisis of the 1970s or the financial nadir that followed the Sept. 11 attacks.

''We've got to get people's spirits up again,'' said Donovan Richards, a Queens city councilman who heads the Council's public safety committee. ''It's just finding that opportunity to do it. It's tough.''

The absence of a champion for New York has gained notice, particularly among old hands who witnessed and participated in past New York City crises and yearn for more inspiring leadership.

They speak longingly of the civic leadership they witnessed firsthand in the 1970s and early 1980s, when New York City was running on fumes, almost declared bankruptcy and then began to regrow.

Who, they wonder, will emerge to rival labor leaders like Victor H. Gotbaum; businessmen like David Rockefeller and Lewis Rudin; governmental leaders like Felix G. Rohatyn, Gov. Hugh L. Carey, and Richard Ravitch, all of whom set the city on a course to solvency and growth.

Who will be the 21st century version of Edward I. Koch, the former mayor whose cadence and mannerisms oozed New York: During the 1980 subway strike, he exhorted commuters crossing Brooklyn Bridge on foot to not ''let these bastards bring us to our knees!'''

For the first months of the pandemic, Mr. Cuomo seemed to warm to the role. In his daily televised briefings, he often spoke of the importance of the nation helping New York, and was able to secure ventilators and other medical essentials for the city.

But the governor, who often proclaims that he's ''a Queens boy,'' has found it hard to resist portraying the city in an unflattering light, in an unsubtle jab at the leadership of Mr. de Blasio, a fellow Democrat but a frequent rival.

''There hasn't been an effort to get people in an organized way to talk about New York City's incredible virtues and that we're all in this together,'' said Carl Weisbrod, who has spent four decades in and around city government, most recently as Mr. de Blasio's planning commission chairman.

It is easier to despair of civic cohesion than create it. Civic and business leaders interviewed for this article say they are doing what they can absent muscular centralized leadership -- speaking to business people about New York City's future, lobbying Republicans in the White House and U.S. Senate to come to New York City's aid. But the fault, they argue, lies largely with Mr. de Blasio and Mr. Cuomo, who have bullhorns capable of breaking through the noise.

Mr. de Blasio particularly strikes them as uninterested in championing New York City, or of listening to their ideas about how to do so.

They despair of his disinclination in resuscitating the Industry City development in Sunset Park that would, its developers say, create 20,000 jobs. The mayor's ''fair recovery task force,'' was supposed to release an economic ''recovery road map'' for New York City in early June. The report is now two months late.

''I don't need anyone to tell me how bad things are, we've already lived through that in 1977, in 2001 and in 2008,'' said Peter Madonia, who served in Mr. Koch's administration and as chief of staff for the former mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

Mr. Madonia said he's looking for a leader who ''tells me what to look forward to and why, and tells me how they are going to make it happen.''

Peter Ajemian, a spokesman for Mr. Cuomo, asserted that ''no one is pulling harder for New York City than the governor.''

He highlighted several infrastructure projects, including the Second Avenue Subway and La Guardia Airport, as evidence that the governor had the city's interests at heart.

''Construction at LaGuardia and J.F.K. is even more important now than ever before because that is a significant boost for New York City and New York City needs a significant boost with all the problems they're experiencing,'' Mr. Cuomo said on Friday.

The mayor's press secretary, Bill Neidhardt, said that Mr. de Blasio has been cheerleading for the city, and will continue to do so in the weeks and months ahead. In the coming days, Mr. de Blasio will even visit some newly reopened tourist attractions to drum up support for an industry that has all but vanished.

''Cheerleading for New York City's comeback is not just about big business, and anyone who tries to portray it as such really has a twisted view of what a true economic recovery means and looks like,'' Mr. Neidhardt said. ''And for us, our version of cheerleading is really about working people getting what they need to rebuild and have their lives come back.''

The Democratic primary that is likely to determine who succeeds the term-limited Mr. de Blasio happens in June, and the field of potential candidates has not been particularly vocal about New York's future.

To some business leaders, the scarcity of expressions of faith in the future of New York City makes perfect sense. The city has only just recently managed to wrestle coronavirus to the ground. It has yet to fully reopen. New Yorkers continue to die, and to mourn.

''What we need is a reckoning with the terrible economic consequences of the pandemic and a plan for how our city is going to get through the next few years with a minimum of pain,'' said Kathryn Wylde, who heads the Partnership for New York City, whose board includes the chief executives of Citigroup, BlackRock and Goldman Sachs. ''That is what we are missing right now.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/nyregion/new-york-recovery-coronavirus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/nyregion/new-york-recovery-coronavirus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg before the first pitch at the Mets' home opener in 2002. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KATHY WILLENS/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Mayor Edward I. Koch's spirit and manner helped shape New York City's image as it recovered from the 1970s financial crisis. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NEAL BOENZI/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***In Europe, Millions of Jobless Are Falling Through the Cracks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60K9-23G1-JBG3-651P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1532 words

**Byline:** Liz Alderman

**Highlight:** Government efforts to subsidize wages and prevent layoffs have kept many in jobs, but they aren’t sheltering an army of precarious workers.

**Body**

Government efforts to subsidize wages and prevent layoffs have kept many in jobs, but they aren’t sheltering an army of precarious workers.

PARIS — Thierry Hombert stepped onto the balcony of his sparsely furnished apartment and took one last long look around. When the coronavirus hit France, the short-term catering gigs on which he lived for a decade disappeared, and he was now selling his home to make ends meet.

While millions of employees across Europe have been cast lifelines by [*government furlough programs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) meant to limit mass unemployment, Mr. Hombert and legions of other workers on precarious irregular contracts were excluded from that support.

“It’s people like us who are falling through the cracks — and we are many,” said Mr. Hombert, 50, who worried about finding himself out on the street. “We’re the ones being left behind.”

The furlough programs, widely credited with sparing over 60 million people from layoffs in Europe, have a major drawback: They don’t shelter millions of workers who aren’t on company payrolls, including the newly self-employed, freelancers and people on the kind of [*short-term contracts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) that employers have used en masse since the 2010 financial crisis to reduce labor costs.

These people generally have reduced access to unemployment benefits, which are far less generous than the furlough programs.

Around [*15 million people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) in the European Union were unemployed in June, a rise of 700,000 since April, according to Eurostat, Europe’s statistics agency. Heavily seeding those ranks are people who had been on work contracts. They account for around [*four out of 10 workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html)in the industries hardest hit by Covid-19, including tourism, catering, restaurants and services where there is direct contact with other people, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

These workers face bleak prospects for new employment in Europe’s deep recession, and have fewer social protections than furloughed employees, including scant access to sick leave, exposing many to steep income losses and the threat of further precariousness.

Mr. Hombert is among those who have taken a heavy hit. For 10 years, he forged a career in the catering industry by working on a relentless cycle of daily and hourly contracts.

On a typical day, he woke at 5 a.m. to work a business breakfast at one end of Paris, then headed to another part of town to service a glittering political or social dinner ending after midnight. Grabbing a few hours of sleep, he headed to a fresh gig in the morning, where he signed new temporary contracts all over again.

The work pulled in 3,000 euros ($3,500) a month — enough to pay living expenses, his €1,000 mortgage payment and support for his two teenage children. But his savings were liquidated last year when he and his wife divorced and he bought her share of the apartment, in Fresnes, a ***working-class*** suburb south of Paris.

When the pandemic wiped out his contracts, the catering firms that employed him put only permanent staff on furlough, reaping a subsidy from the government for not firing them.

[*Europe’s furlough subsidy programs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html)don’t extend the same benefit to contract workers, throwing Mr. Hombert into an uncertain future.

His jobless benefits, which are less than half his normal income, last for only 180 days under unemployment rules governing the catering industry. After they expire in mid-August, he will go onto France’s basic welfare, which provides around €600 a month, not enough to take care of his expenses.

“Covid-19 has created a huge financial crisis,” said Mr. Hombert, who traded in his car, cut back on all but the basics and scrapped plans to take his children on vacation. “You try to plan two months out, but you can’t even do that,” he said. “Then you find yourself having to sell the apartment to get by.”

But engineering less pain may prove impossible. In Britain, the government also [*acted quickly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) to protect the economy, and was lauded for the scale of its measures. A plan to pay up to 80 percent of workers’ wages was announced before the nationwide lockdown went into force in March. By the middle of July, 9.5 million jobs had been furloughed.

Still, more than one million people have fallen through the gaps in these support programs, including the self-employed and short-term workers, according to a [*parliamentary select committee report*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html).

Thousands have found a collective voice online using the hashtag [*#ExcludedUK*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html), whose founders conducted research showing that at least three million people are receiving little or no support from the government.

Sonali Joshi, one of the founders, owns a film company working with Asian cinema. As the director of the company, she gets most of her income from dividends, making her ineligible for the government’s self-employment income support program. The parliamentary report estimates there are 710,000 others like Ms. Joshi locked out of aid this way.

“We’re stuck in this situation of real uncertainty,” Ms. Joshi said. “Four months have passed already, but we don’t know how to recover in many ways without the support that really should be there.”

Ms. Joshi faced unappealing options, including putting herself on furlough to earn about 500 pounds ($637) a month, or continue working, though all of her projects were on pause. In the end, she chose furlough. But with business down, she can’t give any new projects to the 200 freelancers who work with her.

The situation will grow bleaker in autumn, when many of Europe’s furlough programs expire and a tsunami of new layoffs hits. [*Airbus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html), Renault, British Airways and other European corporations have announced huge downsizing despite taking government furlough subsidies. In France alone, President Emmanuel Macron has warned of one million more jobs lost.

“In September, when you will have large numbers joining the unemployment system with good employability in front of people who’ve been unemployed since the beginning of the crisis, it’s going to be a drama,” said Christophe Catoir, the president for France and Northern Europe at Adecco, Europe’s biggest temporary employment agency.

European governments have sought to cushion the blow by expanding some protections for nonstandard workers, easing access to [*paid sick leave*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html), and introducing or increasing unemployment benefits. In France and [*Denmark*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html), temporary income replacement programs were extended to the self-employed. Germany and other countries began funding paid furloughs for people contracted directly with temporary employment agencies.

The support goes only so far. At Adecco, 78 percent of temps lost work during France’s quarantine and received furlough pay for the duration of their short-term contracts, which in France average around seven days. But when the contracts ended, they scrambled to find new work even as employers stopped hiring.

Governments are trying to help people like them by pumping billions into [*retraining*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) for the unemployed. But the programs can sometimes feel futile for those who need fast access to new jobs.

When Mr. Hombert applied at the unemployment office for work assisting elderly people and cleaning their homes, he was told he would need two years of training. He also finds himself in competition with younger workers for summer jobs at do-it-yourself stores and other big shops.

“At age 50, trying to find work is almost impossible,” he said. “Jobs don’t go to us.”

Landlords won’t rent to Mr. Hombert because he has no job, and he faces a wait of up to four years for public housing. Without a home, he worries he won’t be able to host his children, who stayed with him every other week after the divorce.

“It’s hard to live,” Mr. Hombert said, his voice faltering. “You hear stories about people winding up on the street and you think, ‘That could be me.’ It’s frightening.”

Enrico Bergamini, the author of a report on [*inequality arising from Covid-19*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) for Bruegel, a think tank in Brussels, said government policy responses to the crisis still left too many facing unprecedented vulnerability.

“The issue will be how do we recover from this shock, which is widening inequality gaps,” Mr. Bergamini said.

“Workers are unprotected and vulnerable because we let them be.”

Eshe Nelson contributed reporting from London, and Théophile Larcher from Paris.

PHOTOS: When Thierry Hombert lost his job after the pandemic hit, he had to trade in his car and put his apartment on the market. Mr. Hombert and legions of other contract workers were excluded from government furlough programs. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA MANTOVANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B1); Above, holding ties as if they were nooses, contract workers from the food, catering and events industries held a protest in Paris in June after they were denied furlough benefits. Left, freelancers seeking government support demonstrated in Seville, Spain, in June. Below, people lined up in front of London’s National Gallery for free meals distributed by a charity in May. The situation will grow bleaker in autumn, when many of Europe’s furlough programs expire and a tsunami of new layoffs hits. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCOIS MORI/ASSOCIATED PRESS; CRISTINA QUICLER/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; FINBARR O’REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B3)

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2020

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[***Long-Distance Friends***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62G5-9K51-JBG3-64CB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2073 words

**Byline:** By Cathy Park Hong

**Body**

The Composer of Noise

I MET REI at an artists' residency in the late 2000s, when the New England landscape was at its greenest and most vertiginous. At dusk, wood thrushes chimed their watery, ethereal songs, which I now associate with freedom and creative ferment. I recall Rei entering the screened-in porch where a few residents were smoking and introducing himself as a composer from Japan. He was 32, about the same age I was at the time, and wore a baggy black hoodie, trousers and thick, white-framed glasses. He kept his hair longer in the front so that a thicket of bangs swept just past his left eyebrow. He was tall, and if you looked closely, he was attractive. But it was hard to notice that because he was quiet and looked as if he wanted to shrink into himself, like a teenage boy who'd shot up over the span of the summer.

Also in residence was a petite and impish artist from Korea whose sense of humor turned aggressive when she drank and Rei happened to be within her vicinity. At parties or when we gathered in the common room late at night, she hunted him down to antagonize him with her daily recriminations, which I presume was her way of flirting.

''If it's not the imperialist,'' she would say.

''Hello, Bangul,'' Rei would say.

''Your people tortured us, taking away our language, our names, even.''

''Yes, I know.''

''And to this day, you still refuse to apologize.''

''But I did, just yesterday.''

''Is your father rich? How else could you be here in America, studying to be a composer? What does he do?''

''He's the C.E.O. of Sony.''

''Are you telling the truth?'' Bangul shouted excitedly. ''You're lying!''

Rei accepted her nightly censures with equanimity, but when he grew tired of them, he nudged her away with ironic deflections that only inflamed her further. Since I'm Korean, too, I was amused by her antics but watched without joining in. I didn't pay much attention to Rei at first because of his laconic nature. But he had a depth of character that kept uncupping itself like nesting dolls the more I talked to him. He was wry, analytical, but also affectionate and without judgment. We ended up becoming close rather quickly, which is not unusual in residencies, where friendships are fast-tracked.

REI, WHOM I'VE identified by his middle name, was not the scion of Sony but the son of flower farmers in a rural ***working-class*** town north of Tokyo. His hometown was stifling and homogeneous, and as soon as he was able -- once he turned 19 -- he escaped. After the tsunami hit Japan in 2011 and led to the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima, I emailed him to ask about his family. He responded, saying that his parents lived 100 miles from the nuclear plant, a safe enough distance away.

Since then, I'd lost contact with Rei, but thought of him recently while reading ''Ghosts of the Tsunami'' by Richard Lloyd Parry, which is about the grieving parents of children who were swept away by the wave while they were at school. Unyielding fealty to bureaucracy killed these students as much as the tsunami itself, because their teachers, adhering to instructions in a poorly worded emergency manual, neglected to evacuate them to higher ground despite frantic warnings from others that a flood was coming. After I read the book, I searched for our last correspondence and found, to my dismay, that I had misread Rei's email all those years ago. He'd written, ''My parents live 100 miles away from the power plant, not far enough away to be optimistic. We'll see how it develops.''

TO WRITE ABOUT friendship is an exercise in nostalgia, one that more often draws a portrait of your former self than a portrait of the friend, especially during a pandemic, when I'm prone to dwelling on what is absent from my life. Without the varying textures of experience, days are deleted from my life. I age meaninglessly. My interest in writing about Rei might therefore be suspect: Is it our friendship I'm interested in? Or is he a portal to those years when I felt the least burdened by responsibilities, when I could roam as I pleased and see whom I wanted?

After the residency, we met intermittently, since we lived on separate coasts, and then, later, in separate countries. I was in New York, while he resided in Los Angeles, getting his Ph.D. in computer music. He rented an apartment in Koreatown, chosen for its central location, since he was the only person I knew in L.A. who didn't own a car. He took the bus, or odder still, he walked.

When I visited my family in L.A., which is where I grew up, I saw him, too. I picked him up and took him for a drink at a landmark restaurant that once appeared in the film ''Chinatown,'' and which, with its red leather banquettes and ruby crushed-velvet lamps, had the trappings of Old Hollywood, except it was now owned by Koreans who, alongside martinis, served plates of spicy octopus and kimchi fried rice. We always met as visitors from elsewhere, in settings that held no connection to our past. Even the bar, despite being in my hometown, was like a midcentury film set that had nothing to do with my youth.

Of course, our respective histories remained in the background like a mountain of ash. Sometimes I reached back to grab a handful to throw at him. Like Bangul, I couldn't help it. I joked that he owed me a lifetime of cocktails for the 35 years during which Korea had been a Japanese colony. But except for my occasional quips, we were free of rivalry, or pettiness, or nascent sexual desires. And perhaps this is why I return to Rei, because I felt in our companionship a rare harmony.

WE TALKED ABOUT love, mostly. As a teenager, I used to promise my father, almost on a weekly basis, that I would marry a Korean man, while inwardly knowing that no man of my tribe would want me. I wasn't feminine enough; I was too odd. With each promise I made, a suffocating, palpitating panic spread from my heart to my throat to my eyes, until I saw only the burning, spidery spots that you see after looking directly at the sun. Bound to break this promise, I felt I would always live alone, a fate that seemed all the more imminent throughout my 20s, when I actually did fall in love with several Asian men, all of whom broke my heart.

Rei had similar pressures from his parents, who expected him to take over the family farm, marry and have children. But by the age of 10, he already knew he wanted nothing to do with flowers or his hometown. He'd level out at just over six feet by adulthood, but as a boy, he stood out for his extraordinary height. He was the tallest boy in class, but he didn't know how to wield his height to his advantage, as if it were a sword too heavy to lift. Sensing his defenselessness, the boys bullied him, especially since he refused to play his part in the pecking order, where the oldest and strongest hazed the youngest without mercy. Eventually, Rei left, moving first to Tokyo for college, and then to Chicago, Rotterdam, Los Angeles and finally to Berlin, where he settled. He took shelter in graduate programs that subsidized his music, which was alchemized from computer algorithms, music that was so shatteringly dissonant, it seemed almost a revolt against his agrarian origins.

Both of us were certain that we'd always be alone, but it turned out for nought. By the time I met Rei, I was dating someone who would become my husband. Rei would eventually meet someone, too, but at the time, he was single. He seemed self-sufficient in his solitary life, as if a partner would interfere with his studies, so I was surprised to learn that he'd once been engaged to a Japanese woman who lived with him when he was in the Netherlands. It was out of obligation to her father, who demanded they marry if they lived together abroad but, inevitably, it didn't work out. He left, drifting away to California.

He told me about his hapless dates that he didn't know were dates until afterward. ''I don't have any luck with women,'' he said, shrugging his shoulders, appearing not entirely anguished by his bad luck. He had a subtle Japanese accent and laughed easily at my jokes, which flattered me because he didn't laugh easily at anyone else's. When we met up, the boundaries between our selves dissolved, while our individualities were at their most articulated -- and maybe, too, there was a buried chord of desire that made it especially pleasurable to see him. I introduced him to my sister, hoping they would hit it off. How perfect would that be: two people for whom I had a deep, abiding affection, together. Instead, having been awarded a yearlong fellowship, he left for Berlin.

WHILE READING ''GHOSTS of the Tsunami,'' I searched online for footage of the disaster, expecting it to sound like the hurricanes I'd watched on CNN, with howling winds and lashing water, or the oceanic roar of pounding waves. But it wasn't what I expected at all. It was a malevolent thing, a black, flat, fast-moving amoebal mass, efficiently swallowing acres of gray paddy fields, office buildings, tile-roofed homes and highways full of cars. But what I heard was even eerier because the tsunami sounded so animal-like, like it was digesting all of human civilization, with its peristaltic, grinding crunch of steel and concrete and whole forests being ripped from their roots.

Thinking back, it was that sound, rather than the book, that first reminded me of Rei after all these years. It recalled for me his music, which I first encountered at the residency. We'd gathered at a library that was once a stone chapel and sat on foldout chairs. He turned off the lights and began his composition. A wind rose to a high jet whine that amplified to an annihilating engine roar. With no visuals or lyrics to help guide me, my imagination ran through a gauntlet of disasters. An artist from New Orleans cried afterward, saying she'd pictured a hurricane. Later, Rei told me he wanted to create a shelter of sound with his compositions. But at the time, I felt the opposite, as if his music had simulated a great suctioning cavity where there was once shelter, as if the chapel had been ripped from its foundations and we were exposed to the fury of a godless earth for the wounds we inflicted upon it.

IN THE MIDST of writing this piece, I reconnected with Rei over Zoom to ask about his parents. He lives in Berlin with two kids and his partner. He told me that his parents were doing fine, although some still believe that the poisons that had seeped into the earth might resurface later in the genes of plants, or animals, or children. When I told him that I was writing an essay about him, he was amused but also puzzled. But what could I possibly say?

The last time I saw Rei was in 2010, when my husband and I spent the summer in Berlin, a city that, with its graffiti and D.I.Y. gardens, still looked as though it had been rebuilt by artists. Rei and I hung out quite often that summer, meeting up for drinks at beer gardens or dinner along the green canal in Kreuzberg. I felt so weightless then.

Maybe I'm craving a similar sense of peace during these isolating, anxious days, not unlike the relieved peace of seeing a friend in a foreign country and being able to speak fluently to them. I want to say that the levity with Rei felt hard won, a light cast against what came before us generations ago, when Japan first imposed upon Korea a brutal police state. But I wonder if such a connection can even be made between then and our friendship now, or if I'm contriving it to appease in me some compulsion for closure.

Toward the end of my stay, Rei told me he'd met a German woman, who would later become his partner.

''We are moving in together,'' he said.

''Already?''

''My lease is up, and she offered her flat,'' he said, looking embarrassed. ''She even put down her cat because I'm allergic.''

''Wow -- that is love.''

''I told her it wasn't necessary.''

''Also very German.''

''She's actually nice. Do you want to meet her?''

I couldn't resist some other crack about the Axis powers reuniting. I felt protective, like a sister, even a little jealous. But he looked happy, so I reassured him that I was happy for him. It was mid-August, and already there was a chill to the breeze, which tinged me with anxiety about returning home and a future that felt uncertain. He said he'd miss me and wondered when we'd see each other again. ''I'll visit next summer,'' I said. ''As soon as I'm free.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/12/t-magazine/long-distance-friends.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/12/t-magazine/long-distance-friends.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: ''In Memory of a Sure Thing'' (2021), made exclusively for T by the New York-based artist Alanna Fields, who said: ''Since the onset of the pandemic, a lot of my friends have moved out of the city, and the dynamics of our relationships have changed. With this piece, I used an archival image of three male friends. I brought in the borders to signify isolation, and the red to signify loss -- what does it mean when you lose physical nearness, when you can't access a person in the same way?'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA SCOTT)

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2021

**End of Document**



[***New Jersey, Backing Off Original Plan, Gives Schools All-Virtual Option***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60K8-78F1-DXY4-X507-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1555 words

**Byline:** By Tracey Tully

**Body**

The decision comes as the teachers union, a close ally of Gov. Philip D. Murphy, had publicly raised concerns about the safety of holding in-person classes.

Gov. Philip D. Murphy is giving New Jersey districts the option to offer all-virtual classes when school resumes next month, relaxing his original requirement that teachers provide some in-person classroom instruction.

The policy shift comes as the state's powerful teachers union for the first time publicly called for an all-virtual start to the school year given the risks still posed by the coronavirus.

It also follows decisions by two of New Jersey's largest urban districts, Jersey City and Elizabeth, to offer only virtual instruction -- plans that were in direct conflict with the governor's original position and would have required approval from the state.

To be eligible to start the year with all-remote instruction, a district must be able to document why it cannot safely provide in-person instruction and set a date for a return to school, Mr. Murphy said.

''Districts that cannot meet all the health and safety standards for safe in-person instruction will begin their school year in an all-remote fashion,'' the governor said. ''Public school districts will need to spell out their plans for satisfying these unmet standards and a date by which they anticipate the ability to resume in-person instruction.''

The teachers union, the New Jersey Education Association, a close ally of Mr. Murphy, had raised concerns about the safety of holding in-person classes, but had stopped short of publicly calling for all-virtual instruction.

But late Tuesday, in a joint statement with groups representing principals and administrators, the union criticized the state's lack of uniform school safety guidelines and called for all-remote instruction to protect its members and students from the risk of contracting the virus.

''Our state, while doing better than many others, has not yet stopped the spread of this virus, particularly among the same young people who are scheduled to return to school in under four weeks,'' the education leaders wrote.

Marie Blistan, president of the 200,000-member teachers union, said that the concern about the inability to safely return to in-person instruction was coming from a wide spectrum of employees, including principals and superintendents, who provide guidance to elected school boards.

While state officials stressed that the goal was for a majority of schools to offer in-person instruction, Ms. Blistan said she believed the policy shift would lead most districts to opt for all-remote instruction.

''I believe that that is going to happen, one way or another,'' Ms. Blistan said. ''And I want it to happen before anyone else gets sick.''

The virus has taken a tremendous toll in New Jersey, one of the states hit first and hardest by the pandemic. At least 187,328 people have tested positive for the virus, and there have been 15,890 deaths linked to Covid-19.

But a strict, monthslong regional lockdown has led to a rate of infection that is now among the nation's lowest.

Still, over the last week, the boards of education in Jersey City and Elizabeth each voted to start school with only virtual instruction. The densely populated city of Bayonne, in Hudson County, and Willingboro, a Burlington County township near the state's western border with Pennsylvania, also submitted plans that called for all-virtual instruction.

The mayor of Newark, Ras Baraka, another close ally of the governor, had publicly urged parents not to send their children to school, citing the increased risk of spreading the virus in a city that has had at least 652 deaths from Covid-19.

''At this rate that we're going,'' Mr. Baraka, a former high school principal, said on Aug. 3, ''I would advise everybody to keep their children home from school.''

He repeated the sentiment five times.

In late June, Mr. Murphy released a 104-page plan that required schools to offer some form of in-person instruction. Weeks later, he said that parents could choose to not send their children to school, and that districts must offer those students all-virtual classes.

When virus cases began to increase in New Jersey after falling to their lowest points in mid-July, Mr. Murphy announced that children would need to wear masks throughout the school day.

On Monday night, the board of education in Elizabeth, the state's fourth-largest city with 28,300 students, said it had no choice but to offer only virtual instruction because it did not have enough teachers to staff its classrooms.

As of Tuesday afternoon, a spokesman said that 402 Elizabeth teachers -- one in five instructional staff members -- had provided doctors' notes and documentation asserting that they could not teach in person based on their own underlying health conditions or those of someone they lived with.

The lack of sufficient staff members meant that in-person instruction was ''no longer a practical reality,'' said Pat Politano, a spokesman for the Elizabeth schools.

The moves by officials in urban districts had presented a challenge for a governor who had in part framed the argument about the need for some in-person learning as an issue of equity for students who rely on school for access to computers and basic nutrition.

New Jersey is home to some of the top-rated schools in the nation. But it is equally well known for the economic gaps that exist between its ***working-class*** and poor cities and its more affluent suburbs, where parents may be better able to cope with the expense and rigor of remote learning.

New York City is the only large district in the country that has said it intended to offer in-person instruction -- with children reporting to classrooms one to three times a week -- provided the rate of new positive tests remains under 3 percent.

Mayor Bill de Blasio, when asked on Wednesday if New York was concerned about teacher shortages similar to those the Elizabeth schools were facing, said the district was reviewing requests from about 15 percent of its teachers for health-related accommodations.

''We're going to have the resources to serve our kids,'' Mr. de Blasio said.

Across the Hudson River, in Jersey City, the school board voted last week to offer only virtual instruction. The mayor, Steven M. Fulop, cited the state's lack of access to speedy coronavirus test results, the absence of a robust contact-tracing network and shortages of cleaning supplies as reasons for the decision.

''There's limited resources around testing,'' Mr. Fulop said in an interview on Tuesday. ''There's slow response time, and there continues to be a lack of resources around cleaning supplies and sanitation.''

It was unclear how many of New Jersey's 584 school districts might attempt to shift to all-virtual instruction. All districts now have the option of resubmitting reopening plans based on the new guidance.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that students be ''physically present in school'' as much as possible, and has emphasized that there are health, social and educational risks to keeping children at home.

In many New Jersey towns, a majority of parents had said in planning surveys that they intended to send their children to school in person.

Many districts were preparing for a hybrid model of instruction that alternated between coming to school in person and tuning in remotely to teachers' lessons from devices at home. The rotation would enable districts to maintain the required six-foot distance between occupants of the building.

But in a survey conducted by Elizabeth, 52 percent of parents still said they would not send their children to in-person classes, Mr. Politano said.

The debate among parents had become more intense as the first day of school grew nearer and the state's rate of coronavirus infection increased slightly before dropping again.

Mr. Murphy had in part blamed the spike in cases on indoor house parties among young people; in response, he reduced the number of people permitted to gather indoors from 100 to 25.

It was a policy shift broadly noted by educators, who began to publicly question how they could be expected to keep children and staff members safe indoors, often in aging school buildings that may lack proper ventilation. About 2,500 of the state's public school buildings were built more than 50 years ago, Ms. Blistan said.

''We're not saying we shouldn't open schools,'' Patricia Wright, executive director of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, said on Tuesday in an interview. ''We strongly believe students should be in school. What I think we need is more time.''

In its statement, the N.J.E.A., together with the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, predicted that the absence of a uniform guidance from Mr. Murphy would lead to a chaotic decision-making process.

''The question of whether and when to reopen for in-person instruction is first and foremost a public health decision that cannot be left in the hands of nearly 600 individual school districts,'' the statement read.

''The stakes are too high, and the consequences of a wrong decision are too grave.''

Troy Closson and Eliza Shapiro contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/nyregion/nj-schools-reopening.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/nyregion/nj-schools-reopening.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Gov. Philip D. Murphy's shift came as a teachers union called for a remote start to the school year. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***New York City Could Use a Champion. Who Will Step Up?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60K2-13G1-JBG3-62DG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1472 words

**Byline:** Dana Rubinstein

**Highlight:** New York seems to be missing the kind of civic leadership that helped the city recover from previous financial and psychic crises.

**Body**

New York seems to be missing the kind of civic leadership that helped the city recover from previous financial and psychic crises.

Waves of death and joblessness, hunger and economic depression — all at a scale rarely rivaled in New York City history.

Shootings and homicides have risen from last year. Civil unrest has seldom been higher. And some of those who could afford to leave the pandemic-stricken city have done so: Between March 1 and May 1, some [*5 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) of New Yorkers fled town.

And to hear New York’s leaders tell it, they understand why.

“Crime is up, a lot of people have left,” Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo told [*reporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) last month.

“The city,” he said, “is in very troubling times and we are seeing deterioration on a number of levels.”

When New York City has been confronted by crisis, from the near-bankruptcy in the 1970s to the physical and psychic devastation after the Sept. 11 attacks, its recovery has been aided by a civic champion — a leading elected official who can persuade people and businesses to stay, and help convince Washington to do more to speed the city’s recovery.

But this time around, New York seems to be missing that type of voice.

A native New Yorker resides in the White House, but President Trump seems to take special pleasure in tarnishing the image of the city that helped created him.

“It’s turned out to be a hellhole, and they better do something about it because people are leaving New York,” Mr. Trump [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) in July, not quite a year after [*changing his primary residence*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) from Manhattan to Palm Beach, Fla.

Mayor Bill de Blasio could fill the role, but he has [*never been one*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) to extol the city’s virtues. His initial [*campaign for mayor*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) was based on portraying New York as a place that had failed ***working-class*** New Yorkers; Mr. de Blasio tends to avoid marquee events, cultural institutions and the type of civic boosterism expected of big-city mayors.

Yet New York’s economic future may well depend on appealing to the New York loyalties of the very New Yorkers whom Mr. de Blasio has had such a hard time connecting with.

“The guy’s not running for re-election,” said Scott Rechler, the chairman and chief executive of RXR Realty, which controls 25.5 million square feet of commercial real estate in New York City. “He’s done.

“So this is where the guy stands up and helps lead in these difficult times in a way that puts the partisan politics to the side and focuses on running the city and helping build a path to the city’s future.”

The stakes are significant. If wealthy New Yorkers cut bait and flee, or if corporate titans with global reach drastically diminish their footprints in the financial and cultural capital of the United States, New York City’s tax base could erode, potentially undermining the city’s ability to fund the schools, food pantries and public housing on which so many New Yorkers rely.

The tax base “will shrink and New York’s ability to pay for services will also shrink, which will reduce quality of life and the level of public service and make New York City all around a less attractive place,” said Maria Doulis, vice president of the Citizens Budget Commission.

The losses already being experienced by New York have drawn comparisons to the economic crisis of the 1970s or the financial nadir that followed the Sept. 11 attacks.

“We’ve got to get people’s spirits up again,” said Donovan Richards, a Queens city councilman who heads the Council’s public safety committee. “It’s just finding that opportunity to do it. It’s tough.”

The absence of a champion for New York has gained notice, particularly among old hands who witnessed and participated in past New York City crises and yearn for more inspiring leadership.

They speak longingly of the civic leadership they witnessed firsthand in the 1970s and early 1980s, when New York City was running on fumes, almost declared bankruptcy and then began to regrow.

Who, they wonder, will emerge to rival labor leaders like [*Victor H. Gotbaum*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html); businessmen like [*David Rockefeller*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) and [*Lewis Rudin*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html); governmental leaders like [*Felix G. Rohatyn*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html), Gov. [*Hugh L. Carey*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html), and [*Richard Ravitch*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html), all of whom set the city on a course to solvency and growth.

Who will be the 21st century version of [*Edward I. Koch*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html), the former mayor whose cadence and mannerisms oozed New York: During the 1980 subway strike, he [*exhorted*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html) commuters crossing Brooklyn Bridge on foot to not “let these bastards bring us to our knees!’”

For the first months of the pandemic, Mr. Cuomo seemed to warm to the role. In his daily televised briefings, he often spoke of the importance of the nation helping New York, and was able to secure ventilators and other medical essentials for the city.

But the governor, who often proclaims that he’s “a Queens boy,” has found it hard to resist portraying the city in an unflattering light, in an unsubtle jab at the leadership of Mr. de Blasio, a fellow Democrat but a frequent rival.

“There hasn’t been an effort to get people in an organized way to talk about New York City’s incredible virtues and that we’re all in this together,” said Carl Weisbrod, who has spent four decades in and around city government, most recently as Mr. de Blasio’s planning commission chairman.

It is easier to despair of civic cohesion than create it. Civic and business leaders interviewed for this article say they are doing what they can absent muscular centralized leadership — speaking to business people about New York City’s future, lobbying Republicans in the White House and U.S. Senate to come to New York City’s aid. But the fault, they argue, lies largely with Mr. de Blasio and Mr. Cuomo, who have bullhorns capable of breaking through the noise.

Mr. de Blasio particularly strikes them as uninterested in championing New York City, or of listening to their ideas about how to do so.

They despair of his disinclination in resuscitating the Industry City development in Sunset Park that would, its developers say, create 20,000 jobs. The mayor’s “fair recovery task force,” was supposed to release an economic “recovery road map” for New York City in [*early June*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html). The report is now two months late.

“I don’t need anyone to tell me how bad things are, we’ve already lived through that in 1977, in 2001 and in 2008,” said Peter Madonia, who served in Mr. Koch’s administration and as chief of staff for the former mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

Mr. Madonia said he’s looking for a leader who “tells me what to look forward to and why, and tells me how they are going to make it happen.”

Peter Ajemian, a spokesman for Mr. Cuomo, asserted that “no one is pulling harder for New York City than the governor.”

He highlighted several infrastructure projects, including the Second Avenue Subway and La Guardia Airport, as evidence that the governor had the city’s interests at heart.

“Construction at LaGuardia and J.F.K. is even more important now than ever before because that is a significant boost for New York City and New York City needs a significant boost with all the problems they’re experiencing,” Mr. Cuomo said on Friday.

The mayor’s press secretary, Bill Neidhardt, said that Mr. de Blasio has been cheerleading for the city, and will continue to do so in the weeks and months ahead. In the coming days, Mr. de Blasio will even visit some newly reopened tourist attractions to drum up support for an industry that has all but vanished.

“Cheerleading for New York City’s comeback is not just about big business, and anyone who tries to portray it as such really has a twisted view of what a true economic recovery means and looks like,” Mr. Neidhardt said. “And for us, our version of cheerleading is really about working people getting what they need to rebuild and have their lives come back.”

The Democratic primary that is likely to determine who succeeds the term-limited Mr. de Blasio happens in [*June*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/05/15/upshot/who-left-new-york-coronavirus.html), and the field of potential candidates has not been particularly vocal about New York’s future.

To some business leaders, the scarcity of expressions of faith in the future of New York City makes perfect sense. The city has only just recently managed to wrestle coronavirus to the ground. It has yet to fully reopen. New Yorkers continue to die, and to mourn.

“What we need is a reckoning with the terrible economic consequences of the pandemic and a plan for how our city is going to get through the next few years with a minimum of pain,” said Kathryn Wylde, who heads the Partnership for New York City, whose board includes the chief executives of Citigroup, BlackRock and Goldman Sachs. “That is what we are missing right now.”

PHOTOS: Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg before the first pitch at the Mets’ home opener in 2002. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KATHY WILLENS/ASSOCIATED PRESS); Mayor Edward I. Koch’s spirit and manner helped shape New York City’s image as it recovered from the 1970s financial crisis. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NEAL BOENZI/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Why You Should Still Care About ‘Bicycle Thieves’; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60K8-08W1-DXY4-X45P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MOVIES

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**Byline:** A.O. Scott

**Highlight:** On the unforgettable heartbreak and enduring pleasures of an Italian neorealist masterpiece.

**Body**

On the unforgettable heartbreak and enduring pleasures of an Italian neorealist masterpiece.

“People should see it — and they should care.” Those are the concluding words to one of the more passionate raves in the annals of New York Times film criticism: [*Bosley Crowther’s 1949 review*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html) of the Italian movie introduced to American audiences as “[*The Bicycle Thief*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html).”

The English title has since been adjusted to reflect the original. It’s “Bicycle Thieves” (“Ladri di Biciclette” in Italian) not only because more than one bike is stolen, but also because the cruelty of modern life threatens to make robbers of us all. More than 70 years after Crowther’s enthusiastic notice — during which time [*Vittorio De Sica*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html)’s fable of desperation has been imitated, satirized, analyzed and taught in schools — I’m tempted to let my predecessor have the last word.

But why should you see it, or see it again? Why should you (still) care? These are fair questions to ask of any consensus masterpiece — skepticism is what keeps art alive, reverence embalms it — and especially apt in the case of “Bicycle Thieves.” The movie is about seeing and caring, about the danger of being distracted from what matters. The tragedy it depicts arises partly from poverty, injustice and the aftereffect of dictatorship, but more profoundly from a deficit of empathy.

Based on a book by Luigi Bartolini, with a script by Cesare Zavattini — written, as Crowther noted, “with the camera exclusively in mind” — “Bicycle Thieves is a political parable and a spiritual fable, at once a hard look at the conditions of the Roman ***working class*** after World War II and an inquiry into the state of an individual soul. The soul in question belongs to Antonio Ricci, a lean, handsome, diffident man who lives with his wife, Maria, and their two young children in a recently built apartment that lacks running water.

At a time of mass unemployment and widespread homelessness, the Riccis are relatively fortunate, and as the film begins, luck seems to be smiling on them. Antonio is picked out of a throng of job-seekers and offered a position pasting up advertisements. He needs a bicycle, and Maria pawns the couple’s bed linens — one set has never been used — so her husband can get his trusty Fides out of hock.

The good times don’t last. On his first day at work, Antonio’s bicycle is snatched from under his nose, and he and his young son, Bruno, spend the rest of the movie in a desperate effort to recover it. Their journey takes them (and the viewer) on a tour of Rome’s rougher quarters, away from the monuments and museums. By the end, we have witnessed a humble man’s humiliation, a loss of dignity as devastating as an earthquake.

Antonio (Lamberto Maggiorani), Maria (Lianella Carell) and Bruno (Enzo Staiola) are played — along with almost everyone else in the movie — by nonprofessional actors. Some of the mystique around “Bicycle Thieves” rests on this fact, on the arguable but durable belief that minimal acting technique will produce maximal authenticity.

The use of ordinary people and actual locations, which didn’t begin with De Sica, was already, in 1948, a hallmark of neorealism, the movement that helped Italy secure a central place in postwar world cinema. Like most artistic tendencies, neorealism has often been more of a puzzle than a program, its essence obscured by theoretical hairsplitting and ideological disputation.

By the strict accounting of some critics, there are exactly seven films in the neorealist canon: three apiece by De Sica and Roberto Rossellini and one by Luchino Visconti. A less rigorous definition includes countless Italian films released between the end of the war and the mid-1960s, even big-budgeted, movie-star-filled, internationally flavored productions like Federico Fellini’s “La Strada” and Visconti’s “Rocco and His Brothers.” Any Italian movie shot in black-and-white and concerned with the struggles of poor people might qualify.

I prefer to think of neorealism as an impulse, an ethos, a spore that caught the wind of history and sprouted in the soil of every continent. The spirits of Maria and Antonio Ricci — and perhaps especially of the impish, vulnerable Bruno — live on in the work of Satyajit Ray in Bengal in the late 1950s, in the Brazilian Cinema Novo in the 1960s, in Iran in the 1990s and [*the United States in the first decade of this century*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html). Films like Ramin Bahrani’s “Chop Shop” and Kelly Reichardt’s “Wendy and Lucy,” which tally the moral and existential costs of economic precariousness, have a clear affinity with “Bicycle Thieves.”

In Italy, the neorealist impulse has been refreshed in each generation, in the work of filmmakers like [*Ermanno Olmi*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html) and, most recently, Alice Rohrwacher, whose [*“Happy as Lazzaro”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html) infuses a story of hardship and exploitation with literal magic. “Bicycle Thieves” itself has become an essential part of the cultural patrimony, a touchstone to be treasured, teased and taken for granted. It has been quoted and referenced in countless later movies. My own favorite is Ettore Scola’s [*“We All Loved Each Other So Much,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html)which traces the postwar lives and loves of four anti-fascist partisans. One of them, a left-wing intellectual played by Stefano Satta Flores, is obsessed with De Sica and “Bicycle Thieves,” a preoccupation with absurd, unhappy consequences. His love of the movie costs him a job and causes him embarrassment on a television quiz show.

Part of what draws filmmakers (and film lovers) to “Bicycle Thieves” is its purity and simplicity, but to emphasize those elements — the unvarnished honesty of the performances, the gritty realness of the Roman streets, the raw emotions of the story — is to risk underestimating its complexity and sophistication.

Neorealism was partly an aesthetic of necessity. Right after the war, money and equipment were in short supply, and the vast Cinecittà studio complex on the southern edge of Rome was a refugee camp. Cinecittà had been built by Mussolini as one monumental expression of his belief in the natural affinity between fascism and film. (The Venice Film Festival was another.) The leading lights of neorealism — including De Sica, a prominent actor before he took up directing — had started out working in Mussolini’s movie industry, which specialized in slick melodramas and high-society romances as well as propaganda.

While it is free of those genre trappings, “Bicycle Thieves” has a sometimes playful, sometimes poetic self-consciousness. The first work we see Antonio doing is hanging up a poster of Rita Hayworth, a sign that Hollywood is part of the Italian landscape. Within a few years, the import and export of movie stars would become a fixture of Italy’s cultural and economic boom. Fellini’s “La Strada” and “Nights of Cabiria” won back-to-back foreign-language film Oscars in 1957 and ’58. Anna Magnani had won for best actress in 1956. Six years later it was Sophia Loren’s turn, for “Two Women,” directed by De Sica, who had perhaps done more than anyone other than Loren herself to cultivate her star power and unlock her artistic potential.

“Bicycle Thieves” may seem like an improbable gateway to the glamorous golden age of Italian cinema, the starry, sexy cosmos of Loren, Gina Lollobrigida and “La Dolce Vita,” but sensuality and spectacle are hardly alien to the neorealist universe. The struggle for survival doesn’t exclude the pursuit of pleasure. Even as Antonio and Bruno encounter disappointment, indifference and cruelty, they also find glimmers of beauty and delight. Seeking help from a sanitation-worker friend in their search for the Fides, Antonio finds the man at the neighborhood cultural center, rehearsing a musical sketch for a revue. Later, Antonio and Bruno will cross paths with itinerant musicians, a fortuneteller, and a young man blowing bubbles in an open-air bicycle market. They will duck into a restaurant for a snack of fried mozzarella, enduring the condescending stares of the rich patrons at the next table.

Their pursuit of the purloined bicycle is full of pain and anxiety, but it is also an adventure, with episodes of tenderness and comedy on the way to final heartbreak. Those moments, modulated by Alessandro Cicognini’s musical score, provide an undercurrent of hope, much as the bustling rhythm of Rome itself — a city that has resisted dreariness for 2,000 years — supplies a reminder that life goes on.

That’s always a good lesson, though “Bicycle Thieves” is a film entirely without didacticism. It shows everything and doesn’t need to explain anything, and so does away with the false choice between escapism and engagement. To care about a movie can be a way of caring about the world.

“Bicycle Thieves” is available to stream on the [*Criterion Channel*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html), [*HBO Max*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html) or [*Kanopy*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/12/13/archives/the-screen-vittorio-de-sicas-the-bicycle-thief-a-drama-of-postwar.html).

PHOTOS: Top, Antonio (Lamberto Maggiorani) in Vittorio De Sica’s “Bicycle Thieves.” Above from left: the director with Sophia Loren; and “We All Loved Each Other So Much,” one of countless films that reference “Bicycle Thieves.” Below left, Alice Rohrwacher’s “Happy as Lazzaro,” a descendant of De Sica’s classic. Bottom, American movies influenced by the film include “Wendy and Lucy,” starring Michelle Williams. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PRODUZIONI DE SICA; HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; MONDADORI, VIA GETTY IMAGES; NETFLIX; OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES)

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**End of Document**



[***New Jersey Gives Schools an All-Remote Option***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60K3-2XG1-JBG3-639W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1562 words

**Byline:** Tracey Tully

**Highlight:** The decision comes as the teachers union, a close ally of Gov. Philip D. Murphy, had publicly raised concerns about the safety of holding in-person classes.

**Body**

The decision comes as the teachers union, a close ally of Gov. Philip D. Murphy, had publicly raised concerns about the safety of holding in-person classes.

Gov. Philip D. Murphy is giving New Jersey districts the option to offer all-virtual classes when school resumes next month, relaxing his original requirement that teachers provide some in-person classroom instruction.

The policy shift comes as the state’s powerful teachers union for the first time publicly called for an all-virtual start to the school year given the risks still posed by the coronavirus.

It also follows decisions by two of New Jersey’s largest urban districts, Jersey City and Elizabeth, to offer only virtual instruction — plans that were in direct conflict with the governor’s original position and would have required approval from the state.

To be eligible to start the year with all-remote instruction, a district must be able to document why it cannot safely provide in-person instruction and set a date for a return to school, Mr. Murphy said.

“Districts that cannot meet all the health and safety standards for safe in-person instruction will begin their school year in an all-remote fashion,” the governor said. “Public school districts will need to spell out their plans for satisfying these unmet standards and a date by which they anticipate the ability to resume in-person instruction.”

The teachers union, the New Jersey Education Association, a close ally of Mr. Murphy, had raised concerns about the safety of holding in-person classes, but had stopped short of publicly calling for all-virtual instruction.

But late Tuesday, in a [*joint statement*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) with groups representing principals and administrators, the union criticized the state’s lack of uniform school safety guidelines and called for all-remote instruction to protect its members and students from the risk of contracting the virus.

“Our state, while doing better than many others, has not yet stopped the spread of this virus, particularly among the same young people who are scheduled to return to school in under four weeks,” the education leaders wrote.

Marie Blistan, president of the 200,000-member teachers union, said that the concern about the inability to safely return to in-person instruction was coming from a wide spectrum of employees, including principals and superintendents, who provide guidance to elected school boards.

While state officials stressed that the goal was for a majority of schools to offer in-person instruction, Ms. Blistan said she believed the policy shift would lead most districts to opt for all-remote instruction.

“I believe that that is going to happen, one way or another,” Ms. Blistan said. “And I want it to happen before anyone else gets sick.”

The virus has taken a tremendous toll in New Jersey, one of the states hit first and hardest by the pandemic. At least 187,328 people have tested positive for the virus, and there have been [*15,890 deaths*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) linked to Covid-19.

But a strict, monthslong regional lockdown has led to a rate of infection that is now among the [*nation’s lowest*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf).

Still, over the last week, the boards of education in Jersey City and Elizabeth each voted to start school with only virtual instruction. The densely populated city of Bayonne, in Hudson County, and Willingboro, a Burlington County township near the state’s western border with Pennsylvania, also submitted plans that called for [*all-virtual*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) instruction.

The mayor of Newark, Ras Baraka, another close ally of the governor, had publicly urged parents not to send their children to school, citing the increased risk of spreading the virus in a city that has had at least [*652 deaths*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) from Covid-19.

“At this rate that we’re going,” Mr. Baraka, a [*former high school principal*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf), said on Aug. 3, “I would advise everybody to keep their children home from school.”

He [*repeated*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) the sentiment five times.

In late June, Mr. Murphy released a [*104-page plan*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) that required schools to offer some form of in-person instruction. Weeks later, he said that [*parents could choose*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) to not send their children to school, and that districts must offer those students all-virtual classes.

When virus cases began to [*increase*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) in New Jersey after falling to their lowest points in mid-July, Mr. Murphy announced that children would need to wear masks throughout the school day.

On Monday night, the board of education in Elizabeth, the state’s fourth-largest city with 28,300 students, said it had no choice but to offer only virtual instruction because it did not have enough teachers to staff its classrooms.

As of Tuesday afternoon, a spokesman said that 402 Elizabeth teachers — one in five instructional staff members — had provided doctors’ notes and documentation asserting that they could not teach in person based on their own underlying health conditions or those of someone they lived with.

The lack of sufficient staff members meant that in-person instruction was “no longer a practical reality,” said Pat Politano, a spokesman for the Elizabeth schools.

The moves by officials in urban districts had presented a challenge for a governor who had in part framed the argument about the need for some in-person learning as an issue of equity for students who rely on school for access to computers and basic nutrition.

New Jersey is home to some of the top-rated schools in the nation. But it is equally well known for the economic gaps that exist between its ***working-class*** and poor cities and its more affluent suburbs, where parents may be better able to cope with the expense and rigor of remote learning.

New York City is the [*only large district*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) in the country that has said it intended to offer in-person instruction — with children reporting to classrooms one to three times a week — provided the rate of new positive tests remains under 3 percent.

Mayor Bill de Blasio, when asked on Wednesday if New York was concerned about teacher shortages similar to those the Elizabeth schools were facing, said the district was reviewing requests from about 15 percent of its teachers for health-related accommodations.

“We’re going to have the resources to serve our kids,” Mr. de Blasio said.

Across the Hudson River, in Jersey City, the school board voted last week to offer only virtual instruction. The mayor, Steven M. Fulop, cited the state’s lack of access to speedy coronavirus test results, the absence of a robust contact-tracing network and shortages of cleaning supplies as reasons for the decision.

“There’s limited resources around testing,” Mr. Fulop said in an interview on Tuesday. “There’s slow response time, and there continues to be a lack of resources around cleaning supplies and sanitation.”

It was unclear how many of New Jersey’s 584 school districts might attempt to shift to all-virtual instruction. All districts now have the option of resubmitting reopening plans based on the new guidance.

The [*American Academy of Pediatrics*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) has recommended that students be “physically present in school” as much as possible, and has emphasized that there are health, social and educational risks to keeping children at home.

In many New Jersey towns, a majority of parents had said in planning surveys that they intended to send their children to school in person.

Many districts were preparing for a hybrid model of instruction that alternated between coming to school in person and tuning in remotely to teachers’ lessons from devices at home. The rotation would enable districts to maintain the required six-foot distance between occupants of the building.

But in a survey conducted by Elizabeth, 52 percent of parents still said they would not send their children to in-person classes, Mr. Politano said.

The debate among parents had become more intense as the first day of school grew nearer and the state’s rate of coronavirus infection increased slightly before dropping again.

Mr. Murphy had in part blamed the spike in cases on [*indoor house parties*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf) among young people; in response, he reduced the number of people permitted to gather indoors from 100 to 25.

It was a policy shift broadly noted by educators, who began to publicly question how they could be expected to keep children and staff members safe indoors, often in aging school buildings that may lack proper ventilation. About 2,500 of the state’s public school buildings were built more than 50 years ago, Ms. Blistan said.

“We’re not saying we shouldn’t open schools,” Patricia Wright, executive director of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, said on Tuesday in an interview. “We strongly believe students should be in school. What I think we need is more time.”

In its [*statement*](https://www.njasa.net/cms/lib/NJ07000175/Centricity/ModuleInstance/825/njasanjpsa%20njea%20statement%2081120ahg%20cc.pdf), the N.J.E.A., together with the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, predicted that the absence of a uniform guidance from Mr. Murphy would lead to a chaotic decision-making process.

“The question of whether and when to reopen for in-person instruction is first and foremost a public health decision that cannot be left in the hands of nearly 600 individual school districts,” the statement read.

“The stakes are too high, and the consequences of a wrong decision are too grave.”

Troy Closson and Eliza Shapiro contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Gov. Philip D. Murphy’s shift came as a teachers union called for a remote start to the school year. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2020

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[***Tear-Gas Gelato, Foulmouthed Mooncakes and Other Foods Fit for a Revolution***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XY5-M1B1-JBG3-6511-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Laurie Wen and Kiran Ridley

**Highlight:** How the Hong Kong democracy movement feeds on the city’s distinct identity.

**Body**

How the Hong Kong democracy movement feeds on the city’s distinct identity.

HONG KONG — “Who says I can’t sell an ice cream cone and add a gas mask on the side?” Chung Yiu-wa, the co-owner of Sogno Gelato, said. “I have a license to sell, and I can attach free gifts if I want. I’m not breaking any laws.”

At first glance, Sogno Gelato, an ice-cream shop in a mall in a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the New Territories, could be mistaken for a tween girl’s dream bedroom. The walls are covered with little squares of canary yellow, robin’s egg blue and baby pink — from hundreds of Post-it notes with pro-democracy messages. There is a giant stuffed Winnie-the-Pooh, [*a cheeky reference to President Xi Jinping of China*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html). Its right eye is covered with a bloodied bandage in homage to   [*a first-aider who was partially blinded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) by a police projectile during a demonstration.

Mr. Chung, who goes by Ah Wa, and his co-owner have turned Sogno Gelato into a makeshift rear-guard supply station, counseling space and surrogate living room for Hong Kong’s democracy movement. The store gives out free ice cream to supporters. It serves late-night meals to battle-worn front liners, including home-cooked dishes dropped off by neighbors. (The menu one recent night: chestnut and chicken stew, pan-fried pork chops with onion, buttered corn.) It hosts know-your-rights workshops. It distributes donated protective gear, including gas masks and bike helmets of the sturdy kind, which many young protesters cannot afford, at least not if they still want to be able to feed themselves.

A few days before Christmas, Ah Wa added a few limited-time-only holiday flavors to the menu: chocolate and rum, Christmas pudding, ginger snap and “tear-gas.” He pledged to continue serving the tear-gas gelato — it’s made with black pepper — as long as the government keeps shooting gas canisters at protesters. Or as long as Sogno Gelato manages to remain open.

The store doesn’t take cash donations, so customers will sometimes pay for a HK$32 scoop with a HK$500 bill and say, “Keep the change.”

Sogno Gelato has no staff. “The kids run it now,” Ah Wa said. Many teenagers hang out there partly to avoid political arguments at home. One day, several of them insisted on serving me their special: “Five Big Snow Balls,” which in Cantonese sounds almost exactly like “Five Big Demands” — itself an echo of the measures protesters have been calling for, including universal suffrage and an investigation into police abuses.

Many of the regulars refer to Ah Wa, 31, as “Dad” and have given him their ID numbers and birth dates: That way, if they are arrested, he can quickly hand over the necessary information to volunteer defense lawyers.

One September evening, a Sogno Gelato regular named Gary — early 20s, born on the mainland, out of work, recently kicked out by his family — was on a bus with friends, on his way to meet Ah Wa after a protest. (“I help build barricades. I don’t throw things or fight the cops.”) The police stopped the bus and searched everyone on board. Among Gary’s things, they found an anti-germ mask, work gloves and something, apparently, more incriminating still. “He has restaurant coupons!” an officer said. “He must be a front liner!” Gary was arrested.

His friends called Sogno Gelato for help.

At 2 a.m., the police were still recording his statement. “The lawyer asked if I was hungry, and arranged for Ah Wa to bring food to the police station and hand it over to the cops,” Gary told me later, at the shop. “He brought me a Yeung Chow fried rice.”

The lawyer tried to negotiate with the officers to let Gary eat while they continued to question him. “At that moment, I wanted to cry,” Gary said. He thought then about the woman who was representing him pro bono: “‘You’re just my volunteer lawyer; you don’t need to act like my family. I can’t ask that of you.’”

“Maybe she felt I was about to cry, so she joked with me instead, asking, ‘How’s the fried rice?’ I said, ‘It’s delicious.’”

If the current protests in Hong Kong have lasted seven months despite minimal concessions from the government and the rising costs — economic, social, [*psychological*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) — of all the disruption and violence, that’s partly because sympathetic citizens like Ah Wa have mobilized to organize parallel support systems for the demonstrators. Various shadow networks of caterers, lawyers, health care providers or car-poolers have emerged. There are   [*apps that tell you which restaurants and shops are “yellow”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) (pro-democracy) and which are “blue” (pro-police and pro-government).

Protesters and their supporters may disagree over whether violent tactics on the streets will help or hurt the movement overall, or whether what they want for Hong Kong is outright independence, a greater degree of self-determination or just the proper application of the existing “one country, two systems” principle, which is supposed to guarantee the city’s semi-autonomy. But they are united by the notion that Hong Kong is distinct from mainland China, politically and culturally, that it is their home — and so its fate should be theirs to decide. This local pride, though it has run deep for a long time, became resolutely political after the Umbrella Movement in 2014.

Before the city’s spectacular economic development in the 1970s, many poor Hong Kongers, including waves of refugees from the mainland, eked out a living as street vendors. But as the city’s economy soared and more and more people took white-collar jobs, government policies discouraged peddling on the street. Hawking, in turn, became a symbol of a distinct Hong Kong identity under threat, of a local underdog oppressed by an overlord government — whether colonial British or communist Chinese — that seems forever unaccountable to the people.

These tensions came to a head on Lunar New Year’s Day in 2016, when several proponents of localism — a movement to preserve the city’s unique features, especially against encroachment from Beijing — called for a gathering to support hawkers selling fishballs and other cart foods in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Mong Kok, claiming the vendors were being harassed by the authorities. That night, there were clashes with police and arrests. Later, some participants whose public profiles continued to rise, like Edward Leung Tin-kei, were barred from running for office, and were tried and [*sentenced to long prison terms*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) for those Lunar New Year clashes. “Free Hong Kong! Revolution of Our Time!,” a mantra of the current protests, is attributed to Leung.

That February night in 2016, now a seminal moment in Hong Kong’s democracy movement, is known as the Fishball Revolution.

On July 22, a young pro-democracy activist committed suicide after his relatives kicked him out of the house. That’s when Andy Cheng, a 28-year-old working in advertising, decided to step up. “If your family doesn’t want to be your family, come to me,” Andy thought when he sent out an open invitation for dinner that night on [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) and Telegram. “I’ll be your family.” He made coconut chicken soup, scrambled eggs with tomatoes, stir-fried greens and steamed minced pork — as typical a Hong Kong home meal as it gets. Two people showed up.

By August, he said, he was serving 30 to 40 dinners daily and several people were crashing overnight on the floor of his work space. Andy started calling the office — a hip loft with gunmetal slate floors and shelves filled with collectible toys — a “safe house.” Soups are the taste of home, according to both Andy’s mother and many Hong Kong soap operas, and he makes sure to serve one, slow-cooked, at every meal.

One evening in early October, Andy, wearing Le Corbusier glasses and harem pants, was hosting a hot-pot party. Shoes were piled up by the front door. Dozens of plates lined the large table: thin slices of marbled beef rolled up like cigars, julienne pork collar, enoki mushrooms, Chinese lettuce, dumplings filled with pork and pea pods, slivered grass carp and crispy fried fish skin.

A dozen of us stood close to the table, the better to reach the pot of bubbling broth in the middle; hot pot may be Chinese cuisine’s most communal dish. I asked a teenage girl what she preferred. The dumplings, she said — but only their skins. “When I eat with my dad,” she added, “he eats the fillings for me.”

When I saw her again the following week, her parents had kicked her out, suspecting her of participating in the protests. Her father is a police officer, and the family lives in police housing.

I call her Little Princess at her friend’s suggestion, after the nickname of a character in a love story she wrote in 2018. At that time, Little Princess, now 17, had never been to a protest. She didn’t join any until last June, when, after the government suspended but did not withdraw the controversial extradition bill that set off last year’s crisis, an activist [*fell to his death*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) from a scaffolding.

The next afternoon, Little Princess was among the two million Hong Kongers who marched against the bill and police violence. On July 1, she was one of several hundred protesters who broke into and briefly occupied the Legislative Council.

Little Princess said her favorite books are “1984” and “Animal Farm.” Her favorite classes are Chinese literature and history — especially Russian history (“because Gorbachev reformed a very closed society”) and French history (“because of all the revolutions”).

By September, Little Princess and two other 17-year-old girls were conducting online research on how to make petrol bombs. They bought the materials, put them together and went to a quarry for tests and to practice their throwing. They were preparing for Oct. 1, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, a day that some protesters were announcing would mark “[*the end game*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html)” against the authorities.

“The night before, I got scared,” Little Princess told me. One of the girls in her team WhatsApped them: “Let’s write wills.” Little Princess said she apologized to her parents in her note: “I told them this is our future, not theirs. I hoped they wouldn’t scold me for doing something for my own future.” The three also made a pledge: If they survived the next day, they’d go for a special, amazing meal together. Maybe Japanese buffet or hot pot.

One dessert place invites front liners who are low on cash to “[*come be food testers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html).” A steamed-rice crepe shop   [*offers a free meal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) to anyone who hands in a yellow Post-it that says, “I love Hong Kong”; at one burger joint, you’re comped a meal if you whisper to a staffer: “Hong Kong,   [*ga yau*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html)!” — “add oil,” a term of encouragement among protesters. Employees of an e-commerce platform prepay for restaurant meals and groceries, then   [*give out the order numbers to demonstrators*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) so they can claim the food. Sister Cat, a blue-haired grandmother, became famous during the Umbrella Movement for delivering free meals to occupation sites from her traditional diner. Now her Facebook page features a standing invitation for anyone to come share a meal, on the house, for her birthday — every day.

Mooncakes, round pastries often filled with a pristine, salted egg yolk, can be eaten at any time, but they’re most common around Mid-Autumn Festival, an annual harvest ritual held during a full moon. Legend has it that on the occasion of the holiday in 1368, Han Chinese rebels wanting to overthrow Mongol oppressors slipped into the cakes pieces of paper calling for a revolt. The people got the message, rose up and overthrew the Mongol Yuan dynasty. Today, Kristina Sze, the owner of Wah Yee Tang Bakery, doesn’t bother hiding her messages inside the cakes; she stamps them on top.

“We’re in it Together.” “Add Oil.” One day in July, upon finding out that Ms. Sze couldn’t keep up with orders in the lead-up to the holiday, I volunteered to help her out. She picked up a quarter of a bright-orange salted duck-egg yolk, stuffed it inside some lotus-seed paste, wrapped the paste with a pastry skin and handed the ball to me. I rolled it for no more than two seconds, as instructed, and, also as instructed, placed it inside a mold imprinted with an obscenity and the image of a cat raising a middle finger.

When, at the end of the day, the accordion metal gate of Ms. Sze’s shop is drawn shut, it reveals a hand-painted mural that could pass for a Hong Kong political philosophy: “Uphold Human Rights and Eat Good Food.”

By 8 p.m., hundreds of us, some with Santa hats or reindeer antlers, lined up on the tiny street outside Kwong Wing Restaurant, in Tsim Sha Tsui, for Christmas dinner. Riot police stood guard 100 feet away. Earlier, the police had called the restaurant to warn that the celebration could be considered an “illegal assembly” — the implication being that we could all be arrested.

A young woman in a white lacy blouse waited an hour and a half before she could eat, standing on the sidewalk, cold chicken wings and spaghetti from a small paper plate. “Sure, there’s better-tasting food out there,” she told me. “But this is the best Christmas feast I’ve ever had.”

Kitchen Guy, an unemployed chef, had recently become a folk hero after sneaking onto the campus of Polytechnic University during a police siege to cook for protesters trapped inside. Kwong Wing Restaurant offered him a job. No thanks, he said, but I’d really like to help cook a free Christmas dinner for our comrades. Kwong Wing agreed, and a dozen other restaurants volunteered to co-sponsor the event. Then on Christmas Eve, news broke that Kitchen Guy had been arrested at a protest.

On Christmas night, he was still in detention, but the dinner went ahead anyway. The food was free. Most people left hefty tips to contribute to Kitchen Guy’s legal defense.

“Comrades from everywhere are bringing more food to the dinner,” someone [*posted on Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) during the evening. “The more we eat, the more food there is! The more you arrest, the more people will come out to cook for our comrades!”

One man supports the protesters. A restaurant supports him. Other restaurants support the restaurant. Protesters support all of them. Good food or bad food, the Hong Kong democracy movement feeds on solidarity, and solidarity, it seems, grows exponentially.

Laurie Wen, an activist, is writing a book about Hong Kong’s democracy movement.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/world/asia/china-winnie-the-pooh-censored.html).

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PHOTO: Homemade samosas for a pro-democracy protestor in Hong Kong (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIRAN RIDLEY)

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2020

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[***10 Great Movies on HBO Max***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:602J-0JY1-DXY4-X48V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1376 words

**Byline:** Jason Bailey

**Highlight:** Getting started on the new streaming service? Here’s a guide to some of the best film offerings, from classics to contemporary hits.

**Body**

Getting started on the new streaming service? Here’s a guide to some of the best film offerings, from classics to contemporary hits.

The landing was [*a bit rougher*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) than expected, but [*HBO Max has arrived*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html), offering up an all-you-can-eat buffet of [*HBO*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) programming, hit sitcoms and streaming originals. And, of course, there are movies — thousands of them, pulled from a wide array of blockbuster franchises and canon classics. It’s a lot of programming to choose from (10,000 hours, we’re told), so here’s a quick tour through some of the highlights and entry points:

‘Citizen Kane’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)]

When AT&amp;T [*shuttered*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) the movie-buff-friendly FilmStruck streaming service in 2018, the company promised an extensive classics library for what eventually became HBO Max. And they weren’t kidding; the [*Turner Classic Movies-branded tab*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) of the Max interface boasts such all-time favorites as “Singin’ in the Rain,” “Casablanca” and “Ben-Hur.” But if you’re looking to dive into Hollywood’s Golden Age, why not start with the film routinely singled out as the best of them all? HBO Max is the exclusive streaming service home of Orson Welles’s 1941 masterpiece, the [*fast-paced and funny*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) chronicle of the rise and fall of an American media tycoon — a picture as delightfully entertaining as it was technically and structurally innovative.

‘City Lights’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

The TCM tab is currently spotlighting the work of one of the greatest filmmakers and performers of all time, Charlie Chaplin, and it’s an excellent representation of his filmography. It’s tough to say where to start, but you can’t go wrong with “[*City Lights*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html),” the tender story of Chaplin’s Little Tramp and the blind flower girl (Virginia Cherrill) he befriends and helps to see again. Their heart-rending reunion makes for one of the most moving conclusions in all of movies, and this remarkable picture — which Chaplin released as a silent film with music and sound effects in 1931, well after the age of talkies began — serves as a potent reminder of the power of cinematic pantomime.

‘Bicycle Thieves’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)]

The carefully curated Criterion Collection was one of the highlights of the FilmStruck platform, and its subsequent spinoff service, [*The Criterion Channel*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html), remains the gold standard for cinephile streaming. But the 200 or so Criterion titles included with HBO Max are an excellent introductory film studies course, with generous helpings of the essentials: Bergman, Fellini, Kurosawa … and Godzilla. But [*Vittorio De Sica’s 1948 masterpiece*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) may be the best place to start. A key entry in the [*neorealist movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) that defined postwar Italian cinema, it concerns a ***working-class*** father whose bicycle — crucial to his work and thus his ability to feed his family — is stolen. But it’s much more than a simple story of lost and found; De Sica and his cast (none of them trained actors) beautifully capture the fear and desperation of living on the brink of poverty.

‘My Neighbor Totoro’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

HBO Max grabbed headlines with its pricey acquisitions of series like “Friends” and “The Big Bang Theory,” but film fans were delighted that the service landed the [*great white whale of the digital age*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html): streaming rights to the Studio Ghibli catalog. HBO Max’s [*21-film selection*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) represents the bulk of the feature output from the Japanese animation studio, and while the best of the bunch is [*up for debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html), Hayao Miyazaki’s 1988 feature is easily the [*best introduction*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) to the studio’s distinctive style, a delightful combination of animated exaggeration and detail-oriented, character-driven realism. “Totoro,” the story of two young girls and the wood spirits they befriend, is vivacious and warmhearted, trafficking in the everyday magic and fertile imagination of childhood.

‘Wonder Woman’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

The service’s [*DC-branded tab*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) is very much a work in progress — presumably because of the complexities of licensing deals, it’s missing such beloved comic book-inspired properties as the original “Superman” movies and the Christopher Nolan-directed “Dark Knight” trilogy. But the tab does include Tim Burton’s [*Batman*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) films, last year’s Oscar-winning “[*Joker*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)” origin story, and Patty Jenkins’s smash 2017 [*big-screen take*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) on the iconic superheroine, with Gal Gadot charismatically deflecting bullets and swinging her Lasso of Truth as the Amazonian princess who saves humanity from evil during World War I.

‘Behind the Candelabra’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

Since the 1983 broadcast of “[*The Terry Fox Story*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html),” the first made-for-HBO movie, the network has attracted numerous marquee directors — including Mike Nichols, Barry Levinson, Dee Rees and Steven Soderbergh, who won widespread acclaim for [*this 2013 snapshot*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) of Liberace’s later years. Michael Douglas is pitch-perfect as the flamboyant yet closeted entertainer, capturing the charisma and charm of his public persona while ably downshifting in his tender moments with Scott Thorson (Matt Damon), the young lover who tells the story.

‘At the Heart of Gold: Inside the USA Gymnastics Scandal’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)]

HBO’s documentaries have celebrated cultural figures, revisited historical events and addressed social ills. One of the most affecting is Erin Lee Carr’s exposé of Dr. Larry Nassar, the notorious abuser of hundreds of young gymnasts. Carr addresses the crimes (in all their explicit and sickening detail), the psychology of their perpetrator, and the power structures that allowed him to get away with it for so long. But her focus is on the victims, and the heavy burden of guilt and shame they carried for so long (and still carry). It’s [*a piercing documentary*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) and an upsetting experience, but most of all, it’s a film about believing women — before it’s too late.

‘Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)]

The streaming exclusivity of the eight filmed adaptations of J.K. Rowling’s best-selling book series is another of HBO Max’s big selling points, and all of the movies have their fine qualities — yes, even the first two entries. But [*the first great film*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) in the franchise (and, arguably, still its best) was the third, in which the future Oscar winner Alfonso Cuarón (of “Roma” and “Gravity”) took the wheel, augmenting the familiar characters and iconography with a dash of his own moral complexity and subtle pathos.

‘Her Smell’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

Thankfully, the service’s contemporary offerings aren’t just limited to blockbusters. Many a memorable indie picture is nestled in the Max catalog, including Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden’s “[*Half Nelson*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html),” Debra Granik’s “[*Winter’s Bone*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html),” Gerardo Naranjo’s “[*Miss Bala*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)” and this [*scorching musical drama*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) from the writer and director Alex Ross Perry. Elisabeth Moss comes on like a hurricane as Becky Something, a Courtney Love-esque punk rock star whose inner demons and self-destructive behavior threaten to collapse her career — a descent and resurrection captured in a series of unnervingly claustrophobic backstage meltdowns and recording studio encounters.

‘Us’

[*Stream it here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).

Lest we forget, for years upon years, the [*primary draw of HBO*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html) was right there in the name: Home Box Office, i.e., going to the movies without leaving your home. In those distant, pre-“Sopranos,” pre-“Sex and the City” days, people mostly watched HBO to see big Hollywood movies, a year or so after their theatrical runs. And there are plenty of those too: Charlize Theron and Seth Rogen in “[*Long Shot*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html),” the Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga-fronted “[*A Star Is Born*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)” or Jordan Peele’s mind-bending horror thriller “[*Us*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html).” It may well be the best of the bunch, not only for its inventive screenplay, goosebump-raising suspense, and terrific performances (particularly a chilling, double-edged turn by [*Lupita Nyong’o*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/hbo-max-amazon-roku.html)), but also for sheer nostalgia: it’s exactly the kind of nightmare-fueled horror picture that us children of the ’80s loved to tiptoe out of our bedrooms in the middle of the night to sneak-watch on HBO.

Update June 10, 2020: HBO Max has temporarily dropped “Gone With the Wind” from its lineup. A brief mention of it has been removed from this article.

PHOTO: Lupita Nyong’o in “Us,” from the director Jordan Peele. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Claudette Barius/Universal Pictures FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 25, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Venice Glimpses a Future With Fewer Tourists, and Likes What It Sees***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6025-2X81-DXY4-X031-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jason Horowitz

**Highlight:** Can a city whose history and culture drew tens of millions of visitors a year reinvent itself? The coronavirus may give it a chance to try.

**Body**

Can a city whose history and culture drew tens of millions of visitors a year reinvent itself? The coronavirus may give it a chance to try.

VENICE — For a change, it was the Venetians who crowded the square.

Days before Italy lifted coronavirus travel restrictions on Wednesday that had prevented [*the usual crush of international visitors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/europe/venice-italy-tourist-invasion.html) from entering the city, hundreds of locals gathered on chalk asterisks drawn several feet apart. They had come to protest a new dock that would bring boatloads of tourists through one of [*Venice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/world/europe/venice-tourism-surveillance.html)’s last livable neighborhoods, but also to seize a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to show that another, less tourist-addled future was viable.

“This can be a working city, not just a place for people to visit,” said the protest’s organizer, Andrea Zorzi, a 45-year-old law professor who frantically handed out hundreds of signs reading, “Nothing Changes If You Don’t Change Anything.” He argued that the virus, as tragic as it was, had demonstrated that [*Venice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/world/europe/venice-tourism-surveillance.html) could be a better place. “It can be normal,” he said.

The coronavirus has laid bare the underlying weaknesses of the societies it has ravaged, whether [*economic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/15/world/europe/coronavirus-inequality.html) or [*racial inequality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/coronavirus-race.html), an overdependence on [*global production*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/24/world/europe/italy-farms-coronavirus.html) chains, or rickety [*health care systems*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/27/world/europe/coronavirus-italy-bergamo.html). In Italy, [*all those problems have emerged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/21/world/europe/italy-coronavirus-south.html), but the virus has also revealed that a country blessed with a stunning artistic patrimony has developed an addiction to [*tourism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/world/europe/venice-tourism-surveillance.html) that has priced many residents out of historic centers and crowded out creativity, entrepreneurialism and authentic Italian life.

During the lockdown, [*Rome’s center became as sleepy as a ruin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/world/europe/italy-rome-coronavirus-lockdown.html?searchResultPosition=9), while the surrounding neighborhoods remained vibrant. The mayor of Florence said he would tour the world, starting in China, to raise private funds for a city hollowed by the lack of tourists. But it is [*Venice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/world/europe/venice-tourism-surveillance.html), a city threatened by [*inundations of tens of millions of tourists*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/10/travel/venice-treviso-overtourism.html) as much as it is [*by high water*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/13/world/europe/venice-flood.html), where [*things changed most drastically*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/27/travel/coronavirus-venice-flooding.html).

For months, the alleys, porticoes and campos reverberated with Italian, and even with Venetian dialect. The lack of big boats reduced the waves on the canals, allowing locals to take their small boats and kayaks out on cleaner water. Residents even ventured to St. Mark’s Square, which they usually avoid.

Venice, [*which gave the world the word quarantine*](https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/historyquarantine.html) during a prior pandemic, has undergone many transformations in its [*roughly 1,500-year history*](https://www.britannica.com/place/Venice/History). It started as a hide-out for refugees, became a powerful republic, mercantile force and artistic hub.

Now, it’s a destination that largely lives off its history and a [*tourism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/world/europe/venice-tourism-surveillance.html) cash cow worth 3 billion euros, or about $3.3 billion. But with the money comes hordes of day trippers, giant cruise ships, growing colonies of Airbnb apartments, souvenir shops, tourist-trap restaurants and high rents that have increasingly pushed out Venetians.

That lucrative model is likely to return. But longtime proponents of a less touristy city are hoping to take advantage of the global standstill.

“This is a tragedy that has touched us all, but Covid could be an opportunity,” said Marco Baravalle, a leader of an anti-cruise-ship movement who called the absence of big boats “magnificent.”

He said he feared that the city’s mayor, Luigi Brugnaro, backed by powerful boating and tourism interests, would turn things back as soon as possible. “It’s going to be difficult,” Mr. Baravalle said. “But it’s our best chance.”

If tourism critics are in agreement that there needs to be a different vision for Venice, they are less clear on how to bring about a renaissance.

There is talk of a proposed international climate change center, of lower rents drawing local artisans and factory workers back to the islands from the mainland and of a creative community of artists, designers, web producers and architects.

In this floating field of dreams, people will come, just other kinds of people. The tourists would be more like the arts crowd that flocks to the Venice Biennale, and they would carry canvas tote bags and be interested in Venice’s heritage, its museums and galleries. Students would stay and become young professionals, draw start-up investors, and replenish an aging and diminishing population. Good restaurants and natural wine bars would push out the awful ones.

“The type of people you attract to Venice depends on what you offer,” said Luca Berta, a co-founder of VeniceArtFactory, which promotes new art in the city, as he stood in his exhibition space.

Alberto Ferlenga, the rector of the Iuav University of Venice, one of several colleges in the city, said his goal was to make Venice more a university town, with students and professors making the city their campus.

He said he was working on a project with the city, powerful Italian banks and Airbnb that would allow thousands of students — including international ones — to live in Airbnb apartments, which are now empty, instead of commuting from the cheaper mainland.

“Common sense says, ‘Let’s take advantage of it,’” Mr. Ferlenga said of the available housing. Students who stayed and built careers and families in Venice could prove as economically viable as the mass tourism market, he argued. “It would change everything,” he said. “In this moment, there is a temporary window.”

But as advocates of change talk of motivating long-term lending through housing-tax breaks, low-interest loans, and a restricting of [*infamously generous squatting rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/15/world/europe/palace-of-squatters-is-a-symbol-of-refugee-crisis.html), the window is already closing.

In recent days, the city was opened only to those in the surrounding Veneto region. The place was still jammed.

But the city was offered a sense of what was, and what could be. Only Italian — and Veneto-accented Italian — could be heard over the [*spritzes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/06/dining/06spritz.html) and plates of black squid ink spaghetti.

“We thought we’d take advantage of this last chance to see Venice when it is only for us, alone,” said Matteo Rizzi, 40, from nearby Portogruaro, whose children carried cameras as he crossed a bridge into the city from the train station. “It’s like having the museum to ourselves.”

Toto Bergamo Rossi, director of the [*Venetian Heritage Foundation*](https://www.venetianheritage.eu/?lang=en), who lives in a palace not far from the train station, said the hordes had rudely waked him that morning.

“I was really sad, and at the same time, really angry,” said Mr. Bergamo Rossi, whose 15th-century ancestor is depicted in an equestrian statue high above the square where the residents had protested. “We don’t want to go back to that. I want my city to be a real city.”

“Airbnb is like our Covid,’’ he added. “It’s like a plague, and it turned us into a ghost town.”

His organization has prepared an open letter on behalf of “citizens of the world” that he said he would send this week to leaders of the Italian government.

Co-signed by museum directors and academics, and also by Mick Jagger, Francis Ford Coppola and Wes Anderson, the letter presents “Ten Commandments” for the new Venice, including stricter regulation of ‘‘tourist flow’’ and the Airbnb market, and support for long-term rentals.

Supporters of the status quo are quick to dismiss such proposals as noise from the out-of-touch rich and famous. And local tourism workers said they hoped things would switch back soon.

“It’s been a bad period. But I think it will go back to how it was before in about two or three months,” said Jessica Rossato, 28, from nearby Camponogara as she stood outside the Banco Giro bar by the Rialto Bridge. “And that’s an absolutely good thing.”

But it’s not only Venice’s upper- and professional-class residents who hunger for a more livable city. A couple, who have a baby on the way and who were visiting from the mainland, said the rents, even in the more ***working-class*** districts, were too high for their salaries.

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That is why the protesters in the square were arguing that something had to change. As they held their signs over their heads and applauded, Mr. Zorzi told them that their “common battle” during the period of lockdown “would not be in vain.”

A fellow demonstrator asked him if they would still march down to the new tourist port as planned. He explained that the police had nixed the idea out of coronavirus concerns.

“They say there are too many of us,” Mr. Zorzi said, shaking his head.

PHOTOS: A view of the Venetian island of San Giorgio Maggiore from a vaporetto. Left, protesting plans for a pier that would bring boatloads of tourists into one of Venice’s last livable neighborhoods. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALESSANDRO GRASSANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A5)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Picture Venice Bustling Again, Not With Tourists, but Italians***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6029-P1N1-DXY4-X17S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 4, 2020 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

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**Byline:** By Jason Horowitz

**Body**

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Days before Italy lifted coronavirus travel restrictions on Wednesday that had prevented the usual crush of international visitors from entering the city, hundreds of locals gathered on chalk asterisks drawn several feet apart. They had come to protest a new dock that would bring boatloads of tourists through one of Venice's last livable neighborhoods, but also to seize a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to show that another, less tourist-addled future was viable.

''This can be a working city, not just a place for people to visit,'' said the protest's organizer, Andrea Zorzi, a 45-year-old law professor who frantically handed out hundreds of signs reading, ''Nothing Changes If You Don't Change Anything.'' He argued that the virus, as tragic as it was, had demonstrated that Venice could be a better place. ''It can be normal,'' he said.

The coronavirus has laid bare the underlying weaknesses of the societies it has ravaged, whether economic or racial inequality, an overdependence on global production chains, or rickety health care systems. In Italy, all those problems have emerged, but the virus has also revealed that a country blessed with a stunning artistic patrimony has developed an addiction to tourism that has priced many residents out of historic centers and crowded out creativity, entrepreneurialism and authentic Italian life.

During the lockdown, Rome's center became as sleepy as a ruin, while the surrounding neighborhoods remained vibrant. The mayor of Florence said he would tour the world, starting in China, to raise private funds for a city hollowed by the lack of tourists. But it is Venice, a city threatened by inundations of tens of millions of tourists as much as it is by high water, where things changed most drastically.

For months, the alleys, porticoes and campos reverberated with Italian, and even with Venetian dialect. The lack of big boats reduced the waves on the canals, allowing locals to take their small boats and kayaks out on cleaner water. Residents even ventured to St. Mark's Square, which they usually avoid.

Venice, which gave the world the word quarantine during a prior pandemic, has undergone many transformations in its roughly 1,500-year history. It started as a hide-out for refugees, became a powerful republic, mercantile force and artistic hub.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/world/europe/coronavirus-venice-tourists.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/world/europe/coronavirus-venice-tourists.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A view of the Venetian island of San Giorgio Maggiore from a vaporetto. Left, protesting plans for a pier that would bring boatloads of tourists into one of Venice's last livable neighborhoods. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALESSANDRO GRASSANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A5)

**Load-Date:** June 4, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Democrats Plan to Vote As Source of Comfort: 'What Is Normal Now?'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YFG-0KF1-JBG3-6020-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 17, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1294 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina

**Body**

Arizona's primary is on Tuesday, and Democrats there are holding onto the idea that they still have control over something: ''I want to believe that voting takes away some of the fear.''

PHOENIX -- Supermarket shelves are barren. Schools are closing across the country. But in Arizona, many Democrats are hoping that voting in the presidential primary provides a slice of normalcy at a time that is anything but normal.

''I want to believe that voting takes away some of the fear,'' said Dawn Schumann, the political director for the Arizona Teamsters. ''The fear is taking a lot out of all of us.''

In dozens of interviews at polling places across the state this weekend, where early voting was underway, residents said voting felt like both an act of faith and defiance, even as other states were considering whether to move forward.

By Monday, four states -- Louisiana, Georgia, Ohio and Kentucky -- had postponed their primary elections, with more likely to follow. But Arizona was still set to hold its election on Tuesday as planned. State and local officials said they would make disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer available at polling places, and they encouraged those who could to vote by mail.

The 8,000 members of Ms. Schumann's union, Teamsters Local 104, include airline workers and delivery workers, people who could be among the most at risk for contracting the coronavirus. But she said they were anticipating the primary.

''They interact with a lot of people -- they touch everything globally,'' Ms. Schumann said. ''I have no doubt many of them are eager to vote, maybe even more eager.''

When Stephanie Ringler, 49, and David Devenport, 62, came to cast their ballots at the Burton Barr Public Library, near downtown Phoenix, on Friday afternoon, they had the future on their minds. But they vacillated between thinking of a time when the nation would go ''back to normal'' and wondering aloud, ''What is normal now?''

''We need an adult in the White House, first and foremost,'' Ms. Ringler said. ''We need a functioning cabinet who listens to common sense, who listens to science.''

They said they had watched with dismay as the crisis mounted in recent days, and expressed confusion about President Trump's comments on the virus.

''I am deeply worried about how unprepared we are for this,'' Mr. Devenport said, while adding that he had found inspiration among his friends.

He said he felt as if they were looking out for one another in new ways, such as texting when they are out shopping to ask, ''Can I pick anything up for you?''

Voting, he said, is a kind of extension of that community, a way he could act when so many feel helpless. As voters, they could practice social distancing even as they attempted to knit society back together.

''We don't have enough people out there talking the truth and speaking about reality,'' he said. ''We shouldn't have to be this way.''

Sara Miller, 53, a teacher at a Catholic school, had gone to a Costco in Phoenix on Friday morning to try to buy food for a weekend dinner party. She walked out empty-handed after she saw the lines and the picked-over aisles.

''What we're seeing now is mob mentality and someone needs to talk us out of that, get us out of that kind of thinking of every man for himself,'' said Ms. Miller, a lifelong Democrat who mailed in her ballot for former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. last week, in large part because she liked his demeanor.

''We all want things that we know, that are familiar. We just really need calm,'' she said. ''We all have to remember we're in this together. Do we have someone to remind us?''

Arizona is one of a handful of states both Republicans and Democrats believe will be competitive in the general election, and both Mr. Biden and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont had campaigned there before the outbreak.

While Mr. Sanders has so far performed well in the West, particularly in states with large Latino populations, polls in Arizona indicate he is facing an uphill climb here.

The vast majority of voters interviewed said they preferred Mr. Biden precisely because he was a familiar presence who they believed could win over moderates here and in other parts of the country.

''Absolutely nothing is the same -- but where do we go with our worries?'' said Lorraine Frias, 51, a nonprofit fund-raiser who voted with her husband in Mesa on Friday afternoon.

The couple was undecided for weeks, but landed on Mr. Biden after he won a string of primaries on Super Tuesday.

''We want someone who will not overpromise, who will be honest,'' she said. ''But so much is changing so fast, I don't even know what we need to do.''

Even some supporters of Mr. Sanders believe that those who are most likely to vote for him are less likely to cast a ballot as the panic over the coronavirus spreads. Many of his backers are ***working-class*** voters who may be most acutely concerned about receiving health care or collecting their paycheck as the pandemic continues to shut down businesses, especially in service industries.

Strip mall parking lots in and around Phoenix were full over the weekend, but polling sites were far from it. Dozens of people shopping said they had no intention to vote in the Democratic primary or the November election.

At the voting center in the municipal building of Surprise, a suburban community about 30 miles northwest of Phoenix, fewer than 10 voters showed up over three hours Saturday morning.

Still, deep dissatisfaction with Mr. Trump was driving some voters to the polls.

Steve Brown, 69, who moved from Oregon after retiring as an insurance executive, described himself as ''anti-Trump since the day he came down the escalator.''

While he said he did not feel worried about his own health, he was ''very anxious'' that the president's leadership would mean the virus would ''spiral further out of control.''

''Voting is always an obligation, but even more so now, when what we have is just terrifying,'' said Mr. Brown, who along with his wife voted for Mr. Biden.

''Biden will pick the right people to be around him,'' Mr. Brown said. ''You can look to him like he knows where this is going.''

But, Mr. Brown added: ''I'm kind of worried about his age. I know I was sharper at 60 than I am now.''

For Alfredo Lopez, a 38-year-old engineer who brought both his wife and his father with him to vote just before the polls closed in Mesa on Friday, the global health crisis was one more reason to support ''Medicare for all,'' a centerpiece of Mr. Sanders's campaign.

''This is really showing us the need for a health care system that works for everybody,'' Mr. Lopez said, adding that it was clear to him that many people would be unable to gain access to care or medication. ''There's going to be a peak, and the question is if we are ready for it.''

Moments after she cast her ballot in Mesa, Carol Lopez, 40, said she was particularly disturbed that the information coming from the president seemed to contradict advice from medical experts.

''People are getting bad information from the person in charge,'' she said. ''Right now the people who are in charge can't be trusted.''

Arizona Democratic Party officials said that there had been ''huge turnout'' from early mail-in ballots, with 375,000 returned so far, and that the number of voters could easily surpass the 2016 primary.

''We're pressing forward,'' Adrian Fontes, the Maricopa County recorder, who oversees elections in Phoenix and the surrounding suburbs, where the vast majority of registered Democrats in the state live, said Sunday night.

Last week, he expressed blustery confidence in the system, saying it was ''as calm as it can be.''

''We're prepared for everything,'' he said. ''Except Godzilla.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/16/us/politics/arizona-primary-coronavirus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/16/us/politics/arizona-primary-coronavirus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''I want to believe that voting takes away some of the fear,'' Dawn Schumann said.

Lorraine and Dan Frias were undecided for weeks before voting on Friday in Mesa, Ariz. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How It Could Have Happened Here***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YF8-18Y1-DXY4-X3YY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 16, 2020 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 1129 words

**Byline:** By James Poniewozik

**Body**

David Simon's potent HBO adaptation of the Philip Roth novel imagines a country tilting toward fascism.

There's a repeating motif in David Simon's passionate, gutting adaptation of Philip Roth's 2004 novel ''The Plot Against America.'' A Jewish boy in early 1940s Newark is sitting in his bedroom when he hears an airplane overhead. Maybe it's a warplane. Maybe it's the president. Neither is a comforting thought.

The president is Charles Lindbergh (Ben Cole), the famous aviator who, in this alternative past, defeated Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940 on a platform of antiwar isolationism laced with anti-Semitism, made nice with the Nazis and began a gradual program of persecuting American Jews in the name of assimilation.

That airplane motoring overhead is a symbol of what Simon and Ed Burns's dazzling mini-series so mightily conveys: the ominous approach of history from a vantage where you can hear and see it but can't touch it. It can only touch you.

''Plot,'' beginning Monday on HBO, asks the audience to imagine the outlandish idea that the presidency might have been won by a celebrity demagogue new to politics who appeals to bigotry and fear, who ran on the slogan of ''America First,'' who boasts of having ''taken our country back,'' who sees fine people on the most reprehensible side of history, who cozies up to despots and behaves as if he were their puppet.

Roth, who died in 2018, insisted that he did not intend ''Plot'' as a political allegory. But history doesn't always care what you intend.

In the 2020 version, Simon draws not a frighteningly different America -- as in ''The Man in the High Castle'' or ''The Handmaid's Tale'' -- but a chillingly familiar one, both in its echoes of current fears and in its evocation of the past. The opening of ''Plot'' could be any remembrance of urban life just before World War II. Families gather for dinner, kids chalk up the street to play games, ''Begin the Beguine'' plays on the radio.

Roth created an unsettling intimacy by writing his novel like a memoir, from the point-of-view of 10-year-old Roth -- Philip Levin (Azhy Robertson) in the series -- as his family suffers from the rise and triumph of Lindberghism: first open bigotry on the street corners, then official singling out from Washington.

Simon and Burns trade Roth's internal perspective for a third-person that captures the sweep of history as experienced by the whole Levin family. Philip's father, Herman (Morgan Spector), an outspoken F.D.R. Democrat, unwinds by listening to Walter Winchell, the MSNBC of the anti-Lindbergh movement. Philip's cousin Alvin (Anthony Boyle) is itching to take more direct and physical action.

America's turn to smiley-faced fascism hits home when President Lindbergh establishes Just Folks, a program to foster urban Jewish children with gentile families in the country -- deracination disguised as integration -- which attracts Philip's rebellious older brother, Sandy (Caleb Malis). The program, ironically, is the brainchild of Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf (John Turturro, with southern-fried smarm), an accommodationist convinced that Lindbergh has made anti-Semitic comments ''out of ignorance'' but regrets them ''privately.''

When Lionel begins dating Philip's rudderless, impressionable aunt Evelyn (Winona Ryder), she clashes with Philip's mother, Bess (Zoe Kazan), who is both more cautious than her hotheaded husband and less starry-eyed about their chances in a country of emboldened bigots.

''Like it or not,'' she says, ''Lindbergh is teaching us what it means to be Jews.''

It's a frog-in-boiling-water situation, and Simon keeps a steady hand on the burner dial, patiently moving through the stages -- denial, anger, desperation -- of realizing that you are a stranger in your own country.

The six-episode series builds to a fevered, violent climax. But arguably the most disturbing episode follows the Levins on a long-planned vacation to Washington, D.C. What should be a patriotic, educational family trip becomes a pilgrimage to the fallen monuments of a now-dead pluralism, a frightening recon mission into occupied territory. Herman, unable to stifle his disgust at what's become of the country, is dismissed by pro-Lindy tourists as a ''mouthy Jew.''

It's a depressingly believable horror story, an invasion of the body-politic-snatchers. Even Philip's stamp collection becomes a symbol of what's been lost: tiny portraits of the wide world and of America's idealized past brought into one book, as America is slamming the door on that world and renouncing those ideals.

''Plot'' is a departure for Simon, who has not adapted a work of fiction before, yet it feels natural. Simon is an artist of granular realism, and the lived-in middle-to-***working-class*** Jewish New Jersey he creates gives the series its power.

The Levins are a family in full, not just plot-advancement devices, and Kazan and Spector are especially strong anchors. (The depictions of fictionalized historical figures -- Lindbergh, Winchell, the anti-Semitic Henry Ford, now secretary of the interior -- are thinner.)

Simon, like Roth, loves a good argument, and the ones here are all too familiar and believable. The accommodationists believe that they can guide the administration away from its worst tendencies. The resisters debate whether simply listening to the radio and getting mad counts as action, or if more active steps are needed.

''Plot'' is something of a thematic risk for Simon, too. His past work -- ''The Wire,'' ''Show Me a Hero,'' ''The Deuce'' -- is driven by the belief that individual acts can do only so much in the face of overpowering social systems. That might have made ''Plot,'' the story of how one man's run for president might have nudged history off course, an uneasy fit for Simon's philosophy, as much as it might mesh with his politics.

Instead, he's produced a translation that's at once fully Rothian and fully Simonian. He hasn't changed a lot in the story, but where he has, it's to emphasize that the charismatic bigot in the White House is not simply an aberration who can be erased and forgotten like a bad dream. The problem is as much the passions and cynicism that made him possible: the citizens whose prejudice was validated, the officials who got a taste of thugocracy, the society that learned the norms of decent behavior were always optional, the minorities who found that equality is revocable.

That merger of visions makes the difference between a dutiful adaptation of a great novel and a series that is great in itself. There is plenty of pugilistic optimism in this ''Plot,'' but it's tough-minded. Maybe the clouds will part. Maybe the next plane to fly overhead will be a friendly one. But you will never feel as safe under that sky again.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, Azhy Robertson, left, plays Philip Levin, and Caleb Malis is his brother, Sandy, in ''The Plot Against America,'' an adaptation of the 2004 Philip Roth novel. Winona Ryder, above left, portrays the boys' aunt Evelyn, who is led astray by Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf, played by John Turturro, top right. (C1)

The novel version of ''The Plot Against America'' tells the story as witnessed by a 10-year-old, Philip Levin. David Simon and Ed Burns's mini-series uses a third-person perspective to capture the sweep of history as experienced by the whole Levin family, which includes Philip's mother, Bess, played by Zoe Kazan, above

his father, Herman, portrayed by Morgan Spector, above right

and his cousin Alvin, played by Anthony Boyle, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELE K. SHORT/HBO) (C5)

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[***Can It Happen Here? In ‘The Plot Against America,’ It Already Did; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YF3-6GP1-JBG3-639D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 15, 2020 Sunday 04:27 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1260 words

**Byline:** James Poniewozik

**Highlight:** David Simon’s potent HBO adaptation of the Philip Roth novel imagines a country tilting toward fascism.

**Body**

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There’s a repeating motif in David Simon’s passionate, gutting adaptation of Philip Roth’s 2004 novel [*“The Plot Against America.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/05/arts/television/plot-against-america-hbo-david-simon.html) A Jewish boy in early 1940s Newark is sitting in his bedroom when he hears an airplane overhead. Maybe it’s a warplane. Maybe it’s the president. Neither is a comforting thought.

The president is Charles Lindbergh (Ben Cole), the famous aviator who, in this alternative past, defeated Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940 on a platform of antiwar isolationism laced with anti-Semitism, made nice with the Nazis and began a gradual program of persecuting American Jews in the name of assimilation.

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[***How Wonks Could Shape A Recovery***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61YW-2181-DXY4-X28X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Neil Irwin

**Body**

They all agree pandemic aid is warranted, but the question is how big and how quickly.

A fierce debate is underway among centrist and left-leaning economists, taking place in newspaper op-eds, heated exchanges on Twitter, and even at the White House lectern. Unlike most internecine battles within a narrow intellectual tribe, this one will shape the future of the American economy and the political fortunes of the Biden administration.

The core question is whether the administration's $1.9 trillion pandemic rescue plan is too big. Is action on that scale needed to contain the economic damage from the coronavirus and get the economy quickly on track to full health? Or is it far too big relative to the hole the economy's in, thus setting the stage for a burst of inflation followed by a potential recession, as leading center-left economists including Larry Summers (the former Treasury secretary) and Olivier Blanchard (a former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund) have argued in recent days?

This clash of ideas is taking place at a crucial moment. With the Senate at a 50-50 partisan divide, a single Democratic senator who finds the arguments of Mr. Summers and Mr. Blanchard persuasive could require President Biden to trim his ambitions, with far-reaching consequences for his presidency and the economy.

The substance of the debate touches on important macroeconomic concepts like economic speed limits, the risks of deficits and the origins of inflation. But it is impossible to separate the substance from the personal history of those involved.

It has created stark divides among economic policy thinkers who for the most part know one another, have worked together in government, have spoken at the same think tank events, and share mostly similar political views.

Hanging over it all is the legacy of the Clinton-era Democratic policy establishment, and a continuing debate about past policy decisions.

What is in dispute?

President Biden's pandemic aid plan includes direct spending for Covid testing and vaccine rollout, expanded unemployment insurance, money for schools and child care, and $1,400 payments to most Americans. It comes on the heels of a $900 billion bipartisan pandemic aid act enacted in December.

For weeks, policy veterans have been fretting among themselves over the scale of Mr. Biden's proposal, in private emails and text chains. Mr. Summers made those concerns public with an op-ed in The Washington Post last week. Mr. Blanchard has backed him on Twitter, as has Jason Furman to some degree, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers under President Barack Obama.

What is their argument?

As Mr. Summers wrote, it is a good idea to spend whatever it takes to contain the virus and enable the economy to recover quickly from its pandemic-induced downturn. Provisions that strengthen the safety net for those who are suffering are worthwhile.

The problem, he says, is that the plan's total size reaches a scale that risks major future problems. In particular, the total money being proposed far exceeds most estimates of the ''output gap.'' (More on that below.) That implies that much of that spending will just slosh around the economy, causing prices to rise, potentially hindering the rest of Mr. Biden's agenda and risking a new recession.

This isn't a conventional argument between doctrinaire deficit hawks and doves, but something more subtle. In the past, Mr. Summers in particular has repeatedly called for larger budget deficits to help combat ''secular stagnation,'' in which major world economies are mired in slow growth, and he has supported large pandemic aid packages.

But Mr. Summers says any new spending package should pay out gradually over time and be devoted more substantially to long-term investments.

''There is nothing wrong with targeting $1.9 trillion, and I could support a much larger figure in total stimulus,'' he wrote in a follow-up article. ''But a substantial part of the program should be directed at promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth for the remainder of the decade and beyond, not simply supporting incomes this year and next.''

What's the output gap?

Imagine a world in which the American economy is cranking at its full potential. Pretty much everyone who wants to work is able to find a job. Every factory is at its complete capacity. The output gap is, simply, how far away the economy is from that ideal state.

A traditional approach to fiscal stimulus has been to estimate the size of that gap, apply some adjustments to account for the way federal spending circulates through the economy, and use that arithmetic to decide how big a stimulus action ought to be.

In theory, if the government pumps too much money into the economy, it is trying to generate activity over and above potential output, which is impossible to sustain for long. Workers might put in overtime, and a factory might run extra hours for a while, but eventually the workers want a breather, and the machines need to shut down for maintenance. If there is more money floating around in the economy than there is supply of goods and services, the result won't be increased prosperity, but rather higher prices as people bid up the things they want to buy.

By that traditional thinking, Mr. Summers and other skeptics are on solid ground. The Congressional Budget Office is projecting an output gap for 2021 of only $420 billion, implying that $1.9 trillion in additional cash is much more than the economy needs to fill the gap. Even if you believe the C.B.O. is too pessimistic about America's potential, we're talking orders of magnitude of difference.

There are problems with this argument, though. For one, potential output is a theoretical concept, not something we can ever know with precision. In fact, there is a solid case to be made that technocrats have underestimated the economy's true potential for years, given the absence of inflation in 2018 and 2019 despite a hot job market.

For another, it imagines the economy as a series of hydraulic tubes, in which a skilled engineer can push the right buttons to achieve a predictable outcome. In macroeconomics, especially in the era of a once-a-century pandemic, things might not be so simple.

How is the Biden administration responding?

Aggressively.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and other top officials have taken to the airwaves in recent days to argue that their proposal is prudent and appropriately scaled.

Administration officials have described the plan as ''bottom-up,'' meaning it was devised by starting with specific problems facing Americans -- a lack of income for those out of work, bottlenecks in vaccine delivery, a lack of funds for school reopening -- and then ending with forecasts of the sums necessary to solve those problems.

Their argument is that the United States is in a do-whatever-it-takes moment, and that the most urgent goal is to try to ensure that the economy can fully reopen as quickly as possible while preventing potential lasting damage to families and businesses.

''I think that the idea now is that we have to hit back hard; we have to hit back strong if we're going to finally put this dual crisis of the pandemic and the economic pain that it has engendered behind us,'' Jared Bernstein, a member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said in a news briefing Friday.

They do not dismiss the possibility that there will be higher inflation down the road -- but say it is a manageable risk.

Inflation is ''a risk that we have to consider,'' Ms. Yellen said on CNN's ''State of the Union'' on Sunday, but ''we have the tools to deal with that risk if it materializes'' and ''we have a huge economic challenge here and tremendous suffering in the country.''

''That's the biggest risk,'' she said.

In the logic that has prevailed within the administration and among other former officials who support the approach, it misses the point to theorize about output gaps and inflation risks. They say this relief should be thought of differently than traditional fiscal stimulus.

''Relief payments are life support,'' wrote Austan Goolsbee, another former Obama adviser. ''To avoid permanent damage, they need to last as long as the virus does. Without them, the chance of deterioration and irrevocable harm soars.''

So if this passes, is there really going to be a huge burst of inflation?

Maybe.

The economy is in uncharted territory. With potentially trillions of pandemic aid spending on the way -- in addition to vast accumulated savings over the last year because of Americans' pandemic-constrained spending and stimulus-boosted incomes -- there is a lot of money poised to be spent.

And some things may reduce the supply of goods and services, like disruptions to global supply chains resulting from the pandemic and business closures.

Lots of money chasing finite supply is an Economics 101 recipe for surging prices.

But for the medium term, the more important question is whether any inflation surge would be a temporary not-so-harmful phenomenon or the start of something more lasting.

Why does that matter?

The Federal Reserve will be inclined to mostly ignore a one-time shock of post-pandemic inflation. Chair Jerome Powell said so in a news conference last month.

There is a possibility ''that as the economy fully reopens, there'll be a burst of spending because people will be enthusiastic that the pandemic is over,'' Mr. Powell said. ''We would see that as something likely to be transient and not to be very large.''

In that case, he said, ''the way we would react is we're going to be patient.''

It might even help rebalance the economy after years in which the United States has depended on low interest-rate policies from the Fed to keep growth afloat. Somewhat higher inflation would mean lower ''real,'' inflation-adjusted interest rates, and might gain the Fed some credibility that it will not permit inflation to be persistently too low. It could, plausibly, get back to above-zero interest rates sooner than it would otherwise, taking the air out of financial bubbles and giving it more room to combat the next downturn.

However, if surging prices were to create a vicious cycle of higher prices and higher wages, the Fed would be inclined to raise interest rates enough to try to break that cycle -- potentially driving the economy into another recession in the process. That is the last thing that American workers need, let alone Democrats seeking to hold Congress in 2022 and the White House in 2024.

So is this part of a wider philosophical divide among Democratic economists?

There is no ideological chasm here.

But there is a deeper division than just the technical question of the output gap's size or what the risks are of too much versus too little pandemic aid. Rather, the Biden approach represents a rejection of the technocratic bent within the Democratic Party that many on the left believe has been deeply damaging to the country.

President Bill Clinton and President Obama relied for economic advice on what might be called the Bob Rubin coaching tree. Mr. Rubin, who served as Treasury secretary in the 1990s, was a mentor to Mr. Summers, who was a mentor to Timothy Geithner, Mr. Obama's first Treasury secretary, and so on.

The policymakers in this tradition view themselves as rigorous, careful and pragmatic. Many liberals view them as excessively moderate, too deferential to Wall Street and clueless about the political dynamics that could make for durable policies to help the ***working class***.

The Biden administration includes many top officials from outside that tree, such as Ms. Yellen. And it is particularly seeking to correct what are seen as the mistakes of the early Obama administration, when Mr. Summers and Mr. Geithner were in top jobs.

The new administration sees this as a moment of profound crisis, a time when it must act on a scale commensurate with the problem. It is betting that if it solves the problem, its political fortunes will be better rather than worse, and it can always deal with inflation or other side effects if they come.

In a sense then, the debate over pandemic aid isn't entirely about output gaps or risk trade-offs. It's about which mode of policymaking ought to prevail in the Democratic Party.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/08/upshot/the-clash-of-liberal-wonks-that-could-shape-the-economy-explained.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/08/upshot/the-clash-of-liberal-wonks-that-could-shape-the-economy-explained.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr., then the vice president, in a 2009 meeting with White House economic advisers, including Larry Summers, second from right. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANDEL NGAN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (B5)

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[***Music***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:601G-W721-DXY4-X0BK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 31, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Lauretta Charlton

**Body**

Oh, the '90s. How special you were with your plaid shirts, midriffs, Lilith Fairs, gangsta rap and boy bands. I don't feel nostalgic for you, exactly, but you're never far from my mind, especially your music, which is interesting because so much about music has changed since you were here, starting with the business itself. Today aspiring artists write rap songs about horses and cowboy boots, put them on SoundCloud and, against all odds, go on to delight the entire country, with an able assist from Billy Ray Cyrus, whose biggest hit was released in 1992. There are no massive brick-and-mortar record stores. There are no release schedules that music critics can rely on to plan their reviews. In many ways, what I love about you is that you now seem so tidy and predictable. This, I imagine, is what makes reading books about artists and other music types who came up during the '90s -- that bygone era when labels were still flush, there was no Spotify and people still waited hours to get into nightclubs -- so quaint and entertaining.

And thus I went into Tori Amos's new book, RESISTANCE: A Songwriter's Story of Hope, Change, and Courage (Atria, 261 pp., $26), with an open mind, ready to feel old. Amos has maintained an impressive career since her first solo album, ''Little Earthquakes,'' in 1992. And as you might expect from the title of her latest book -- or from anyone who writes lyrics about rape, religion and the patriarchy, for that matter -- she is uncompromising and very earnest about the power of music to effect change, just like that friend from high school who practiced Wicca and carried amethyst in her pocket.

The book is not a memoir, although Amos does write about starting her career on the piano bar circuit in Washington, D.C., playing for suits and pols. It mostly has her reflecting on her songs as tools of protest, against everything from the ''warlords of hate'' to ''the imperial authoritarian agenda'' of the greedy men for whom she once played music, including a vast repertoire of covers. In one memorable chapter, she tells of having her album rejected by her record label. In the early '90s, when Amos was just getting started, it was guitar-playing, headbanging grunge types who were demanding all our attention and so executives thought Amos's songs needed more guitar, just like a producer asking for more cowbell on Blue Öyster Cult's ''The Reaper.''

And yet she persisted, by turning to ''the Muses,'' whose words appear throughout the book like ghostly apparitions out on the wiley, windy moors. (The words of the Muses -- capital M, always -- appear in italics, giving the book a stream-of-consciousness quality befitting an artist known to be preoccupied with faeries and Greek mythology.) ''The response from the Muses for artists, whatever the form your art takes, is to scatter fertile creative seeds into our Great Mother, giving her thanks for all she does for her daughters and sons,'' Amos writes later in the book. ''Male artists are being called to join their sisters in planting seeds to confront the corruption of those who would subject Earth's Daughters to the Patriarchal will.''

Each chapter reads as though Amos is performing incantations, just like those scenes in ''The Craft,'' from 1996. That is to say, like her music, Amos's book is passionate, resounding and angry. In other words, you need to be in the mood for it. I recommend burning incense and wearing all black as you read.

If there's a muse in Alicia Keys's new memoir, MORE MYSELF: A Journey (Flatiron, 256 pp., $29.99), written with Michelle Burford, it's New York City just as the '90s were coming to a close, back when black people could still afford brownstones in Brooklyn. Keys, another pianist, didn't grow up in Brooklyn, nor did she have to claw her way out of the staid piano bar circuit. She was raised in Hell's Kitchen by a single mother whom she affectionately calls ''the blackest white woman I know.'' One of her first memories was of watching sex workers on the streets of Manhattan in freezing cold weather, and telling herself that she would never be one of those women. Her first piano was a used upright that she received from a piano tuner who had no use for it.

Keys, too, tells of navigating a record business in which she was told her music needed to be ''less piano driven'' in order to sell. ''Trouble was, no one quite knew what to do with a piano prodigy in cornrows, mixing classical music with hip-hop beats and bass lines alongside a dash of gospel,'' she writes. One person did: Clive Davis, who would go on to become Keys's mentor and help her score her first big breakthrough moment, playing her debut single, ''Fallin','' on ''The Oprah Winfrey Show.'' Multiple Grammy wins followed.

Being catapulted into fame but not being able to handle the success is a well-worn trope in music memoirs. Thankfully, Keys doesn't spend too much time reflecting on how lonely it is to be rich, famous and friends with Bono. Bob Dylan, who included her name in the lyrics of his 2006 song ''Thunder on the Mountain,'' barely gets a mention. Instead Keys spends her time writing movingly about her relationship to her family, including how she reconciled with an absent father who was not around when she was growing up, a star student at the Professional Performing Arts School who would later drop out of Columbia University to pursue a music career.

Even though she was a killer student and a piano prodigy -- at ease with Stevie Wonder and Chopin, Bach and Biggie -- Keys still found time to get into trouble, smoking weed and sneaking into clubs like Tunnel, which was founded by Peter Gatien, the famous nightlife impresario who pleaded guilty to tax evasion in the '90s, and who has a new book of his own.

Talk about someone with an ax to grind! In Gatien's book, THE CLUB KING: My Rise, Reign, and Fall in New York Nightlife (Little A, 253 pp., $24.95), bones are picked. The villain is Rudy Giuliani, who became mayor of New York City in 1994. A year later, Limelight, Gatien's most famous club, was raided by the authorities for drugs. But let's not forget the exposition: Gatien grew up wearing a coonskin hat and watching ''The Ed Sullivan Show'' in a ***working-class*** family in Canada. His obsession with American consumerism was clear from an early age. He called it -- ahem -- ''cultural cocaine.'' He charts his career crisscrossing the globe opening clubs in London, New York, Toronto, Miami and Chicago. He opened his first club, the Aardvark, in 1973, in Cornwall, Ontario. Rush, also from Canada, was the first band he booked. He eventually ran four popular clubs in New York City -- Limelight, the Palladium, Tunnel and Club USA. He tells of working with Funkmaster Flex to run security at Tunnel, famous for showcasing rap artists: They'd screen people at the door as if they were being booked at Rikers. Pleasant experience, I'm sure.

The more successful his clubs became, though, the more Gatien's marriages suffered, as did his relationship with his daughters. It all became too much, which he is very humble about: ''I tried to stay out of the figurative limelight, but the spectacular success of the real Limelight came with a higher public profile than I'd ever had before.'' The lapsed Catholic and college dropout turned to drugs. Freebasing cocaine, but only occasionally, as he tells it.

Throughout the book it becomes clear that Gatien has a bit of a chip on his shoulder about how things went down for him in the '90s. He goes to great lengths to show us that he played by the rules, mostly. You come away thinking it was Giuliani who deserved to fall. (No arguments there!) Gatien was arrested and charged with conspiracy for allegedly allowing drug use at his clubs, but he was found not guilty. He later pleaded guilty to state tax evasion. ''I paid my taxes. But I also sometimes doled out payroll in cash,'' he explains. ''I dotted every i but occasionally failed to cross every t. So sue me, I'd think. But that's exactly what New York State did.''

The '90s. What a bitch.Lauretta Charlton is an editor at The Times.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/11/books/review/more-myself-alicia-keys.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/11/books/review/more-myself-alicia-keys.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Igor Bastidas FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Hopes Fade for New Political Course in Algeria a Year After Popular Uprising***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:610C-0WJ1-JBG3-63XN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Adam Nossiter

**Highlight:** “We are moving backward fast,” said a leading figure in protests last year that ousted the country’s authoritarian ruler.

**Body**

“We are moving backward fast,” said a leading figure in protests last year that ousted the country’s authoritarian ruler.

ALGIERS — In a Moorish-style palace on the [*Algerian*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html) capital’s airy heights, the nation’s president proclaimed a new day for his country, saying it was now “free and democratic.” The old, corrupt system — in which he had spent his entire career — was gone, he insisted.

“We’re building a new model here,” said President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, 75, chain-smoking a pack of cigarettes in an hourslong interview surrounded by aides in his sumptuous office last month. “I’ve decided to go very far in creating a new politics and a new economy.”

But old habits die hard in this North African country, which has known nearly 60 years of repression, military meddling, rigged elections and very little democracy. On the streets below Mr. Tebboune’s office, [*Algeria’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html) old realities are reasserting themselves.

The state jails dissidents, and [*seats have been for sale*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html) — the going price was about $540,000 according to a parliamentarian’s court testimony — in the same Parliament that ratified Mr. Tebboune’s proposed new Constitution, drafted after he came to power in a disputed election in December. But the opposition is hobbled by a lack of leadership and a failure to articulate an alternative vision for the country.

A year after a [*popular uprising*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html) ousted the 20-year autocrat, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and led the army to jail much of his ruling oligarchy, hopes are now fading for an overhaul of the political system and real democracy in Algeria.

“We are moving backward fast,” said Mohcine Belabbas, an opposition politician who played a major role in the uprising.

Today there are two political narratives in Algeria: the one from Mr. Tebboune, on high, and the one in the streets below.

The [*revolt in the streets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html) that began last year, known here as Hirak, initially appeared to signal a new dawn in a country that had been stifled for decades by its huge military. But when the movement’s failure to coalesce around leaders and agree on goals created a vacuum, the remnants of the repressive Algerian state, with its ample security services, stepped in.

Other advocates for change in the Arab world looked on enviously as week after week, tens of thousands turned out peacefully to protest the continued reign of Mr. Bouteflika, who was left paralyzed after a stroke in 2013. It seemed that the abortive Arab Spring that began in late 2010 was finally being realized.

Algeria, an insular linchpin in the region, is the world’s 10th biggest producer of natural gas and is believed to have the second largest military establishment in Africa. It has been a key leader of nonaligned nations since it fought its way to independence from France 58 years ago.

The military established its pre-eminence in politics shortly after that, and has been at the forefront or just behind it ever since. A civil war with Islamists in the 1990s, in which as many as 100,000 were killed, helped consolidate its grip.

Soldiers in uniform are omnipresent in Algiers. But during last year’s demonstrations, Algerian security forces didn’t open fire on the Hirak protesters, the two sides instead staring each other down in a wary standoff.

Although the army eventually forced Mr. Bouteflika and his governing elite out of office, that was not enough for the protesters. They demanded a full overhaul of the country’s political class, elections for a new constituent assembly to replace the country’s discredited Parliament, and the army’s definitive withdrawal from politics.

They also deemed the army’s push for presidential elections premature. But the army’s all-powerful chief of staff, [*Ahmed Gaid Salah*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html), overruled the movement.

Mr. Tebboune, once an ephemeral prime minister under Mr. Bouteflika, is believed to have been backed for the presidency by Mr. Gaid Salah. He [*was elected*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html) in a vote that opponents said drew less than 10 percent of the electorate; Mr. Tebboune said it was more than 40 percent.

He began with a few good-will gestures, releasing some detained protesters. The pandemic stopped the demonstrations in March, and since then the government has played a cat-and-mouse game with Hirak’s remnants, releasing some and arresting others. Dozens have been arrested, [*according to an opposition group.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html)

The pandemic has dovetailed with the national penchant for insularity, giving Algeria a further excuse to tighten its borders and keep out foreigners. The results are low infection and mortality rates, few mask-wearers and a near-total absence of outsiders on the crumbling streets of central Algiers.

The arrest and prosecution of one of the country’s best-known journalists, [*Khaled Drareni*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html), 40, has hardened the mood in the streets and spread fear in the Algerian news media. The editor of a widely followed website, the Casbah Tribune, and a local correspondent for a French television station, [*Mr. Drareni*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html) covered Hirak with a mix of activism and detachment.

“The system renews itself ceaselessly and refuses to change,” he wrote during last year’s uprising. “We call for press freedom. They respond with corruption and money.”

That remark infuriated the authorities. On Sept. 15, he was convicted of “endangering national unity” [*and sentenced to two years in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html).

The scene outside the courthouse that day turned ugly.

“Khaled Drareni, independent journalist!” demonstrators shouted before the police poured in to disperse them. “Scram!” a muscular plainclothes officer barked at demonstrators. Officers roughly bundled a young woman and an older man into a police van.

“He didn’t even have a press card,” the president fumed during the interview, casting Mr. Drareni as an activist with dubious credentials. Mr. Drareni once interviewed Mr. Tebboune himself, though, as well as President Emmanuel Macron of France.

Mr. Tebboune insisted on an opposing narrative during the three-and-a-half-hour interview, saying his country was now “free and democratic.” He later made his normally reticent cabinet members available for interviews, and even demanded that the army chief of staff — who is never accessible to the media — agree to be interviewed.

“The army is neutral,” growled Gen. [*Saïd Chengriha*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/world/europe/france-algeria-war-report.html), a grizzled veteran of the country’s 1990s civil war with the Islamists. He succeeded General Gaid Salah, who died of a heart attack in December.

“How do you want us to be involved in politics? We’re not at all trained in that,” said the general, 75, speaking in the military’s extensive compound in the heights of Algiers.

But decades of history are not so easily reversed.

The general and the president said they met at least twice a week to discuss the country’s situation, which is increasingly perilous because of a drop in oil prices. Well over 90 percent of the largely desert country’s exports consist of oil and gas, and with a heavy social expenditures bill, Algeria is estimated to need oil at $100 a barrel to balance its budget. The price has been hovering in the 40s.

Of one thing Mr. Tebboune is certain: The citizen protest movement is over.

“Is there anything left of the Hirak?” he asked dismissively during the interview.

He spoke of change, vaunting his new Constitution, which limits a president to two terms and recognizes the rights of the opposition, at least in the eyes of its supporters. But this past week, the government threatened to strip Mr. Belabbas, the opposition politician, of his parliamentary immunity.

And for all the talk of a new Algeria, the president employed the old language of the autocrat when he discussed dealing with dissent.

“Everyone has the right to free expression — but only in an orderly manner,” he said. “It’s normal that someone who insults and who attacks the symbols of the state winds up in court.”

An Algerian revolt against the French 58 years ago was hampered because of the lack of a clear leader. That resistance to anoint a leader, a tactic to minimize repression, also weakened Hirak.

The activists who took a leading role have refused to engage with the deposed leader’s heirs, including the new president.

Behind high locked metal gates, watched from the sun-blasted street by plainclothes officers, Mr. Belabbas acknowledged that the protesters were clear about what they were against — the entire Algerian political system — but less so about what should replace it.

“We never succeeded in defining what we were for,” said Mr. Belabbas, who is head of the Rally for Culture and Democracy party and a member of Parliament.

Caught in the middle are ordinary Algerians — skeptical of Mr. Tebboune’s claims of renewal and of his new Constitution, deflated by the demise of Hirak and angry about the imprisoned Mr. Drareni.

“So, there’s a journalist who speaks. You put him in prison. And that’s supposed to be democracy?” asked Isa Mansour, who runs a small clothing store in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Belouizdad, where the Nobel Prize winner Albert Camus grew up 100 years ago.

“The citizens are fed up with all these promises,” he said. “You can’t expect reforms from the old guard. Algeria is still looking for democracy.”

PHOTOS: A popular revolt brought tens of thousands into the streets of Algiers last year. Below left, Khaled Drareni, a journalist, being cheered by protesters in March. A court later convicted him of “endangering national unity.” Right, security forces surrounding protesters on the day of the presidential election last year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAD KRAMDI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES); President Abdelmadjid Tebboune came to power after a disputed election in December. “I’ve decided to go very far in creating a new politics and a new economy,” he said in an interview. But there is ample reason for skepticism. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAD KRAMDI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES)

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[***The Clash of Liberal Wonks That Could Shape the Economy, Explained***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61YG-WVB1-JBG3-601C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** They all agree pandemic aid is warranted, but the question is how big and how quickly.

**Body**

They all agree pandemic aid is warranted, but the question is how big and how quickly.

A fierce debate is underway among centrist and left-leaning economists, taking place in newspaper op-eds, heated exchanges on Twitter, and even at the White House lectern. Unlike most internecine battles within a narrow intellectual tribe, this one will shape the future of the American economy and the political fortunes of the Biden administration.

The core question is whether the administration’s $1.9 trillion pandemic rescue plan is too big. Is action on that scale needed to contain the economic damage from the coronavirus and get the economy quickly on track to full health? Or is it far too big relative to the hole the economy’s in, thus setting the stage for a burst of inflation followed by a potential recession, as leading center-left economists including Larry Summers (the former Treasury secretary) and Olivier Blanchard (a former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund) have argued in recent days?

This clash of ideas is taking place at a crucial moment. With the Senate at a 50-50 partisan divide, a single Democratic senator who finds the arguments of Mr. Summers and Mr. Blanchard persuasive could require President Biden to trim his ambitions, with far-reaching consequences for his presidency and the economy.

The substance of the debate touches on important macroeconomic concepts like economic speed limits, the risks of deficits and the origins of inflation. But it is impossible to separate the substance from the personal history of those involved.

It has created stark divides among economic policy thinkers who for the most part know one another, have worked together in government, have spoken at the same think tank events, and share mostly similar political views.

Hanging over it all is the legacy of the Clinton-era Democratic policy establishment, and a continuing debate about past policy decisions.

What is in dispute?

President Biden’s pandemic aid plan includes direct spending for Covid testing and vaccine rollout, expanded unemployment insurance, money for schools and child care, and $1,400 payments to most Americans. It comes on the heels of a $900 billion bipartisan pandemic aid act enacted in December.

For weeks, policy veterans have been fretting among themselves over the scale of Mr. Biden’s proposal, in private emails and text chains. Mr. Summers made those concerns public with an [*op-ed in The Washington Post*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/04/larry-summers-biden-covid-stimulus/) last week. Mr. Blanchard has backed him on Twitter, as has Jason Furman to some degree, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers under President Barack Obama.

What is their argument?

As Mr. Summers wrote, it is a good idea to spend whatever it takes to contain the virus and enable the economy to recover quickly from its pandemic-induced downturn. Provisions that strengthen the safety net for those who are suffering are worthwhile.

The problem, he says, is that the plan’s total size reaches a scale that risks major future problems. In particular, the total money being proposed far exceeds most estimates of the “output gap.” (More on that below.) That implies that much of that spending will just slosh around the economy, causing prices to rise, potentially hindering the rest of Mr. Biden’s agenda and risking a new recession.

This isn’t a conventional argument between doctrinaire deficit hawks and doves, but something more subtle. In the past, Mr. Summers in particular has repeatedly called for larger budget deficits to help combat “secular stagnation,” in which major world economies are mired in slow growth, and he has supported large pandemic aid packages.

But Mr. Summers says any new spending package should pay out gradually over time and be devoted more substantially to long-term investments.

“There is nothing wrong with targeting $1.9 trillion, and I could support a much larger figure in total stimulus,” he wrote in a [*follow-up article*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/04/larry-summers-biden-covid-stimulus/). “But a substantial part of the program should be directed at promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth for the remainder of the decade and beyond, not simply supporting incomes this year and next.”

What’s the output gap?

Imagine a world in which the American economy is cranking at its full potential. Pretty much everyone who wants to work is able to find a job. Every factory is at its complete capacity. The output gap is, simply, how far away the economy is from that ideal state.

A traditional approach to fiscal stimulus has been to estimate the size of that gap, apply some adjustments to account for the way federal spending circulates through the economy, and use that arithmetic to decide how big a stimulus action ought to be.

In theory, if the government pumps too much money into the economy, it is trying to generate activity over and above potential output, which is impossible to sustain for long. Workers might put in overtime, and a factory might run extra hours for a while, but eventually the workers want a breather, and the machines need to shut down for maintenance. If there is more money floating around in the economy than there is supply of goods and services, the result won’t be increased prosperity, but rather higher prices as people bid up the things they want to buy.

By that traditional thinking, Mr. Summers and other skeptics are on solid ground. The Congressional Budget Office is projecting an output gap for 2021 of only $420 billion, implying that $1.9 trillion in additional cash is much more than the economy needs to fill the gap. Even if you believe the C.B.O. is too pessimistic about America’s potential, we’re talking orders of magnitude of difference.

There are problems with this argument, though. For one, potential output is a theoretical concept, not something we can ever know with precision. In fact, there is a solid case to be made that technocrats have underestimated the economy’s true potential for years, given the absence of inflation in 2018 and 2019 despite a hot job market.

For another, it imagines the economy as a series of hydraulic tubes, in which a skilled engineer can push the right buttons to achieve a predictable outcome. In macroeconomics, especially in the era of a once-a-century pandemic, things might not be so simple.

How is the Biden administration responding?

Aggressively.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and other top officials have taken to the airwaves in recent days to argue that their proposal is prudent and appropriately scaled.

Administration officials have described the plan as “bottom-up,” meaning it was devised by starting with specific problems facing Americans — a lack of income for those out of work, bottlenecks in vaccine delivery, a lack of funds for school reopening — and then ending with forecasts of the sums necessary to solve those problems.

Their argument is that the United States is in a do-whatever-it-takes moment, and that the most urgent goal is to try to ensure that the economy can fully reopen as quickly as possible while preventing potential lasting damage to families and businesses.

“I think that the idea now is that we have to hit back hard; we have to hit back strong if we’re going to finally put this dual crisis of the pandemic and the economic pain that it has engendered behind us,” Jared Bernstein, a member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said in a news briefing Friday.

They do not dismiss the possibility that there will be higher inflation down the road — but say it is a manageable risk.

Inflation is “a risk that we have to consider,” Ms. Yellen said on CNN’s “State of the Union” on Sunday, but “we have the tools to deal with that risk if it materializes” and “we have a huge economic challenge here and tremendous suffering in the country.”

“That’s the biggest risk,” she said.

In the logic that has prevailed within the administration and among other former officials who support the approach, it misses the point to theorize about output gaps and inflation risks. They say this relief should be thought of differently than traditional fiscal stimulus.

“Relief payments are life support,” [*wrote Austan Goolsbee*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/04/larry-summers-biden-covid-stimulus/), another former Obama adviser. “To avoid permanent damage, they need to last as long as the virus does. Without them, the chance of deterioration and irrevocable harm soars.”

So if this passes, is there really going to be a huge burst of inflation?

[*Maybe*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/04/larry-summers-biden-covid-stimulus/).

The economy is in uncharted territory. With potentially trillions of pandemic aid spending on the way — in addition to vast accumulated savings over the last year because of Americans’ pandemic-constrained spending and stimulus-boosted incomes — there is a lot of money poised to be spent.

And some things may reduce the supply of goods and services, like disruptions to global supply chains resulting from the pandemic and business closures.

Lots of money chasing finite supply is an Economics 101 recipe for surging prices.

But for the medium term, the more important question is whether any inflation surge would be a temporary not-so-harmful phenomenon or the start of something more lasting.

Why does that matter?

The Federal Reserve will be inclined to mostly ignore a one-time shock of post-pandemic inflation. Chair Jerome Powell said so in a [*news conference*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/04/larry-summers-biden-covid-stimulus/) last month.

There is a possibility “that as the economy fully reopens, there’ll be a burst of spending because people will be enthusiastic that the pandemic is over,” Mr. Powell said. “We would see that as something likely to be transient and not to be very large.”

In that case, he said, “the way we would react is we’re going to be patient.”

It might even help rebalance the economy after years in which the United States has depended on low interest-rate policies from the Fed to keep growth afloat. Somewhat higher inflation would mean lower “real,” inflation-adjusted interest rates, and might gain the Fed some credibility that it will not permit inflation to be persistently too low. It could, plausibly, get back to above-zero interest rates sooner than it would otherwise, taking the air out of financial bubbles and giving it more room to combat the next downturn.

However, if surging prices were to create a vicious cycle of higher prices and higher wages, the Fed would be inclined to raise interest rates enough to try to break that cycle — potentially driving the economy into another recession in the process. That is the last thing that American workers need, let alone Democrats seeking to hold Congress in 2022 and the White House in 2024.

So is this part of a wider philosophical divide among Democratic economists?

There is no ideological chasm here.

But there is a deeper division than just the technical question of the output gap’s size or what the risks are of too much versus too little pandemic aid. Rather, the Biden approach represents a rejection of the technocratic bent within the Democratic Party that many on the left believe has been deeply damaging to the country.

President Bill Clinton and President Obama relied for economic advice on what might be called the Bob Rubin coaching tree. Mr. Rubin, who served as Treasury secretary in the 1990s, was a mentor to Mr. Summers, who was a mentor to Timothy Geithner, Mr. Obama’s first Treasury secretary, and so on.

The policymakers in this tradition view themselves as rigorous, careful and pragmatic. Many liberals view them as excessively moderate, too deferential to Wall Street and clueless about the political dynamics that could make for durable policies to help the ***working class***.

The Biden administration includes many top officials from outside that tree, such as Ms. Yellen. And it is particularly seeking to correct what are seen as the mistakes of the early Obama administration, when Mr. Summers and Mr. Geithner were in top jobs.

The new administration sees this as a moment of profound crisis, a time when it must act on a scale commensurate with the problem. It is betting that if it solves the problem, its political fortunes will be better rather than worse, and it can always deal with inflation or other side effects if they come.

In a sense then, the debate over pandemic aid isn’t entirely about output gaps or risk trade-offs. It’s about which mode of policymaking ought to prevail in the Democratic Party.

PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr., then the vice president, in a 2009 meeting with White House economic advisers, including Larry Summers, second from right. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANDEL NGAN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) (B5)

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[***The Composer of Noise***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62DV-YXR1-JBG3-6332-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 2139 words

**Byline:** Cathy Park Hong

**Highlight:** A look back at one of those relationships where, despite changes in circumstance and place, two people are able to pick up where they left off.

**Body**

The Composer of Noise

I MET REI at an artists’ residency in the late 2000s, when the New England landscape was at its greenest and most vertiginous. At dusk, wood thrushes chimed their watery, ethereal songs, which I now associate with freedom and creative ferment. I recall Rei entering the screened-in porch where a few residents were smoking and introducing himself as a composer from Japan. He was 32, about the same age I was at the time, and wore a baggy black hoodie, trousers and thick, white-framed glasses. He kept his hair longer in the front so that a thicket of bangs swept just past his left eyebrow. He was tall, and if you looked closely, he was attractive. But it was hard to notice that because he was quiet and looked as if he wanted to shrink into himself, like a teenage boy who’d shot up over the span of the summer.

Also in residence was a petite and impish artist from Korea whose sense of humor turned aggressive when she drank and Rei happened to be within her vicinity. At parties or when we gathered in the common room late at night, she hunted him down to antagonize him with her daily recriminations, which I presume was her way of flirting.

“If it’s not the imperialist,” she would say.

“Hello, Bangul,” Rei would say.

“Your people tortured us, taking away our language, our names, even.”

“Yes, I know.”

“And to this day, you still refuse to apologize.”

“But I did, just yesterday.”

“Is your father rich? How else could you be here in America, studying to be a composer? What does he do?”

“He’s the C.E.O. of Sony.”

“Are you telling the truth?” Bangul shouted excitedly. “You’re lying!”

Rei accepted her nightly censures with equanimity, but when he grew tired of them, he nudged her away with ironic deflections that only inflamed her further. Since I’m Korean, too, I was amused by her antics but watched without joining in. I didn’t pay much attention to Rei at first because of his laconic nature. But he had a depth of character that kept uncupping itself like nesting dolls the more I talked to him. He was wry, analytical, but also affectionate and without judgment. We ended up becoming close rather quickly, which is not unusual in residencies, where friendships are fast-tracked.

REI, WHOM I’VE identified by his middle name, was not the scion of Sony but the son of flower farmers in a rural ***working-class*** town north of Tokyo. His hometown was stifling and homogeneous, and as soon as he was able — once he turned 19 — he escaped. After the tsunami hit Japan in 2011 and led to the nuclear meltdown in [*Fukushima*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/10/world/asia/fukushima-japan-nuclear-anniversary.html), I emailed him to ask about his family. He responded, saying that his parents lived 100 miles from the nuclear plant, a safe enough distance away.

Since then, I’d lost contact with Rei, but thought of him recently while reading “[*Ghosts of the Tsunami*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/10/world/asia/fukushima-japan-nuclear-anniversary.html)” by Richard Lloyd Parry, which is about the grieving parents of children who were swept away by the wave while they were at school. Unyielding fealty to bureaucracy killed these students as much as the tsunami itself, because their teachers, adhering to instructions in a poorly worded emergency manual, neglected to evacuate them to higher ground despite frantic warnings from others that a flood was coming. After I read the book, I searched for our last correspondence and found, to my dismay, that I had misread Rei’s email all those years ago. He’d written, “My parents live 100 miles away from the power plant, not far enough away to be optimistic. We’ll see how it develops.”

TO WRITE ABOUT friendship is an exercise in nostalgia, one that more often draws a portrait of your former self than a portrait of the friend, especially during a pandemic, when I’m prone to dwelling on what is absent from my life. Without the varying textures of experience, days are deleted from my life. I age meaninglessly. My interest in writing about Rei might therefore be suspect: Is it our friendship I’m interested in? Or is he a portal to those years when I felt the least burdened by responsibilities, when I could roam as I pleased and see whom I wanted?

After the residency, we met intermittently, since we lived on separate coasts, and then, later, in separate countries. I was in New York, while he resided in Los Angeles, getting his Ph.D. in computer music. He rented an apartment in Koreatown, chosen for its central location, since he was the only person I knew in L.A. who didn’t own a car. He took the bus, or odder still, he walked.

When I visited my family in L.A., which is where I grew up, I saw him, too. I picked him up and took him for a drink at a landmark restaurant that once appeared in the film “Chinatown,” and which, with its red leather banquettes and ruby crushed-velvet lamps, had the trappings of Old Hollywood, except it was now owned by Koreans who, alongside martinis, served plates of spicy octopus and kimchi fried rice. We always met as visitors from elsewhere, in settings that held no connection to our past. Even the bar, despite being in my hometown, was like a midcentury film set that had nothing to do with my youth.

Of course, our respective histories remained in the background like a mountain of ash. Sometimes I reached back to grab a handful to throw at him. Like Bangul, I couldn’t help it. I joked that he owed me a lifetime of cocktails for the 35 years during which Korea had been a Japanese colony. But except for my occasional quips, we were free of rivalry, or pettiness, or nascent sexual desires. And perhaps this is why I return to Rei, because I felt in our companionship a rare harmony.

WE TALKED ABOUT love, mostly. As a teenager, I used to promise my father, almost on a weekly basis, that I would marry a Korean man, while inwardly knowing that no man of my tribe would want me. I wasn’t feminine enough; I was too odd. With each promise I made, a suffocating, palpitating panic spread from my heart to my throat to my eyes, until I saw only the burning, spidery spots that you see after looking directly at the sun. Bound to break this promise, I felt I would always live alone, a fate that seemed all the more imminent throughout my 20s, when I actually did fall in love with several Asian men, all of whom broke my heart.

Rei had similar pressures from his parents, who expected him to take over the family farm, marry and have children. But by the age of 10, he already knew he wanted nothing to do with flowers or his hometown. He’d level out at just over six feet by adulthood, but as a boy, he stood out for his extraordinary height. He was the tallest boy in class, but he didn’t know how to wield his height to his advantage, as if it were a sword too heavy to lift. Sensing his defenselessness, the boys bullied him, especially since he refused to play his part in the pecking order, where the oldest and strongest hazed the youngest without mercy. Eventually, Rei left, moving first to Tokyo for college, and then to Chicago, Rotterdam, Los Angeles and finally to Berlin, where he settled. He took shelter in graduate programs that subsidized his music, which was alchemized from computer algorithms, music that was so shatteringly dissonant, it seemed almost a revolt against his agrarian origins.

Both of us were certain that we’d always be alone, but it turned out for nought. By the time I met Rei, I was dating someone who would become my husband. Rei would eventually meet someone, too, but at the time, he was single. He seemed self-sufficient in his solitary life, as if a partner would interfere with his studies, so I was surprised to learn that he’d once been engaged to a Japanese woman who lived with him when he was in the Netherlands. It was out of obligation to her father, who demanded they marry if they lived together abroad but, inevitably, it didn’t work out. He left, drifting away to California.

He told me about his hapless dates that he didn’t know were dates until afterward. “I don’t have any luck with women,” he said, shrugging his shoulders, appearing not entirely anguished by his bad luck. He had a subtle Japanese accent and laughed easily at my jokes, which flattered me because he didn’t laugh easily at anyone else’s. When we met up, the boundaries between our selves dissolved, while our individualities were at their most articulated — and maybe, too, there was a buried chord of desire that made it especially pleasurable to see him. I introduced him to my sister, hoping they would hit it off. How perfect would that be: two people for whom I had a deep, abiding affection, together. Instead, having been awarded a yearlong fellowship, he left for Berlin.

WHILE READING “GHOSTS of the Tsunami,” I searched online for footage of the disaster, expecting it to sound like the hurricanes I’d watched on CNN, with howling winds and lashing water, or the oceanic roar of pounding waves. But it wasn’t what I expected at all. It was a malevolent thing, a black, flat, fast-moving amoebal mass, efficiently swallowing acres of gray paddy fields, office buildings, tile-roofed homes and highways full of cars. But what I heard was even eerier because the tsunami sounded so animal-like, like it was digesting all of human civilization, with its peristaltic, grinding crunch of steel and concrete and whole forests being ripped from their roots.

Thinking back, it was that sound, rather than the book, that first reminded me of Rei after all these years. It recalled for me his music, which I first encountered at the residency. We’d gathered at a library that was once a stone chapel and sat on foldout chairs. He turned off the lights and began his composition. A wind rose to a high jet whine that amplified to an annihilating engine roar. With no visuals or lyrics to help guide me, my imagination ran through a gauntlet of disasters. An artist from New Orleans cried afterward, saying she’d pictured a hurricane. Later, Rei told me he wanted to create a shelter of sound with his compositions. But at the time, I felt the opposite, as if his music had simulated a great suctioning cavity where there was once shelter, as if the chapel had been ripped from its foundations and we were exposed to the fury of a godless earth for the wounds we inflicted upon it.

IN THE MIDST of writing this piece, I reconnected with Rei over Zoom to ask about his parents. He lives in Berlin with two kids and his partner. He told me that his parents were doing fine, although some still believe that the poisons that had seeped into the earth might resurface later in the genes of plants, or animals, or children. When I told him that I was writing an essay about him, he was amused but also puzzled. But what could I possibly say?

The last time I saw Rei was in 2010, when my husband and I spent the summer in Berlin, a city that, with its graffiti and D.I.Y. gardens, still looked as though it had been rebuilt by artists. Rei and I hung out quite often that summer, meeting up for drinks at beer gardens or dinner along the green canal in Kreuzberg. I felt so weightless then.

Maybe I’m craving a similar sense of peace during these isolating, anxious days, not unlike the relieved peace of seeing a friend in a foreign country and being able to speak fluently to them. I want to say that the levity with Rei felt hard won, a light cast against what came before us generations ago, when Japan first imposed upon Korea a brutal police state. But I wonder if such a connection can even be made between then and our friendship now, or if I’m contriving it to appease in me some compulsion for closure.

Toward the end of my stay, Rei told me he’d met a German woman, who would later become his partner.

“We are moving in together,” he said.

“Already?”

“My lease is up, and she offered her flat,” he said, looking embarrassed. “She even put down her cat because I’m allergic.”

“Wow — that is love.”

“I told her it wasn’t necessary.”

“Also very German.”

“She’s actually nice. Do you want to meet her?”

I couldn’t resist some other crack about the Axis powers reuniting. I felt protective, like a sister, even a little jealous. But he looked happy, so I reassured him that I was happy for him. It was mid-August, and already there was a chill to the breeze, which tinged me with anxiety about returning home and a future that felt uncertain. He said he’d miss me and wondered when we’d see each other again. “I’ll visit next summer,” I said. “As soon as I’m free.”

PHOTO: “In Memory of a Sure Thing” (2021), made exclusively for T by the New York-based artist Alanna Fields, who said: “Since the onset of the pandemic, a lot of my friends have moved out of the city, and the dynamics of our relationships have changed. With this piece, I used an archival image of three male friends. I brought in the borders to signify isolation, and the red to signify loss — what does it mean when you lose physical nearness, when you can’t access a person in the same way?” (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA SCOTT)

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[***Trump’s Fear of Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60YP-T571-JBG3-633R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. The next presidential debate may be different. The N.F.L. postpones a game. And Trump is trying to prevent a normal election.

[Follow [*our latest coverage of the Biden vs. Trump 2020 election*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).]

There is a theme that has run through President Trump’s entire re-election campaign: He is afraid that he cannot beat Joe Biden.

It explains his extraordinary efforts last year to prevent Biden from becoming the nominee. And it explains his more recent efforts to discredit the election. Rather than running against Biden, Trump now seems to be [*running against democracy itself*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

I think it’s useful to think of the 2020 Trump campaign in three distinct stages. The first was during the run-up to the Democratic primaries, when Trump used the powers of the presidency to pressure at least one foreign country, Ukraine, [*to smear Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) (an effort that led to impeachment). Trump took no similar steps to damage Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren or Kamala Harris.

Why? Trump often acts on instinct, and he may have done so in this case. But he is also a voracious consumer of polls, and polls consistently showed him faring worse in a hypothetical matchup against Biden [*than against any other Democrat*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

The second stage began after Biden clinched the nomination, and Trump doubled down on efforts to damage him. He portrayed Biden as a corrupt old politician, not so different from Hillary Clinton, or a closet socialist.

It hasn’t worked. Biden’s lead over Trump has remained stable.

That has led to the third stage: Try to prevent a normal election.

Trump, with help from other leading Republicans, has increased his efforts to make it difficult to vote. His campaign has filed lawsuits in North Carolina, Pennsylvania and elsewhere to restrict voting by mail. (The Times Magazine has [*a new investigation on this subject*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), including Mike Pence’s role.)

In recent weeks, Trump also began what seems like an obvious attempt at voter intimidation, [*encouraging his supporters to show up at polling places*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), purportedly to prevent voter fraud, which almost never occurs. Donald Trump Jr. has released a video calling for an “army for Trump’s election security operation.”

Tuesday’s debate was the apex of the strategy, at least for now. Trump refused to allow a normal debate, constantly interrupting Biden. For voters, the result was a chaotic jumble. For Trump, it was one more attempt to undermine the normal functioning of democracy.

There is still more than a month until Election Day — an eternity in politics. At this point, though, the picture from the last year and a half is remarkably consistent.

Trump seems to believe he would lose a normal election to Biden. But in an abnormal election, with low turnout and protracted fights over ballot eligibility, who knows what will happen? And if Trump does lose, he is laying the groundwork to make the false claim that the election was rigged.

As my colleague Maggie Haberman [*put it yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), “People close to him are blunt that the president knows he’s losing and is scared of it.”

A programming note: Starting today, we’ve reorganized the next section of this newsletter, “The Latest News.” The new format organizes stories more clearly by topic. We welcome feedback, at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

THE LATEST NEWS

* The Commission on Presidential Debates [*said it would soon announce changes to the remaining debates between Trump and Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), after Tuesday night’s chaos. Among the possibilities: giving moderators the power to cut off a candidate’s microphone.

1. “I never dreamt that it would go off the tracks the way it did,” Chris Wallace, the debate’s moderator, [*said in an interview with The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. Republican lawmakers [*distanced themselves*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) from Trump’s refusal during the debate to condemn white supremacists or the [*Proud Boys*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a violent far-right group. Senator Lindsey Graham said the president should “make it clear Proud Boys is a racist organization antithetical to American ideals.”
3. Biden started a train tour of Pennsylvania and Ohio [*in a bid to win back* ***working-class*** *white voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) who helped Trump win those states in 2016. Barack Obama won both, twice.
4. Democrats’ [*huge lead in absentee ballot requests*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) has Republicans worried. But Democrats fear that advantage could backfire if mail ballots are rejected at high rates.
5. Daily poll diary: Most voters pronounced Biden the debate’s winner in several instant polls. These surveys can be quirky, but the candidate who wins them tends to gain in the real polls, The Times’s Nate Cohn points out. Over all, Nate writes, yesterday brought “[*some of Trump’s worst polls since the convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)

THE VIRUS

* A large new study in India found that [*children of all ages can spread the coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). The study is not the last word in the debate, but it adds to the evidence that school openings are likely to lead to new outbreaks.

1. The White House overruled the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and [*will allow cruise ships to begin sailing again*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) after Oct. 31, rather than February.
2. The governor of Mississippi, Tate Reeves, [*refused to extend the state’s mask mandate*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). “We should not use the heavy hand of government more than it is justified,” Reeves said.
3. For the first time this season, [*the N.F.L. postponed a game*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — between the Tennessee Titans and the Pittsburgh Steelers — after an eighth member of the Titans organization tested positive.
4. The number of confirmed daily cases in the U.S. has risen about 25 percent since mid-September. [*These maps and charts have the details*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

OTHER BIG STORIES

* The Tokyo Stock Exchange [*shut down most of today*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) because of a technical glitch.

1. The baby son of the celebrity couple Chrissy Teigen and John Legend [*died shortly after birth*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. A judge in Brooklyn sentenced Clare Bronfman, an heir to the Seagram’s liquor fortune, to [*more than six years in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) for her role in Nxivm, a purported self-help group that members said was an abusive cult.
3. The Los Angeles Lakers [*easily beat*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) the Miami Heat in the first game of the N.B.A. finals, 116-98.
4. A Morning read: The city of Denver is working [*to add green spaces to minority communities*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that have long lacked them — and that endure worse heat and fewer opportunities for outdoor activities as a result.

* Lives Lived: He was known as the “Berlin Patient,” the first person cured of H.I.V. Only later did we learn his name, Timothy Ray Brown, a Seattle native who underwent a successful experimental bone marrow transplant in Berlin in 2007. [*He died, of leukemia, at 54*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

IDEA OF THE DAY: The end of snow days

New York City announced last month that its school system [*would not allow snow days this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), instead requiring students to learn from home. The change could be the beginning of the end for the snow day as we know it.

Schools that lost instructional time during the pandemic are desperate not to lose any more, and both teachers and students are now far more familiar with virtual learning. So it’s easy to imagine how snow days will turn into virtual-learning days even after the pandemic ends. Some snow-prone states, like [*Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), have given districts this option for several years.

Is it a good idea? [*Opponents of snow days*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) point to the pressure they put on working parents, as well as the problem of missed meals for low-income students. Of course, a virtual-learning day does little to solve either of those issues. And snow days are one of the great spontaneous joys of childhood. They are, as one mother told The Times, a “pause on real life and a chance to let kids be kids.”

School administrators in Shakopee, Minn., are cleverly trying to have it both ways. They recently made the switch to virtual learning when it snows but will also set aside one day a year for a scheduled snow day. “In Minnesota,” Mike Redmond, the Shakopee superintendent, said, “it’s like a birthright you should have a snow day.”

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, CROCS

Pasta night

Make [*this tangy, salty-sweet pasta tonight*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), inspired by traditional caponata, an Italian dish that revolves around sautéed eggplant. The mix of eggplant and creamy ricotta makes for a hearty vegetarian meal.

Essential viewing

In Hollywood, Hispanic stories usually mean ones from other countries, largely overlooking the experiences of U.S.-raised Latinos. “The context, details and nuances that go into telling the story of a family in Mexico City won’t be the same for the story of a family in Los Angeles, which would in turn differ for one in Miami,” writes the film critic Carlos Aguilar.

In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, Aguilar put together [*a list of the 20 essential films since 2000*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that capture the American Latino experience.

Crocs are thriving

In 2020, Crocs reign supreme. The comfortable foam clogs, long the chosen footwear of toddlers and gardeners, have crept into the fashion mainstream. That’s largely thanks to branded collaborations, like one with the luxury fashion house Balenciaga in 2017. You can now find Grateful Dead Crocs, KFC Crocs and even Drew Barrymore Crocs.

On Tuesday, the latest special edition, designed with the Latin pop star Bad Bunny and adorned with glow-in-the-dark charms, [*sold out within 16 minutes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Diversions

* Working on your green thumb? Here’s [*a quick guide to saving seeds*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) for veggies like beans, peas, tomatoes and lettuce.

1. [*The late-night comedy hosts took aim*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)at Trump’s refusal to condemn the Proud Boys.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Guinness World Record holder for “English word with the most meanings” (three letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. Hear about theater during the pandemic, at a free Times event featuring the avid theatergoer Hillary Clinton and Broadway stars like Audra McDonald. [*It’s tonight at 7 Eastern*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about voting by mail. On “[*Sway*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing),” Kara Swisher interviews Alexander Vindman, a key Trump impeachment witness.

Ian Prasad Philbrick, Sanam Yar and Amelia Nierenberg contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Joe Biden during a train tour of Ohio. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Gabriela Bhaskar for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Donald Trump, Joe Biden and the Vote of the Irish***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6006-9JH1-JBG3-63SN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Shawn McCreesh

**Highlight:** From Tammany Hall to ‘Build the Wall,’ the long journey of Irish-American politics.

**Body**

From Tammany Hall to ‘Build the Wall,’ the long journey of Irish-American politics.

In 2016, my vantage point on the donnybrook between Donald and Hillary was an Irish bar in Queens, where I was a bartender a few nights a week. It was a cash-only joint that sometimes stayed open until 7 a.m. and sold discounted cigarettes driven up from Virginia, the sort of place where you could make $800 under the table but you also might get a bottle or a chair thrown at you. This was where I watched the presidential debates and noticed something interesting. Half the patrons were Irish immigrants who considered Mr. Trump a real “eejit,” but the other half, the Irish Americans, thought he was just grand.

Something didn’t compute. Weren’t the Clintons universally beloved by all with Irish blood? (See “[*Derry Girls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html)” on Netflix for a sample of the rock star treatment they got after Bill brought peace to Northern Ireland.) It was puzzling to watch the barflies buzz about Trump’s anti-immigration rhetoric — a drawbridge mentality from a crowd whose lineage had been met with “Irish Need Not Apply” signs. The craic in the Queens shebeen turned out to be a sudsy microcosm: The green vote has never been more red.

“All those Irish were Democrats for literally hundreds of years,” said James F. McKay III, the president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the largest Irish Catholic organization in the country. “But what is the old saying? When they got the wrinkles out of the belly, they became Republicans.”

No doubt. My own grandfather, one of 12 children raised in a two-bedroom house in County Armagh, sailed to Philadelphia, and cheered when John F. Kennedy became president. Sixty-six years later, some of my grandfather’s children and his brother voted for Donald Trump.

“The Irish vote has become not, unfortunately, the lockup of the Democratic Party,” said Brian O’Dwyer, vice president of the Irish American Democrats, a political action committee. “But it is one of the few swing votes, along with the Catholic vote, left in the United States, and you can see various patterns back and forth where the Irish in particular have gone one way or another.”

Everyone agrees that there’s no longer a cohesive bloc that votes on issues of Irish statehood or identity. But politicians have recognized that appealing to this nebulous tribe is just one more way to win precious swing votes.

“We have millions of Irish, and I think I know most of them, because they’re my friends,” President Trump said at a 2019 news conference with the Irish prime minister, or taoiseach, Leo Varadkar. More than 33 million Americans claim Irish ancestry, and the swing districts that propelled Mr. Trump are mulched with them. His campaign has instructed supporters to text “SHAMROCK” to a phone number to join a new coalition, Irish Americans for Trump, and is hawking Trump Luck of the Irish whiskey glasses, two for $30.

During the Iowa caucuses, Joe Biden, the [*great-grandson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html) of a blind fiddler from Ireland’s Cooley Mountains, dispatched Kevin O’Malley, a former ambassador to Ireland, to towns with Catholic populations. Biden brought out the big guns by circulating a   [*two-page endorsement letter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html) handwritten by a nun. On St. Patrick’s Day, his campaign held a conference call with Terry McAuliffe, the former governor of Virginia and a close Clinton ally, and leaders of Irish American organizations.

Last month, Mr. Biden did a virtual town hall with Hillary Clinton and nodded to [*both pols’ ties to the heavily Irish city of Scranton*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html), Pa., by invoking James Joyce: “You know that famous quote by Joyce, ‘When I die, Dublin will be written on my heart’? I think when we die, Scranton will be written on our hearts.”

Steve Bannon, the former Trump strategist, calls blarney. He was in Scranton in early March to speak to a packed house at an anti-abortion prayer breakfast and told me: “I think Biden is a weak candidate in this regard, as weak as Hillary. He’s just a globalist — he’s supported every one of these trade deals, he pushed NAFTA and he’s soft on China.” These issues, Mr. Bannon said, “will be brought up to the ***working-class***, blue-collar unions, which have still got a heavy participation by Irish Catholics.”

The mythos of the once mighty Irish vote dates to the 1870s and to Tammany Hall. As the diarist George Templeton Strong wrote [*at the time*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html): “Our rulers are partly American scoundrels and partly Celtic scoundrels. The Celts are predominant, however, and we submit to the rod and the scepter of Maguires and O’Tooles and O’Shanes.”

Since then, many presidents have claimed Irish ancestry, even Barack “O’bama.” While in office he visited the town of Moneygall, home to one of his great-great-great grandfathers, and joked that “I’ve come home to find the apostrophe we lost somewhere along the way.”

Of course the true zenith of Irishness was reached in 1960 with Kennedy. It was no easy feat to elect him, with many Americans suspicious that a Catholic commander in chief would put pope over country. Still, he listened to the advice given to him by Robert Frost: “Be more Irish than Harvard.”

By then, the Irish vote was decomposing. The tides of immigration from the Emerald Isle had waned. Irish Americans left the cities for the suburbs, and in 1980 many became Reagan Democrats, and, not long after, Republicans.

“It’s the repositioning of every ethnic group when they come to America,” said Niall O’Dowd, the founder of Irish America magazine, the Irish Voice newspaper and IrishCentral.com. “But there’s a natural leaning of the Catholic Church being so far to the right on many issues in America that has taken many Irish Catholics with them, particularly on the issue of abortion.”

Bill Clinton figured out how to juice the demographic years later. In 1992, during the New York primary, he pledged to a group of influential Irish power brokers that, should he become president, he would appoint a special envoy to Northern Ireland, then mired deep in the sectarian conflict known as the Troubles. It was a risky move that instantly rankled the British, but Mr. Clinton became a friend of the Fenians that day. He [*won his primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html). When Hillary Clinton ran for a New York Senate seat in 2000, Bill hit the streets of Queens to play “the Irish card” on her behalf, as the Irish Times   [*put it then*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html).

This was one of the first bases Mrs. Clinton tapped as she geared up for her second presidential run. As [*early as 2012*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html), Mrs. Clinton, then secretary of state, invited top Irish supporters to accompany her on a state trip to Dublin. And yet, some of them feel that candidate Clinton could have better used her Irish connection to meet swing voters where they were. “Hillary missed a trick,” said Mr. O’Dowd. “I was sitting there when the head of Notre Dame offered her the   [*huge invitation to speak*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html). She wanted to do it, but following up with the campaign proved to be awfully impossible.”

Caitriona Perry, an Irish journalist who crisscrossed the U.S. [*to write*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html) “The Tribe: The Inside Story of Irish Power and Influence in US Politics,” agreed that Mrs. Clinton paid insufficient attention to Irish-American communities. Ms. Perry said of the coterie around Trump, “We’ve seen so many Irish Americans pass through this administration that they are themselves reflective of Irish American families and communities who do align more broadly with the Republican Party and then specifically with Donald Trump.”

The “alt-Irish,” [*as they’ve been called*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html), include Sean Spicer; Kellyanne Conway (née Fitzpatrick); and the new press secretary,   [*Kayleigh McEnany*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html), to name a few. But just as Eugene McCarthy had a Celtic foil in Joseph McCarthy, there’s a Denis McDonough (a chief of staff to Barack Obama) for every Mick Mulvaney (Trump’s former acting chief of staff), a Lawrence O’Donnell for every Sean Hannity.

Whatever the case, President Trump does seem to know a thing or two about the Irish. “You have to keep them as your friend,” he said while being presented with the traditional shamrock bowl by the Irish prime minister at the White House last year. “You don’t want to fight with the Irish. It’s too tough — it’s too bloody.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html).

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html),   [*Twitter (@NYTopinion)*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html) and   [*Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/derry-girls.html).

PHOTO: A trader on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, in March. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Lucas Jackson/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 26, 2020

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[***Covid Vaccines Expose Gap in Global Allotment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61MR-G901-DXY4-X2TT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 29, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; BEHIND THE CURVE

**Length:** 1885 words

**Byline:** By Matt Apuzzo and Selam Gebrekidan

**Body**

Global inequality is shaping which countries get vaccines first. In South Africa, people's best chance for vaccines anytime soon is to join an experimental trial.

CAPE TOWN -- A few months from now, a factory in South Africa is expected to begin churning out a million doses of Covid-19 vaccine each day in the African country hardest-hit by the pandemic.

But those vials will probably be shipped to a distribution center in Europe and then rushed to Western countries that have pre-ordered them by the hundreds of millions. None have been set aside for South Africa.

The country, which will help manufacture the vaccine and whose citizens have enrolled in clinical trials, does not expect to see the first trickle of doses until around the middle of next year. By then, the United States, Britain and Canada may already have vaccinated more than 100 million people.

The first year of the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that a country's wealth would not spare it from the virus. Overconfidence, poor planning and ignored warnings felled some of the world's richest nations. But now, money is translating into undeniable advantages.

Over the past few months, rich nations like the United States and Britain have cut deals with multiple drug manufacturers and secured enough doses to vaccinate their citizens multiple times over. China and Russia have conducted their own trials and begun mass vaccination programs.

Yet countries like South Africa are in a singular bind because they cannot hold out hope for charity. Although its government is nearly insolvent and half of its citizens live in poverty, South Africa is considered too rich to qualify for cut-rate vaccines from international aid organizations.

''Where you're not rich enough but you're not poor enough, you're stuck,'' said Salim Abdool Karim, an epidemiologist who leads the country's coronavirus advisory council.

Poor and middle-income nations, largely unable to compete in the open market, rely on a complex vaccine sharing scheme called Covax. A collaboration of international health organizations, Covax was designed to avoid the inequities of a free-market free-for-all. But its deals come with strings attached, and health advocates are questioning its transparency and accountability.

By the middle of next year, South African officials hope to secure their first vaccine doses under Covax, even as they negotiate to buy supplemental supplies from drug manufacturers. But in a country where luxury estates are walled off from sprawling squatter villages, many expect the newest vaccines to remain a privilege for residents who can pay out of pocket or through supplemental insurance -- a program that disproportionately benefits white people.

''You'll be able to stride into your local private pharmacy and pay a couple hundred rand (about $15) and say, 'Hit me baby,''' said Francois Venter, a researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

'Maybe We'll Get the Vaccine in 2025'

The best chance that many South Africans have to get vaccinated anytime soon is to volunteer for a clinical trial and test unproven vaccines on their bodies. But that arrangement has raised ethical questions.

First is whether countries like South Africa, which is supporting trials by four drugmakers, should be guaranteed doses if the trials succeed. The government hasn't received such a guarantee. And at any rate, such an arrangement would be ethically murky, since it would punish countries that participate in unsuccessful trials.

This month, as Britain prepared to begin its vaccination campaign, dozens of people walked from their shacks in Masiphumelele township, south of Cape Town, to the gates of the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation.

They waited outside for hours, under the shade of a gum tree, for a chance to enroll in a clinical trial of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

''The people at the top, they're going to get the vaccine, the people who have power,'' said Mtshaba Mzwamadoda, 42, who lives in a one-bedroom corrugated metal shack with his wife and three children. ''Maybe we'll get the vaccine in 2025.''

''We'll all be dead then,'' said Prudence Nonzamedyantyi, 46, a housekeeper from the same township.

''That's why we signed up,'' Mr. Mzwamadoda said. ''This is the only chance I have.''

Katherine Gill, an AIDS researcher who is leading the trial, usually tempers her enthusiasm for such tests. But early results from other drugmakers have been promising. ''My assumption is that unless you get onto a vaccine study, you're not going to have access to any vaccine anytime soon,'' Dr. Gill said, ''which is obviously quite heartbreaking.''

In the 1990s, when antiretroviral drugs to treat H.I.V. were developed, South Africans volunteered for clinical trials, knowing that they could never afford the medicine otherwise. ''If you had money, you were able to buy it. If you didn't, you died,'' Dr. Venter said. ''It's going to be the same thing again.''

Covax was set up to prevent that. It came together with money and support from the World Health Organization, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance. Countries, even those that cannot hope to compete on the open market, can buy into Covax and receive vaccines. Poor countries pay nothing.

Secret Deals

South African medical advisers say the Covax system is vital but also deeply frustrating. Governments must pay up front without knowing what vaccine they will receive or getting any guarantees on when the doses will arrive. Covax estimates the price per dose but offers little recourse if the cost is ultimately much higher. Countries must assume all of the risk if the vaccine fails or if anything goes wrong.

During a recent call with reporters, Covax officials called their vaccine sharing program ''the only global solution to this pandemic.''

''We still need more doses and, yes, we still need more money, but we have a clear pathway to securing the initial two billion doses and then beyond that,'' said Seth Berkley, the chief executive of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Still, Mr. Berkley and other officials declined to reveal their arrangements with drug companies, describing them as company secrets. They also did not make public the deals they have struck with individual countries.

''They're agreeing to buy something with public money, and we won't have any influence on pricing,'' said Fatima Hassan, a human rights lawyer. ''Covax is saying the pricing is fair, but we don't know. Where's the transparency?''

Those trade-offs might be palatable for countries receiving the medicine nearly free. But South Africa is paying about $140 million for its Covax doses to vaccinate roughly 10 percent of its population, including health care workers and some high-risk people. The government hopes to cover the country's remaining 50 million people through private deals with drug companies.

Globally, the process is secretive, with governments not disclosing the prices they are paying for vaccines. When a Belgian minister recently published the European Union's price list, she revealed that prices vary depending on who's doing the buying.

Many South Africans are deeply skeptical of pharmaceutical companies and wary of rampant government corruption. The health minister, Zweli Mkhize, said in a recent call with reporters that it was essential that rich countries not hoard vaccines, but otherwise the government has said little about its plans.

Outraged, health advocates have threatened to sue the country's government to make the plans public.

Ultimately, though, money is the great differentiator. From the outset, South Africa's government knew it could not afford to order doses before they were tested and approved, as wealthy countries did.

''While these countries have gone on a shopping spree, we haven't even started window shopping,'' Ames Dhai, a bioethics professor and member of the government's vaccine advisory panel, told doctors on a recent webinar.

No Guarantee

South Africa has seen this play out before. In 2009, when the world feared a devastating H1N1 flu outbreak, rich countries hoarded the earliest vaccines. While the outbreak was far weaker than expected, it revealed the inequities that exist when countries compete for lifesaving medicine.

One example is the HPV vaccine, a drug that can prevent cervical cancer but is in short supply in South Africa. Supplies are so tight that the World Health Organization has recommended that wealthy countries temporarily stop expanding their vaccinating campaigns to cover boys, so other nations can focus at least on covering young girls.

For the Covid-19 vaccine, government officials and advisers say they have met with or received preliminary inquiries from most of the major drug companies.

Abdool Karim, the head of the country's coronavirus council, said the country needed to be judicious in choosing a vaccine that best fits the needs of South Africa. Rushing to buy the Pfizer vaccine, for example, which requires shipping and storage at ultracold temperatures, made no sense when cheaper, simpler and more manageable medicines were on the horizon, he said.

But because South Africa did not pre-order doses from private companies, the country may have to watch its own domestic drug maker, Aspen Pharmacare, produce vaccines for other countries before they are available domestically.

Under contract with Johnson & Johnson, Aspen is expected to produce millions of vaccine doses. South African officials have high hopes for the vaccine, which does not need cold storage and promises to require one injection rather than two.

''We'll participate in your trials, we'll manufacture your vaccines, but we don't know if we'll get access,'' Ms. Hassan said.

Johnson & Johnson has promised to sell its vaccines at break-even prices and provide half a billion doses to Covax to help poor countries. Aspen's chief executive, Stephen Saad, said he was proud of that commitment. But he acknowledged that there is no guarantee for South Africa.

''It's J & J's decision as to where the product goes,'' he said.

South Africa, which is now past a million Covid-19 cases, is facing its second wave. Public health officials are particularly worried about a new mutation that they believe may have made the virus more contagious.

In poor and ***working-class*** townships, the greater fear is of a new lockdown. The government's earlier aggressive lockdown devastated the economy and confined many people to tin shacks built an arm's length apart, with a dozen families sharing an outhouse and many more sharing a water tap.

''It's impossible to have social distancing here,'' said Mr. Mzwamadoda, who was selected for the drug trial.

He is counting on the vaccine, hoping he got the actual medicine and not a placebo. ''I want my life back,'' he said.

Mr. Mzwamadoda woke up the day after his injection feeling well. He talked it over with his wife, and they decided that she would walk to Dr. Gill's clinic and enroll that weekend.

A few days later, though, Dr. Gill got word that Johnson & Johnson did not need any new test subjects at her location.

Data was pouring in. A good outcome, but that meant that when people began lining up at the gates early the next morning, she had to turn them away.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/28/world/africa/covid-19-vaccines-south-africa.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/28/world/africa/covid-19-vaccines-south-africa.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Prudence Dudu Khumalo was vaccinated this month in Johannesburg as part of a clinical trial. (A1)

Prudence Nonzamedyantyi, 46, is among the Covid-19 vaccine trial participants who believe such trials are the only hope of a timely vaccination. Left, preparing an injection in Johannesburg.

Participating in a Johnson & Johnson vaccine trial this month at the Desmond Tutu H.I.V. Foundation Youth Center near Cape Town. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO SILVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** December 29, 2020

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[***Biden's Stunning Super Tuesday Revival***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBY-8071-DXY4-X1JG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 5, 2020 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 26; LETTERS

**Length:** 1264 words

**Body**

Readers analyze the reasons for his strong showing and what it means for Bernie Sanders.

To the Editor:

Re ''Big Night for Biden Serves Notice to Sanders'' (front page, March 4):

''We know Joe. But most importantly, Joe knows us.'' With those nine words, Representative Jim Clyburn of South Carolina kicked off an incredible week for Joe Biden and for the Democratic Party. His endorsement, followed by a Biden landslide in South Carolina, more important endorsements and a superb Super Tuesday make clear what most Democrats want.

In the last three years, President Trump has enabled North Korea and Iran to become more dangerous and made a mess of our important alliances. Mr. Biden's comeback shows that having a plan for that or creating a revolution are less important than the security of ''Joe knows us.''

Elliott MillerBala Cynwyd, Pa.

To the Editor:

I could easily call myself a democratic socialist. I believe that Medicare is a lifesaver for senior citizens and that it should be extended to all Americans. What is the virtue in a college education that burdens people for years with loans? My heart is with Bernie.

And yet I voted for Joe. I don't believe that the country is ready for a revolution, and Bernie would find it impossible to advance his agenda if he won -- which I fear he might not. The time is not right for Bernie, and defeating Donald Trump is the top priority.

Lou Raye NicholCary, N.C.

To the Editor:

The real hero of Super Tuesday was Elizabeth Warren. It was her courage, clarity and strategic skill that hit Mike Bloomberg in his first debate. She made him confront the grievances many had about his past. She demonstrated how ill prepared he was. This was a major blow to his threat to Joe Biden.

Thankfully, Mr. Bloomberg has shown the courage and integrity to step aside and play another role in taking the White House. I hope Senator Warren's immense strengths are put to work in rebuilding our country in a Biden administration.

Nancy MilioChapel Hill, N.C.

To the Editor:

In terms of policy, I'm a big Bernie Sanders fan. But, most of all, I'm committed to defeating President Trump, the political nightmare of my lifetime. I have trouble forgiving Joe Biden for his handling of the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings. But he is a decent man with reasonably progressive instincts. Apparently, he can draw the African-American community (Obama coattails) and the white ***working-class*** guys.

He needs progressives to turn out -- not to blow the election off entirely or vote third-party -- so why not a ticket of Joe Biden (with a commitment to just one term) and Elizabeth Warren (who can excite so many of us)? Joe and Elizabeth, time for a private conversation? This is a very critical time.

Michael Rooke-LeyEugene, Ore.

To the Editor:

There are psychological explanations for Joe Biden's strength in the Super Tuesday voting. In the context of fearful times, when facing a novel deadly pandemic, people gravitate toward the familiar and calming, which Mr. Biden supplies, rather than Bernie Sanders's change and excitement.

Psychology also explains generational differences among voters' reactions to two candidates in their late 70s. Older voters seek Mr. Biden's continuity while youths seek Mr. Sanders's change.

Carol GoldbergNew YorkThe writer is a psychologist.

To the Editor:

Can the Democratic Party afford to lose its left wing? Until Tuesday, I was planning to vote for A.B.T. (Anyone But Trump) come November. But the Democratic establishment's rush to derail Bernie Sanders's campaign is making me think twice.

I do not know what Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar were offered in exchange for their endorsement of Joe Biden. Cabinet positions would be my best guess. This smells very bad and is very discouraging to those of us who wish to steer our party in what we believe to be the right direction.

The establishment may think we have nowhere else to go, but that would be wrong. I voted Green Party when, for example, I could not stomach supporting Gore-Lieberman in 2000. I am perfectly ready to do that again.

Please do not take us for granted.

Irvin Cemil SchickNewton, Mass.

To the Editor:

This country was built on the backs of black enslaved Africans. Now it is their descendants who are exercising their franchise to save our democracy.

Cathryn CushingPortland, Ore.

To the Editor:

Re ''5 Takeaways From a Super Tuesday That Changed the Democratic Race'' (nytimes.com, March 3):

Perhaps the most striking takeaway is the utter failure of the massive amounts of money spent by Michael Bloomberg to have a discernible impact on the Super Tuesday outcome. Over the years, the obsessive quest for campaign contributions by candidates and elected officials on both sides of the aisle and at all levels of our political system has increasingly undermined public confidence in our government. Thank you, Michael Bloomberg, for opening our eyes and teaching us all this profoundly important lesson.

Paul JellinekMercerville, N.J.

To the Editor:

It seems that the Democratic race has come down to two elderly men, one with a history of heart trouble and the other who may be having more and more trouble keeping his mind from wandering. Democrats, and all voters, have the right to know all they can about the health of these candidates. The public should demand that Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden have complete physical and psychological workups, and that the full results be released.

The nation's future well-being is too important to be left to guesses and hope about the candidates' physical and psychological ability to handle the job they seek.

Jonathan J. MargolisBrookline, Mass.

To the Editor:

After the Super Tuesday results, Bernie Sanders's supporters are justifiably disappointed. But what they need to realize is that a Joe Biden presidency would be only a beginning, not an end to their quest. Mr. Biden is no ideologue. He's ''pushable,'' and if elected, he will owe the progressive wing big time if it supports him.

Progressives need to go to the streets and use every other means to promote their aims if Mr. Biden is elected. Want ''Medicare for all,'' climate change or an end to college debt? Ask for it! And keep asking! But sit on your hands now and the penalty is four more years of President Trump, unrestrained this time by the need to be re-elected. A very dark place, indeed.

Jay SchleiferWellington, Fla.

To the Editor:

Joe Biden just had the biggest night of his long political career. Let the fretting and carping begin anew among Democrats. However, before recommencing eating itself, allow me to humbly suggest the party take a moment to celebrate.

Democrats have fought big battles in the past and won. The biggest question now is, can they stop fighting each other long enough to meet the challenge ahead? Namely, defeating Donald Trump in the fall. I believe that how they choose to face this challenge will shape the identity of the party for years to come.

Joe ElliottAsheville, N.C.

To the Editor:

It was heartening to see Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar and Mike Bloomberg step aside in favor of Joe Biden in a true show of unity for a larger cause. I now ask supporters of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren whether they are so attached to their progressive vision (much of which I share) that they will take a substantial risk of four more years of President Trump's court picks, four more years of assaults on our democracy and four more years during which the warming of our planet may become unstoppable.

James Van CleveClaremont, Calif.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/opinion/letters/joe-biden-super-tuesday.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/opinion/letters/joe-biden-super-tuesday.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. spoke to supporters in Los Angeles on Super Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Josh Haner/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2020

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[***Limit Votes? The Right May Need a New Tactic***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6199-YYT1-JBG3-64KC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1815 words

**Byline:** By Michael Wines

**Body**

In dozens of lawsuits, Republicans tried to make voting and counting votes harder. After a record turnout and a Democratic presidential win, some wonder if that's the party's best strategy.

WASHINGTON -- It was an election where Republican charges of fictitious voter fraud took center stage before, during and after the count, backed by a barrage of lawsuits intent on making it harder to cast or tally votes.

Yet by its end, Americans had cast ballots at a rate not seen in a century. A Democrat was elected president. And Republicans drew surprising support from Black and Latino voters -- the very groups the party historically targeted with restrictive voting laws in state after state.

That a strategy Republicans long relied on largely fell flat, experts say, can be explained by the partisan divisions that drove record turnout, by self-inflicted wounds on the part of President Trump and by a pandemic that turned a gradual trend toward voting early -- by mail or in person -- into a stampede.

Some of those factors may be one-offs. But aspects of this election -- especially the shift from Election Day voting to mail ballots, and the party's surprising gains with some racial groups -- raise questions of whether the Republican strategy of voter restrictions served the party's interests as it once did. Also unclear is whether the changes in how people voted this year, in the middle of a pandemic, reflect long-term changes pointing to higher turnouts or factors unique to the 2020 vote.

''Stereotypes die hard, and this Republican idea that if more people vote it benefits Democrats was at some level more true in the past,'' said Norman Ornstein, a scholar of American politics and democracy at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute. ''It was certainly true when Republicans believed that white ***working-class*** voters were Democrats. But it's a ridiculous stereotype now.''

Mr. Ornstein is a relentless critic of Mr. Trump and the Republican Party's increasingly authoritarian bent. And nobody expects party leaders to quickly abandon a strategy that has served its interests from North Carolina to Texas to North Dakota. Republicans have argued that measures like voter identification laws, purges of voter rolls and limits on mail ballots are necessary to combat fraud, but ballot fraud is so rare that the rules often accomplish little more than suppress legal turnout. Even so, such strategies have long been part of American politics and are not going away.

''As long as the Republican Party is going to depend on whiter, older and more rural electorate,'' said Richard L. Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California, Irvine, ''they're going to make it harder for some people to register and vote.'' Assertions of fraud, he said, fire up loyalists, increase political contributions and delegitimize Democratic victories.

''Already,'' Dr. Hasen said, ''Biden is going to come into office with millions of people believing falsely that he cheated his way into the presidency.''

But the election also highlighted how trying to place limits on casting a ballot might actually motivate voters to turn out. And even ignoring the toxic effects on democracy, some experts say, this was an election in which the results suggested that the Republican voting playbook may no longer be as effective as before.

Republicans in Texas outperformed expectations this fall, gaining inroads with Latino voters who are among those hit hardest by the state's tough voting restrictions, which include a strict voter ID law that is geared to Republican-friendly constituencies and severely limited absentee balloting options. That cast doubt on the idea that Republican success comes from making it harder for Democrats to vote, said Joe Straus, the Republican speaker of the State House of Representatives until 2019.

That said, he added, the national party's emphasis on discouraging voters in 2020 does not bode well for efforts to broaden its appeal. ''That is not a good look,'' he said. ''Republicans ought to be the party that is encouraging people to vote and winning elections on ideas.''

Mr. Trump's fact-challenged crusade against voting by mail, which he variously labeled ''a scam,'' ''corrupt'' and ''dangerous,'' ''was a real head-scratcher to me,'' Mr. Straus said. ''Many Republicans, including myself, benefited from mail-in voting over the years.''

Nationally, Republicans have embraced absentee voting more than Democrats have. (And Mr. Trump himself has frequently voted absentee, including in this year's Florida primary). This year, however, Republicans followed Mr. Trump's lead in the general election and shied in droves from voting by mail.

How many of them turned up at the polls later is open to debate.

''I think Trump's discouraging mail-in balloting during the campaign may well have cost him the election,'' Mr. Hasen said.

Beyond that, the president's fearmongering spurred a flood of news reports that debunked his claims while teaching Democrats who did cast mail votes how to do it correctly.

In Michigan, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, said a presidential tweet in May that falsely accused her of promoting absentee-ballot fraud turned into ''a multi-front education effort from all sectors on how to vote absentee and why it's reliable.''

''We ultimately were grateful even for negative attention,'' she said.

Other analysts suggest that the right's courtroom campaign to constrain voting hindered Republicans as much as it helped.

The most striking legal victory for Republicans came in Florida, where a federal appeals court upheld the Legislature's requirement that former felons pay fines and court costs to regain the right to vote. The ruling, undermining a referendum overwhelmingly passed by Florida voters, effectively barred hundreds of thousands of Floridians with criminal records from registering to cast ballots.

Even that ruling, though, may have had a boomerang effect. Some analysts suggested that the publicity surrounding lawsuits and other Republican voter-security moves, like the party's pledge to deploy 50,000 poll watchers in battleground states, actually worked in favor of Mr. Trump's opponents.

''One effect the pre-election litigation and rhetoric did have was motivating citizens to vote exceptionally early,'' said Barry Burden, who directs the Elections Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

A key question is whether early voting will change American voters -- and voting laws -- in coming elections. The coronavirus pandemic turbocharged a shift away from Election Day voting to pre-election balloting, both in person and by mail.

According to the United States Elections Project, 47.2 million Americans voted early in the 2016 general election, roughly half by mail and half in person. This year that rocketed to 101.4 million -- 65.5 million mail ballots and 35.9 million in-person votes.

''The data shows in other states that when voters begin using the mail and voting early, they embrace the convenience,'' Ms. Benson said. ''We'll certainly see in future elections the majority of citizens voting early. What's unknown is just how high that proportion will be.''

In many states, at least, voting by mail proved a positive for Democrats whose supporters had often faced hurdles like long lines at polling places. In suburban Atlanta, Carolyn Bourdeaux won a race for a previously Republican House seat by 10,000 votes in a state with a history of making in-person voting difficult.

''We had to fight for every vote,'' she said. Voting by mail proved crucial: In 2018, when she lost a race for the same seat by fewer than 500 votes, one third of all mail ballots in the state that were thrown out for problems like mismatched signatures and missing addresses came from Gwinnett County, in her House district.

Ms. Bourdeaux later led lawsuits that simplified voting absentee, standardized verification rules and allowed voters to correct mistakes. This fall, only 0.1 percent of Gwinnett County mail ballots were rejected. In 2018, according to lawsuits at the time, the county's rejection rate was about six percent.

Legal efforts to restrict mail balloting gained little traction this fall, but that could be temporary. Speaking on a podcast this past week, the former Republican governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, said falsely that all major industrialized nations have ''gotten rid of or don't have ballots by mail.'' Citing unspecified ''shenanigans'' in mail ballots this fall, he called for the United States to outlaw absentee voting in all but limited circumstances.

David Wasserman, an analyst of the House of Representatives for the Cook Political Report, questioned whether many Republican tactics denounced by voting-rights experts as suppression affected many votes this year. Nor was he certain that misfires like Mr. Trump's assault on voting by mail meant much in the end.

Some Texans were outraged by a court ruling limiting each county to a single location to drop off absentee ballots -- a decision that gave millions of Houston voters one drop box in a county the size of Delaware. But voters still could mail ballots to election offices, he noted.

''There are examples of places where Republicans have impeded voters' ability to cast ballots,'' he said. ''But a dispassionate reading of what transpired last week was that this was a fairly smoothly run election in which voters had, in many cases, very short lines to cast ballots and many opportunities to vote by mail.''

Some on the right see Republican gains with Black and Latino voters as evidence that the Republican message on fraud resonates more than voting rights advocates admit.

In New Mexico's Second Congressional District, ''a Trump Republican retook the seat with a platform pushing voter integrity,'' said Logan Churchwell, a spokesman for the Public Interest Legal Foundation, a conservative group focused on illegal voting. In Starr County, Texas, a poor, Hispanic area near the border with Mexico where authorities have campaigned against election irregularities, ''Trump nearly split the vote in a county where the G.O.P. doesn't really exist.''

And some Republicans even suggested that the party might do better competing for Democratic-leaning voters than trying to discourage them.

''We saw with Joe Biden's nomination that African-Americans are not exactly lefties, and we saw with the Latino vote in South Florida that an argument against socialism can be very persuasive,'' said Whit Ayres, a Republican campaign strategist. ''So there are avenues to expand the Republican coalition if we are savvy enough to take advantage of them.''

He added: ''That's the part I don't know. A lot of that is going to depend on how much of a sway Donald Trump retains over the Republican Party when he is no longer president.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/14/us/republican-voter-restrictions-absentee.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/14/us/republican-voter-restrictions-absentee.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The 2020 election highlighted how attempts to restrict voters might actually motivate more of them to cast ballots. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALYSSA SCHUKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2020

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[***Are State Polls Any Better Than They Were in 2016?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6008-6BW1-JBG3-64SD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 25, 2020 Monday 16:26 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1411 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** The risk of a systematic error is lower this time, but there are still issues that seem to tilt these surveys to the left.

**Body**

The risk of a systematic error is lower this time, but there are still issues that seem to tilt these surveys to the left.

To most, Joe Biden’s clear lead in recent state polls suggests that he has the early edge in the race for the presidency. To others, it’s not so meaningful. After all, Hillary Clinton also held a clear lead in the state polls, and yet Donald J. Trump won the election.

Four years later, it’s fair to wonder whether there is a serious risk of another systematic polling error. The answer is not cut and dried.

There is always a chance of a systematic polling error, even when the reasons aren’t evident in advance. This time, there are obvious causes for concern. Many state polls suffer from the same methodological issues that were partly or even largely responsible for the miss four years ago, despite many opportunities to improve. Yet at the same time, many of the major causes of error in 2016 seem somewhat less acute.

What’s better than in 2016: undecided voters

One major source of the 2016 polling error is much less of a factor than it was four years ago: voters who are undecided or say they will vote for a minor-party candidate. These voters appeared to break overwhelmingly toward Mr. Trump, especially in the relatively white, ***working-class*** battleground states.

This time, far fewer voters are telling pollsters they’re undecided, and that means less room for a late shift among these voters to cause a polling error. At this point in 2016, about 20 percent of voters either supported a minor-party candidate or said they were undecided. Today, the number is about half that level.

What’s a little better than in 2016: education weighting

Another source of polling error was the failure of many state pollsters to adjust their samples to adequately represent voters without a college degree. Voters with a college degree are far likelier to respond to telephone surveys than voters without one, and in 2016 the latter group was far likelier to support Mr. Trump. Over all, weighting by education shifted the typical national poll by around four percentage points toward Mr. Trump, helping explain why the national polls fared better than state polls.

Four years later, weighting by education remains just as important. The gap in the preference of white voters with or without a college degree is essentially unchanged, despite the appeal Mr. Biden was supposed to have with less educated white voters.

In the New York Times/Siena College [*surveys conducted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/upshot/trump-biden-warren-polls.html) in October, Mr. Biden’s combined lead over Mr. Trump in the core six battleground states — Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Arizona, Florida and North Carolina — was two percentage points. That lead would have been six percentage points had the polls not been weighted by education or turnout (which correlates with education).

Although they could still be doing better, more pollsters are weighting by education today than four years ago. Over all, 46 percent of the more than 30 pollsters who have released a state survey since March 1 appeared to weight by self-reported education, up from around 20 percent of battleground state pollsters in 2016.

Some of the increase is because a handful of pollsters have decided to start weighting by education, a prominent example being the Monmouth University poll. But more of the change is because of the high volume of state online polls, which have always been likelier than state telephone surveys to weight by education.

What could be worse than in 2016: new online polls

There has been a surge in new online-only state polls. Over the last month, there have been 13 such surveys, representing nearly half of the pollsters who have conducted state polls over this period. In contrast, only 10 online-only pollsters conducted surveys over the final three weeks of the 2018 election, which was about 10 percent of all of the pollsters who conducted surveys in that period.

Online polling isn’t necessarily bad. Many are sophisticated and comparable in quality to a typical live-interview telephone survey. But most of these new state polls take a simple approach: Contact the members of a large online panel, then weight those respondents by standard census demographics and maybe recalled vote choice in 2016 (more on that later). This is inexpensive and easy, but most pollsters have concluded that it’s not great. The panels just aren’t sufficiently representative, especially in small states, to expect a simple methodology to yield a high-quality result.

Until recently, few pollsters have tried to use this approach in state polling (Morning Consult is the most prolific example of a pollster that has done it nationally). But the early evidence suggests that these kind of state polls might lean to the left.

Perhaps the best early data is the AP/NORC/VoteCast polling ahead of the midterms, which combined a traditional telephone survey of 40,000 respondents with a large nonprobability online sample of 110,000 respondents. The online-only element of the survey was fairly comparable to most of the online surveys released in recent weeks, and it wouldn’t have fared well without calibration using the live-interview surveys. It would have overestimated the Democratic result by an average of about five percentage points across 71 races.

Similarly, the new online polls tend to lean to the left of the state telephone polls so far this cycle. In polls conducted since March 15, Mr. Biden has run 6.6 percentage points ahead of Mrs. Clinton’s margin in online state polls, compared with a gain of 3.7 points in live-interview telephone surveys. Notably, the latter figure comes very close to Mr. Biden’s gain in national polls — about four points — over the same period.

Over the long run, these polls might make up a smaller share of the battleground polling than they have so far. But it seems inevitable that new online polls will represent a larger share of state polls this cycle, and so far the best indications are that they’ll lean to the left.

What could be worse than in 2016: recalled vote weighting

More and more, pollsters with fairly mediocre sampling methods are relying on a new tool to bring their results closer to reality: recalled 2016 vote. Here, the pollster asks respondents whether they voted for Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Trump, then adjusts the sample so that the recalled vote choice matches the actual result of the 2016 election.

Weighting on recalled vote choice certainly has its advantages. You could probably hammer even the worst survey into the ballpark. You could probably get a plausible poll result for Wyoming using a sample of New Yorkers this way.

But although this is a surefire way to reduce error, it is very hard to execute without risking a modest systematic bias. And here again, the bias would tend to be toward the Democrats.

There’s a large body of evidence suggesting that people are likelier to recall voting for the winner and less likely to recall voting for the loser. If so, polls weighting on recalled past vote would tend to be biased toward the party that lost the prior election.

It seems that this effect is, at the very least, substantially diminished compared with a decade ago. Even so, it might still be there. In the Times/Siena polls from October, for instance, 6 percent of 2016 voters refused to say whether they backed Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Trump. Those voters backed Mr. Biden by a two-to-one margin, suggesting that they were probably likelier to have supported Mrs. Clinton.

Another issue is that today’s registered voters aren’t exactly the same as those of four years ago: In the interim some people have either died, reached voting age, or moved elsewhere. So it is not appropriate to assume that people who voted in 2016, and are now registered to vote, backed Mr. Trump or Mrs. Clinton by the same margin as in the 2016 result.

It is hard to say whether this is generalizable, but over all 13 percent of the voters who took the Times/Siena polls in 2016 are no longer on their state voter file, and those voters backed Mrs. Clinton by a six-point margin, compared with a one-point lead for Mr. Trump among those who remain registered in the state. Here again, recalled vote weighting might bias a poll by only one percentage point in Mr. Biden’s favor, but the risks start to add up.

Disinfecting voting booths in Madison, Wis., last month. Adjustments in polling could have big implications in battleground states. STEVE APPS/WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Load-Date:** May 25, 2020

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[***For Covid-19 Vaccines, Some Are Too Rich — and Too Poor; behind the curve***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61MH-YHV1-JBG3-624G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 28, 2020 Monday 11:35 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; africa

**Length:** 1918 words

**Byline:** Matt Apuzzo, Selam Gebrekidan and Joao Silva

**Highlight:** Global inequality is shaping which countries get vaccines first. In South Africa, people’s best chance for vaccines anytime soon is to join an experimental trial.

**Body**

CAPE TOWN — A few months from now, a factory in [*South Africa*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html) is expected to begin churning out a million doses of [*Covid-19 vaccine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html) each day in the African country hardest-hit by the pandemic.

But those vials will probably be shipped to a distribution center in Europe and then rushed to Western countries that have pre-ordered them by the hundreds of millions. None have been set aside for South Africa.

The country, which will help manufacture the vaccine and whose citizens have enrolled in clinical trials, does not expect to see the first trickle of doses until around the middle of next year. By then, the United States, Britain and Canada may already have vaccinated more than 100 million people.

The first year of the [*Covid-19*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html) pandemic revealed that a country’s wealth would not spare it from the virus. [*Overconfidence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html), [*poor planning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html) and [*ignored warnings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html) felled some of the world’s richest nations. But now, money is translating into undeniable advantages.

Over the past few months, rich nations like the United States and Britain have cut deals with multiple drug manufacturers and secured enough doses to vaccinate their citizens multiple times over. China and Russia have conducted their own trials and begun mass vaccination programs.

Yet countries like South Africa are in a singular bind because they cannot hold out hope for charity. Although its government is nearly insolvent and half of its citizens live in poverty, South Africa is considered too rich to qualify for cut-rate vaccines from international aid organizations.

“Where you’re not rich enough but you’re not poor enough, you’re stuck,” said Salim Abdool Karim, an epidemiologist who leads the country’s coronavirus advisory council.

Poor and middle-income nations, largely unable to compete in the open market, rely on a complex vaccine sharing scheme called [*Covax*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html). A collaboration of international health organizations, Covax was designed to avoid the inequities of a free-market free-for-all. But its deals come with strings attached, and health advocates are questioning its transparency and accountability.

By the middle of next year, South African officials hope to secure their first vaccine doses under Covax, even as they negotiate to buy supplemental supplies from drug manufacturers. But in a country where luxury estates are walled off from sprawling squatter villages, many expect the newest vaccines to remain a privilege for residents who can pay out of pocket or through supplemental insurance — a program that disproportionately benefits white people.

“You’ll be able to stride into your local private pharmacy and pay a couple hundred rand (about $15) and say, ‘Hit me baby,’” said Francois Venter, a researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

‘Maybe We’ll Get the Vaccine in 2025’

The best chance that many South Africans have to get vaccinated anytime soon is to volunteer for a clinical trial and test unproven vaccines on their bodies. But that arrangement has raised ethical questions.

First is whether countries like South Africa, which is supporting trials by four drugmakers, should be guaranteed doses if the trials succeed. The government hasn’t received such a guarantee. And at any rate, such an arrangement would be ethically murky, since it would punish countries that participate in unsuccessful trials.

This month, as Britain prepared to begin its vaccination campaign, dozens of people walked from their shacks in Masiphumelele township, south of Cape Town, to the gates of the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation.

They waited outside for hours, under the shade of a gum tree, for a chance to enroll in a clinical trial of the [*Johnson &amp; Johnson vaccine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html).

“The people at the top, they’re going to get the vaccine, the people who have power,” said Mtshaba Mzwamadoda, 42, who lives in a one-bedroom corrugated metal shack with his wife and three children. “Maybe we’ll get the vaccine in 2025.”

“We’ll all be dead then,” said Prudence Nonzamedyantyi, 46, a housekeeper from the same township.

“That’s why we signed up,” Mr. Mzwamadoda said. “This is the only chance I have.”

Katherine Gill, an AIDS researcher who is leading the trial, usually tempers her enthusiasm for such tests. But early results from other drugmakers have been promising. “My assumption is that unless you get onto a vaccine study, you’re not going to have access to any vaccine anytime soon,” Dr. Gill said, “which is obviously quite heartbreaking.”

In the 1990s, when antiretroviral drugs to treat H.I.V. were developed, South Africans volunteered for clinical trials, knowing that they could never afford the medicine otherwise. “If you had money, you were able to buy it. If you didn’t, you died,” Dr. Venter said. “It’s going to be the same thing again.”

Covax was set up to prevent that. It came together with money and support from the World Health Organization, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance. Countries, even those that cannot hope to compete on the open market, can buy into Covax and receive vaccines. Poor countries pay nothing.

Secret Deals

South African medical advisers say the Covax system is vital but also deeply frustrating. Governments must pay up front without knowing what vaccine they will receive or getting any guarantees on when the doses will arrive. Covax estimates the price per dose but offers little recourse if the cost is ultimately much higher. Countries must assume all of the risk if the vaccine fails or if anything goes wrong.

During a recent call with reporters, Covax officials called their vaccine sharing program “the only global solution to this pandemic.”

“We still need more doses and, yes, we still need more money, but we have a clear pathway to securing the initial two billion doses and then beyond that,” said Seth Berkley, the chief executive of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Still, Mr. Berkley and other officials declined to reveal their arrangements with drug companies, describing them as company secrets. They also did not make public the deals they have struck with individual countries.

“They’re agreeing to buy something with public money, and we won’t have any influence on pricing,” said Fatima Hassan, a human rights lawyer. “Covax is saying the pricing is fair, but we don’t know. Where’s the transparency?”

Those trade-offs might be palatable for countries receiving the medicine nearly free. But South Africa is paying about $140 million for its Covax doses to vaccinate roughly 10 percent of its population, including health care workers and some high-risk people. The government hopes to cover the country’s remaining 50 million people through private deals with drug companies.

Globally, the process is secretive, with governments not disclosing the prices they are paying for vaccines. When a Belgian minister recently [*published the European Union’s price list*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html), she revealed that prices vary depending on who’s doing the buying.

Many South Africans are deeply skeptical of pharmaceutical companies and wary of rampant government corruption. The health minister, Zweli Mkhize, said in a recent call with reporters that it was essential that rich countries not hoard vaccines, but otherwise the government has said little about its plans.

Outraged, health advocates [*have threatened to sue the*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html) country’s government to make the plans public.

Ultimately, though, money is the great differentiator. From the outset, South Africa’s government knew it could not afford to order doses before they were tested and approved, as wealthy countries did.

“While these countries have gone on a shopping spree, we haven’t even started window shopping,” Ames Dhai, a bioethics professor and member of the government’s vaccine advisory panel, told doctors on a recent webinar.

No Guarantee

South Africa has seen this play out before. In 2009, when the world feared a devastating H1N1 flu outbreak, rich countries hoarded the earliest vaccines. While the outbreak was far weaker than expected, it revealed the inequities that exist when countries compete for lifesaving medicine.

One example is the HPV vaccine, a drug that can prevent cervical cancer but is in short supply in South Africa. Supplies are so tight that the World Health Organization has recommended that wealthy countries temporarily stop expanding their vaccinating campaigns to cover boys, so other nations can focus at least on covering young girls.

For the Covid-19 vaccine, government officials and advisers say they have met with or received preliminary inquiries from most of the major drug companies.

Abdool Karim, the head of the country’s coronavirus council, said the country needed to be judicious in choosing a vaccine that best fits the needs of South Africa. Rushing to buy the Pfizer vaccine, for example, which requires shipping and storage at ultracold temperatures, made no sense when cheaper, simpler and more manageable medicines were on the horizon, he said.

But because South Africa did not pre-order doses from private companies, the country may have to watch its own domestic drug maker, Aspen Pharmacare, produce vaccines for other countries before they are available domestically.

Under contract with Johnson &amp; Johnson, Aspen is expected to produce millions of vaccine doses. South African officials have high hopes for the vaccine, which does not need cold storage and promises to require one injection rather than two.

“We’ll participate in your trials, we’ll manufacture your vaccines, but we don’t know if we’ll get access,” Ms. Hassan said.

Johnson &amp; Johnson has promised to sell its vaccines at break-even prices and provide half a billion doses to Covax to help poor countries. Aspen’s chief executive, Stephen Saad, said he was proud of that commitment. But he acknowledged that there is no guarantee for South Africa.

“It’s J &amp; J’s decision as to where the product goes,” he said.

South Africa, which is now [*past a million Covid-19 cases*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html), is facing its second wave. Public health officials are particularly worried about [*a new mutation that they believe may have made the virus more contagious*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-vaccine-africa-exported-europe.html).

In poor and ***working-class*** townships, the greater fear is of a new lockdown. The government’s earlier aggressive lockdown devastated the economy and confined many people to tin shacks built an arm’s length apart, with a dozen families sharing an outhouse and many more sharing a water tap.

“It’s impossible to have social distancing here,” said Mr. Mzwamadoda, who was selected for the drug trial.

He is counting on the vaccine, hoping he got the actual medicine and not a placebo. “I want my life back,” he said.

Mr. Mzwamadoda woke up the day after his injection feeling well. He talked it over with his wife, and they decided that she would walk to Dr. Gill’s clinic and enroll that weekend.

A few days later, though, Dr. Gill got word that Johnson &amp; Johnson did not need any new test subjects at her location.

Data was pouring in. A good outcome, but that meant that when people began lining up at the gates early the next morning, she had to turn them away.

PHOTOS: Prudence Dudu Khumalo was vaccinated this month in Johannesburg as part of a clinical trial. (A1); Prudence Nonzamedyantyi, 46, is among the Covid-19 vaccine trial participants who believe such trials are the only hope of a timely vaccination. Left, preparing an injection in Johannesburg.; Participating in a Johnson &amp; Johnson vaccine trial this month at the Desmond Tutu H.I.V. Foundation Youth Center near Cape Town. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO SILVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** August 16, 2021

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[***Elizabeth Warren, Coronavirus, Stock Market: Your Thursday Evening Briefing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YC1-3D91-DXY4-X333-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1221 words

**Byline:** Tom Wright-Piersanti and Marcus Payadue

**Highlight:** Here’s what you need to know at the end of the day.

**Body**

Here’s what you need to know at the end of the day.

(Want to get this briefing by email? Here’s [*the sign-up*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).)

Good evening. Here’s the latest.

1. Elizabeth Warren has dropped out of the Democratic primary race.

Ms. Warren, a progressive senator from Massachusetts, [*entered the contest with a flood of detailed proposals*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) aimed at fighting corruption and changing the rules of the economy, and for much of the race she was considered one of the front-runners.

But her ideas weren’t able to generate enough excitement among the party’s ***working-class*** and diverse base. Her exit means the nominating contest is now a two-man race between Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders. Ms. Warren has not yet announced whom she will support.

Mr. Sanders canceled a planned rally in Jackson, Miss., and will instead travel to Michigan, a change that suggests he will not challenge Mr. Biden for the support of black voters in the South and is instead going all in on the Midwest. Mr. Biden is ahead by about [*65 delegates*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).

2. Another cruise ship is being kept at sea because of the coronavirus.

The Grand Princess, a ship returning from Hawaii with thousands of people on board, [*is being held off the coast of San Francisco*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) after two people who were on the vessel’s previous voyage were found to be infected with the virus.

Test kits were flown to the ship by helicopter to screen [*about 100 passengers and crew members*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline), including 21 with symptoms and 62 who had stayed on from the previous voyage. The same cruise line owns the Diamond Princess, which was   [*ravaged by the virus*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) while quarantined off Japan last month.

In New York, the number of confirmed cases [*jumped to 22 on Thursday*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline), with officials announcing eight new cases in Westchester County, one on Long Island and two cases in New York City in which the patients are critically ill.

In Japan, critics are [*calling for the resignation of Shinzo Abe,*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) the country’s longest-serving prime minister, for his controversial response to the outbreak.

3. Stocks plunged again as investors struggled to gauge the [*economic damage of the outbreak*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).

The S&amp;P 500 fell more than 3 percent. It has now climbed or fallen more than 3 percent on six different days in the past two weeks, something that had not happened even once in the previous 12 months.

Traveler anxiety and travel bans are [*making this a tough year for airlines*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) — so bad that it’s “almost without precedent,” the president of the International Air Transport Association said.

Workplaces [*are feeling the sting*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline), too, worrying about the health of their workers and their finances. From Seattle, above, to New York and London, offices are going through work-from-home drills, restricting travel and building up inventory.

4. Senator Chuck Schumer expressed regret for saying two conservative justices could “pay the price” over an abortion case before the Supreme Court.

The case, which began in Louisiana, may result in reduced access to abortion across the country. [*Mr. Schumer’s comments*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) were denounced by President Trump and Republican senators, who accused Mr. Schumer of threatening violence.

Mr. Schumer, a Democrat, said on Thursday that he “should not have used the words.” But he refused to apologize, saying Republicans would pay a political price if the court struck down abortion rights.

5. One possible winner of the potential withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan? Pakistan.

The Taliban have long been the recipients of Pakistan’s patronage, and a fragile deal brokered last weekend holds the promise of [*an ideal outcome for Islamabad*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline): a weak and pliable neighbor that Pakistan can influence long into the future. Above, soldiers along the Afghan border in 2017.

But regional experts warn that Pakistan risks playing a dangerous game if the American military withdrawal leads to a further descent into chaos — fueling a full-scale civil war in which India, Russia and others back different factions and dragging Pakistan into a protracted conflict.

In Middle East peace news, Russia and Turkey announced [*a deal to halt fighting in the Syrian region of Idlib*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline), where a volatile conflict had pushed the countries to the brink of war.

6. The new Boeing C.E.O. largely laid the blame for the company’s 737 Max crisis [*on his fired predecessor*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).

“It’s more than I imagined it would be, honestly,” said the executive, David Calhoun, in an interview with The Times about the problems plaguing Boeing, which is still reeling from [*two crashes that killed 346 people*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline). “And it speaks to the weaknesses of our leadership.”

Mr. Calhoun, who previously served on Boeing’s board and became its chairman last year, said he was focused on improving the work culture, introducing new company values and instilling discipline.

7. Tax Day is approaching. Sorry to remind you about April 15, but we can help you get through it as painlessly as possible.

First, we give you [*nine reasons to stop doing your own taxes*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline). Chief among them are avoiding costly errors and complicated filing situations, like a recent divorce or a big gain from cashed-in stock options.

We also asked accountants and other specialists to answer [*the most vexing tax questions*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) their clients bring to them.

And [*if you have an I.R.A.*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline), familiarize yourself with changes made last year, including a longer contribution window and new restrictions for heirs.

8. Madison Bumgarner may be the best pitcher in World Series history. Now he’s working on a new title: mentor.

Bumgarner spent the early part of his career with the San Francisco Giants, where he relished the guidance he got from the left-hander Randy Johnson. After signing with the Arizona Diamondbacks this winter, he’s [*trying to return the favor with their young pitching staff*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) — though it’s unclear if his advice will include becoming a   [*secret rodeo competitor*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).

9. How to prepare for the end of the world.

In rural Washington State, a several hours’ drive from where coronavirus cases are rapidly growing, a woman named Lynx Vilden is [*teaching people how to live in the wild*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).

“When the end comes, some will not be waiting in a bunker for a savior,” writes our reporter Nellie Bowles. “They will stride out into the wilderness with confidence, ready to hunt and kill a deer, tan its hide and sleep easily in a hand-built shelter, close by a fire they made from the force of their two palms on a stick.”

10. And finally, an escape pod from planet Earth.

If you have tens of millions of dollars to spare, you could be one of three passengers on [*a spaceship to the International Space Station*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) for a 10-day stay, as soon as 2021.

Axiom Space, a company run by a former manager of NASA’s part of the space station, announced on Thursday that it had signed a contract with SpaceX, Elon Musk’s rocket company, for what could be the first fully private human spaceflight to orbit. The price tag: $10 million to $20 million.

Have a wild evening.

Melina Delkic, Adam Pasick and Lara Takenaga contributed to this briefing.

Your Evening Briefing is posted at 6 p.m. Eastern.

And don’t miss Your Morning Briefing. [*Sign up here*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline) to get it by email in the Australian, Asian, European, African or American morning.

Want to catch up on past briefings? [*You can browse them here*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).

What did you like? What do you want to see here? Let us know at [*briefing@nytimes.com*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/nyt-now-evening-briefing?module=inline).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY David Degner for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Sanders Campaign Was Caught Off Guard by Quick Massing of Opposition***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBH-PVT1-JBG3-6137-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2020 Tuesday 12:17 EST

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**Byline:** Sydney Ember

**Highlight:** “It’s becoming clear that in order for us to win this nomination, that road clearly flows through Joe Biden,’’ Bernie Sanders’s campaign manager said.

**Body**

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ST. PAUL, Minn. — On Sunday night, Faiz Shakir, the campaign manager for Senator [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html), received a call from his onetime boss and longtime mentor, former Senator Harry Reid of Nevada.

Mr. Reid was delivering disappointing news: He planned to endorse former Vice President [*Joseph R. Biden, Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html), who was quickly emerging as Mr. Sanders’s chief rival in the presidential primary.

The call would set off a whirlwind 24 hours for the Sanders campaign, which just days earlier had seemed as if it was on a runaway train to the Democratic nomination. Hours after Mr. Reid’s phone call, as Mr. Sanders prepared to host a rally in Salt Lake City, news broke that Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, a moderate, planned to drop out of the race and endorse Mr. Biden. Reports also flowed in that Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., who had dropped out Sunday night, would back Mr. Biden, too.

The swiftness of the coalescence around Mr. Biden caught the Sanders team off guard. Even after Mr. Biden handily won in South Carolina on Saturday, beating Mr. Sanders by nearly 30 percentage points, aides had spent Sunday reluctant to declare the primary a two-person race between Mr. Sanders and Mr. Biden. By Monday afternoon, however, everyone on the campaign recognized the new dynamics.

“We always anticipated that there would be consolidation of an establishment side,” Mr. Shakir said in an interview Monday night. “It’s one thing to know it’s going to happen, and it’s another thing to watch it happen so very quickly.”

“Because of the swiftness with which it moved,” he added, “it’s becoming clear that in order for us to win this nomination, that road clearly flows through Joe Biden.”

As the contours of the race heading into [*Super Tuesday*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html) became more apparent, the campaign began reaching out to progressive groups and politicians, Mr. Shakir said, hoping to consolidate more support quickly. It also hashed out a strategy that involved drawing more explicit contrasts to Mr. Biden.

The campaign plans to be on the air with advertisements in key states that will vote on March 10 and March 17, including Florida, Michigan, Ohio and Arizona; the ad blitz will include a spot about Mr. Biden’s record on Social Security. It is considering running an ad in Midwestern states like Michigan and Ohio — where both candidates are competing for an overlapping slice of white ***working-class*** voters — that will emphasize Mr. Biden’s record on trade, including his support for the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The Sanders campaign also circulated a memo to surrogates and supporters highlighting “the contrasts that we expect to now be in the spotlight as we head into Super Tuesday and beyond.”

“We are now entering the phase of the primary in which the differences between Bernie and Biden will take center stage,” the memo said. “These differences make clear that the choice between these two candidates is stark.”

Since Mr. Sanders got into the race a year ago, his top advisers have ached for a two-way race with Mr. Biden, viewing the moderate former vice president as the perfect foil for Mr. Sanders’s promise of a political revolution: a throwback Democrat who touts his ability to work with Republicans and who has been criticized by rivals for telling donors that under a Biden administration, [*“nothing would fundamentally change.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html)

But the reality of such a direct confrontation with Mr. Biden, a five-decade fixture in Washington politics, poses challenges for Mr. Sanders, whose style of grass-roots politics and long history as an outsider means he cannot muster the same kind of institutional forces. Instead, he relies on a loyal army of individual donors who give $18 at a time, and a progressive network that for all of its ambition remains in some ways disjointed and uncoordinated.

“There’s a reason the establishment has power, keeps power and maintains powers, because these are the things that they do well,” Mr. Shakir said.

Complicating matters, Mr. Sanders’s chief ideological rival, Senator [*Elizabeth Warren*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html) of Massachusetts, remains in the race despite finishing out of the top two in all of the first four nominating contests — including a distant fifth in South Carolina. Though there have been fissures in the united facade their two campaigns presented for much of the primary race, Sanders aides respect her and do not want to publicly pressure her to drop out.

“We respect the fact that she’s going to make whatever decision she makes, and she should be allowed to do that,” Mr. Shakir said, adding that she “should be given the time and space” to determine her path forward.

He declined to say whether the two campaigns had discussed efforts to consolidate the liberal wing of the party.

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Speaking to reporters Monday morning during a rally in Salt Lake City, Ari Rabin-Havt, a deputy campaign manager, struck a confident tone, saying that the campaign was not nervous about any of the recent developments and that it did not intend to change its strategy.

“Watching the campaign, watching the 10 debates unfold, we believe they have constantly shown that Bernie is the strongest candidate to defeat Donald Trump, and that’s still the case,” Mr. Rabin-Havt said. “And we think we still are in a very strong position heading into Super Tuesday.”

During that rally, Mr. Sanders made no mention of Ms. Klobuchar’s decision to drop out of the race and endorse Mr. Biden, nor did he talk about Mr. Reid.

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PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders and his wife, Jane Sanders, before his campaign rally in St. Paul, Minn., on Monday night as former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. was endorsed by Pete Buttigieg and Senator Amy Klobuchar. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Erin Schaff/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2020

**End of Document**



[***As Opposition Coalesces, Sanders Campaign Shifts Its Focus to Biden's Record***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBX-B9C1-JBG3-634M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 4, 2020 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 1300 words

**Byline:** By Sydney Ember

**Body**

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Mr. Reid was delivering disappointing news: He planned to endorse former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., who was quickly emerging as Mr. Sanders's chief rival in the presidential primary.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/us/politics/bernie-sanders-2020-super-tuesday.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/us/politics/bernie-sanders-2020-super-tuesday.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders and his wife, Jane Sanders, before his campaign rally in St. Paul, Minn., on Monday night as former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. was endorsed by Pete Buttigieg and Senator Amy Klobuchar. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Erin Schaff/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2020

**End of Document**



[***The Sanders Surge That Wasn’t; On Politics With Lisa Lerer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBW-7GV1-DXY4-X0CV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 4, 2020 Wednesday 19:44 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1175 words

**Byline:** Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** Bernie Sanders said lots of new voters would show up and vote for him on Tuesday. He was half right.

**Body**

Bernie Sanders said lots of new voters would show up and vote for him on Tuesday. He was half right.

Hi. Welcome to [*On Politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics), your guide to the day in national politics. I’m Lisa Lerer, your host.

[*Sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) to get On Politics in your inbox every weekday.

As he campaigns across the country, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont promises that he will beat President Trump by bringing new voters into the Democratic Party.

That promise is a core argument for his candidacy, and one he repeated last night to a crowd of supporters in his home state as the Super Tuesday results rolled in:

We’re going to win because the people understand it is our campaign, our movement, which is best positioned to defeat Trump. You cannot beat Trump with the same old, same old kind of politics. What we need is a new politics that brings ***working-class*** people into our political movement, which brings young people into our political movement, and which in November will create the highest voter turnout in American political history.

In the primaries on Tuesday, Mr. Sanders’s prediction wasn’t quite right.

Yes, more Democrats came out to vote in most of the Super Tuesday states than in 2016. But many of them weren’t there to support Mr. Sanders. In fact, his share of the vote fell in some crucial states.

While he won half the vote in Vermont, in [*the returns available so far*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics), Mr. Sanders has not exceeded 37 percent in the other three states he won last night, indicating the possibility of a ceiling on his level of support in the primaries. (And while his numbers may have looked different in a two-way race against former Vice President Joe Biden, Mr. Biden might have benefited from a smaller field, too.)

Without question, Mr. Sanders’s margin right now in California is a big deal. But let’s take a closer look at two states that have shown big political shifts toward Democrats in the Trump era: Virginia and Texas.

In both states, turnout was up on Tuesday.

In Virginia, 1.3 million people voted, a huge increase from the 780,000 votes cast in the state’s 2016 Democratic primary.

In Texas, more than 2.1 million ballots have been counted with 99 percent of precincts reporting. That’s up from 1.4 million votes four years ago.

Yet, Mr. Sanders again lost both states — and captured smaller shares of the vote than in 2016.

That year, Mr. Sanders [*won 33 percent of the vote in Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics). This year,   [*he got only 30 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics). In Virginia, he fell from   [*35 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) in 2016 to   [*23 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) in 2020.

Part of that difference had to do with who came out to vote.

In both states, the total share of young voters, a key part of Mr. Sanders’s base, declined slightly, according to exit polling. The share of Latino voters, another group that has backed Mr. Sanders, stayed fairly constant. Neither group rushed to the polls in the way Mr. Sanders predicted.

The key demographics that helped Democrats flip congressional seats in 2018 — suburban college graduates and black voters — went for Mr. Biden.

Democratic Party officials see the fact that those voters are energized by Mr. Biden as a good sign, should he capture the nomination. Increased support from black voters and “resistance moms” helped flip congressional districts in Dallas and Houston, and in Richmond and the Northern Virginia suburbs.

But as for Mr. Sanders, it was not the kind of turnout he hoped to see.

“Have we been as successful as I would hope in bringing young people in?” he said at a news conference on Wednesday at his campaign office in Burlington, Vt. “The answer is no.”

Drop us a line!

We want to hear from our readers. Have a question? We’ll try to answer it. Have a comment? We’re all ears. Email us at [*onpolitics@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).

Suddenly, Biden is on a roll

Joe Biden had a great night last night, winning 10 of the 14 Super Tuesday states. I spoke with my colleague Thomas Kaplan, who’s covering the Biden campaign, to get a feel for the Joementum mood.

Hi, Tom! How is everyone feeling in Biden’s campaign? I suspect spirits are high.

It’s almost hard to dream up a stretch of days that could have gone as well as the past few for them. It’s just such an incredible turnaround, if you think about how bleak things looked just a couple of weeks ago, when it was questionable if he would be in the race for many weeks to come.

Was there a moment when they knew that things were turning around?

South Carolina, and just how big that win was, was the first moment. But even then, it wasn’t clear what that would translate into, given the short amount of time between the South Carolina primary and Super Tuesday. You could certainly imagine a different scenario in which Biden’s limited resources and thin organization across the country turned into a not-so-good Super Tuesday performance.

You [*wrote about that thin organization*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics). How do you think he outran it?

A bunch of dominoes fell that really produced the best-case scenario for him. The momentum from that big win in South Carolina and the timing of all that positive attention and news media coverage just before Super Tuesday, coupled with the endorsements from his former rivals, kind of created a perfect storm.

Credit is due to the Biden people for this: They were really counting on this idea that Biden has this deep and longstanding relationship with Democrats and this reservoir of good will dating back to the Obama years, and that, yes, you could spend millions of dollars on TV ads, but that can’t create these longstanding bonds and this fondness people have for Biden.

And I think that’s evident when you compare Michael Bloomberg’s spending to what ultimately happened, where Biden had very little money to spend, and yet that didn’t ultimately seem to really matter.

How does the Bloomberg endorsement change things?

That’s a big unresolved question: What does Bloomberg do now in the weeks to come? What does Bloomberg’s support for Biden look like? The Biden folks don’t really have a clear answer to that.

We’ve certainly seen that in the past few days, the money picture for Biden has wildly changed. And, you know, he still does not have the Sanders small-dollar online army. But after struggling financially the whole way, now Biden is the only game in town, other than Sanders.

What’s the next big battle — where should we be watching?

Michigan is a good state to look at, and it votes next Tuesday.

Michigan is a state that Sanders won in 2016 over Hillary Clinton. A Biden win in Michigan — and in particular, a commanding Biden win in Michigan — would be a real setback for Sanders. We won’t have to wait very long to see if that plays out.

… Seriously

These estimates will go down as more votes are counted, but still:

Thanks for reading. On Politics is your guide to the political news cycle, delivering clarity from the chaos.

On Politics is also available as a newsletter. [*Sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) to get it delivered to your inbox.

Is there anything you think we’re missing? Anything you want to see more of? We’d love to hear from you. Email us at [*onpolitics@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2020

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[***As a G.O.P. Playbook on Voter Fraud Falls Flat, Some Ask: What’s Next?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6194-GTH1-JBG3-63Y5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 14, 2020 Saturday 09:55 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1821 words

**Byline:** Michael Wines

**Highlight:** In dozens of lawsuits, Republicans tried to make voting and counting votes harder. After a record turnout and a Democratic presidential win, some wonder if that’s the party’s best strategy.

**Body**

In dozens of lawsuits, Republicans tried to make voting and counting votes harder. After a record turnout and a Democratic presidential win, some wonder if that’s the party’s best strategy.

WASHINGTON — It was an election where Republican charges of fictitious [*voter fraud*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html) took center stage before, during and after the count, backed by a barrage of lawsuits intent on making it harder to cast or tally votes.

Yet by its end, Americans had cast ballots at a rate not seen in a century. A Democrat was elected president. And Republicans drew surprising support from Black and Latino voters — the very groups the party historically targeted with restrictive voting laws in state after state.

That a strategy Republicans long relied on largely fell flat, experts say, can be explained by the partisan divisions that drove record turnout, by self-inflicted wounds on the part of President Trump and by a pandemic that turned a gradual trend toward voting early — by mail or in person — into a stampede.

Some of those factors may be one-offs. But aspects of this election — especially the shift from Election Day voting to mail ballots, and the party’s surprising gains with some racial groups — raise questions of whether the Republican strategy of voter restrictions served the party’s interests as it once did. Also unclear is whether the changes in how people voted this year, in the middle of a pandemic, reflect long-term changes pointing to higher turnouts or factors unique to the 2020 vote.

“[*Stereotypes die hard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html), and this Republican idea that if more people vote it benefits Democrats was at some level more true in the past,” said Norman Ornstein, a scholar of American politics and democracy at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute. “It was certainly true when Republicans believed that white ***working-class*** voters were Democrats. But it’s a ridiculous stereotype now.”

Mr. Ornstein is a relentless critic of Mr. Trump and the Republican Party’s increasingly authoritarian bent. And nobody expects party leaders to quickly abandon a strategy that has served its interests from North Carolina to Texas to North Dakota. Republicans have argued that measures like voter identification laws, purges of voter rolls and limits on mail ballots are necessary to combat fraud, but ballot fraud is so rare that the rules often accomplish little more than suppress legal turnout. Even so, such strategies have long been part of American politics and are not going away.

“As long as the Republican Party is going to depend on whiter, older and more rural electorate,” said Richard L. Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California, Irvine, “they’re going to make it harder for some people to register and vote.” Assertions of fraud, he said, fire up loyalists, increase political contributions and delegitimize Democratic victories.

“Already,” Dr. Hasen said, “Biden is going to come into office with millions of people believing falsely that he cheated his way into the presidency.”

But the election also highlighted how trying to place limits on casting a ballot might actually motivate voters to turn out. And even ignoring the toxic effects on democracy, some experts say, this was an election in which the results suggested that the Republican voting playbook may no longer be as effective as before.

[*Republicans in Texas outperformed expectations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html) this fall, gaining inroads with Latino voters who are among those hit hardest by the state’s tough voting restrictions, which include a strict voter ID law that is geared to Republican-friendly constituencies and severely limited absentee balloting options. That cast doubt on the idea that Republican success comes from making it harder for Democrats to vote, said Joe Straus, the Republican speaker of the State House of Representatives until 2019.

That said, he added, the national party’s emphasis on discouraging voters in 2020 does not bode well for efforts to broaden its appeal. “That is not a good look,” he said. “Republicans ought to be the party that is encouraging people to vote and winning elections on ideas.”

Mr. Trump’s fact-challenged [*crusade against voting by mail*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html), which he variously labeled “a scam,” “corrupt” and “dangerous,” “was a real head-scratcher to me,” Mr. Straus said. “Many Republicans, including myself, benefited from mail-in voting over the years.”

Nationally, Republicans have embraced absentee voting more than Democrats have. (And Mr. Trump himself has frequently voted absentee, including in this year’s Florida primary). This year, however, Republicans followed Mr. Trump’s lead in the general election and shied in droves from voting by mail.

How many of them turned up at the polls later is open to debate.

“I think Trump’s discouraging mail-in balloting during the campaign may well have cost him the election,” Mr. Hasen said.

Beyond that, the president’s fearmongering spurred a flood of news reports that debunked his claims while teaching Democrats who did cast mail votes how to do it correctly.

In Michigan, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, said a presidential tweet in May that falsely accused her of promoting absentee-ballot fraud turned into “a multi-front education effort from all sectors on how to vote absentee and why it’s reliable.”

“We ultimately were grateful even for negative attention,” she said.

Other analysts suggest that the right’s courtroom campaign to constrain voting hindered Republicans as much as it helped.

[*The most striking legal victory for Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html) came in Florida, where a federal appeals court upheld the Legislature’s requirement that former felons pay fines and court costs to regain the right to vote. The ruling, undermining [*a referendum overwhelmingly passed by Florida voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html), effectively barred hundreds of thousands of Floridians with criminal records from registering to cast ballots.

Even that ruling, though, may have had a boomerang effect. Some analysts suggested that the publicity surrounding lawsuits and other Republican voter-security moves, like the party’s pledge to deploy 50,000 poll watchers in battleground states, actually worked in favor of Mr. Trump’s opponents.

“One effect the pre-election litigation and rhetoric did have was motivating citizens to vote exceptionally early,” said Barry Burden, who directs the Elections Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

A key question is whether early voting will change American voters — and voting laws — in coming elections. The coronavirus pandemic turbocharged a shift away from Election Day voting to pre-election balloting, both in person and by mail.

According to the United States Elections Project, 47.2 million Americans voted early in the 2016 general election, roughly half by mail and half in person. This year that rocketed to 101.4 million — 65.5 million mail ballots and 35.9 million in-person votes.

“The data shows in other states that when voters begin using the mail and voting early, they embrace the convenience,” Ms. Benson said. “We’ll certainly see in future elections the majority of citizens voting early. What’s unknown is just how high that proportion will be.”

In many states, at least, voting by mail proved a positive for Democrats whose supporters had often faced hurdles like long lines at polling places. In suburban Atlanta, Carolyn Bourdeaux won a race for a previously Republican House seat by 10,000 votes in a state with a history of making in-person voting difficult.

“We had to fight for every vote,” she said. Voting by mail proved crucial: In 2018, when she lost a race for the same seat by fewer than 500 votes, one third of all mail ballots in the state that were thrown out for problems like mismatched signatures and missing addresses came from Gwinnett County, in her House district.

Ms. Bourdeaux later led lawsuits that simplified voting absentee, standardized verification rules and allowed voters to correct mistakes. This fall, only 0.1 percent of Gwinnett County mail ballots were rejected. In 2018, according to lawsuits at the time, the county’s rejection rate was about six percent.

Legal efforts to restrict mail balloting gained little traction this fall, but that could be temporary. [*Speaking on a podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html) this past week, the former Republican governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, [*said falsely*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html) that all major industrialized nations have “gotten rid of or don’t have ballots by mail.” Citing unspecified “shenanigans” in mail ballots this fall, he called for the United States to outlaw absentee voting in all but limited circumstances.

David Wasserman, an analyst of the House of Representatives for the Cook Political Report, questioned whether many Republican tactics denounced by voting-rights experts as suppression affected many votes this year. Nor was he certain that misfires like Mr. Trump’s assault on voting by mail meant much in the end.

Some Texans were outraged by a court ruling limiting each county to a single location to drop off absentee ballots — a decision that gave millions of Houston voters one drop box in a county the size of Delaware. But voters still could mail ballots to election offices, he noted.

“There are examples of places where Republicans have impeded voters’ ability to cast ballots,” he said. “But a dispassionate reading of what transpired last week was that this was a fairly smoothly run election in which voters had, in many cases, very short lines to cast ballots and many opportunities to vote by mail.”

Some on the right see Republican gains with Black and Latino voters as evidence that the Republican message on fraud resonates more than voting rights advocates admit.

In New Mexico’s Second Congressional District, “a Trump Republican retook the seat with a platform pushing voter integrity,” said Logan Churchwell, a spokesman for the Public Interest Legal Foundation, a conservative group focused on illegal voting. In Starr County, Texas, a poor, Hispanic area near the border with Mexico where authorities have campaigned [*against election irregularities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/voter-fraud-claims.html), “Trump nearly split the vote in a county where the G.O.P. doesn’t really exist.”

And some Republicans even suggested that the party might do better competing for Democratic-leaning voters than trying to discourage them.

“We saw with Joe Biden’s nomination that African-Americans are not exactly lefties, and we saw with the Latino vote in South Florida that an argument against socialism can be very persuasive,” said Whit Ayres, a Republican campaign strategist. “So there are avenues to expand the Republican coalition if we are savvy enough to take advantage of them.”

He added: “That’s the part I don’t know. A lot of that is going to depend on how much of a sway Donald Trump retains over the Republican Party when he is no longer president.”

PHOTO: The 2020 election highlighted how attempts to restrict voters might actually motivate more of them to cast ballots. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALYSSA SCHUKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2020

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[***How Much Does a Play Change During Previews? Just Ask ‘The Perplexed’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YV5-G9R1-DXY4-X3KM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2020 Tuesday 09:37 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 1339 words

**Byline:** Sonia Weiser

**Highlight:** Tweaks to dialogue, costumes and lighting cues came daily, as the cast and crew of Richard Greenberg’s new play prepared for opening night.

**Body**

Tweaks to dialogue, costumes and lighting cues came daily, as the cast and crew of Richard Greenberg’s new play prepared for opening night.

The final sound cue for “The Perplexed,” Richard Greenberg’s new comedy about two estranged, wealthy families brought together by their children’s impending nuptials, is offstage laughter. Heralding the arrival of long-awaited guests, it’s supposed to be jubilant.

Instead, at the first preview of the show last month at New York City Center, the laugh track rang like a witch’s cackle.

“It felt too sardonic to me,” Lynne Meadow, the longtime artistic director of Manhattan Theater Club who’s helming the production, said afterward.

It took at least seven more tries to finally capture the ideal sound effect. Now it was just a matter of solidifying dozens of other decisions before the play’s official premiere on Tuesday.

Previews are a unique, enduring feature of the theater world: Kicking off a show’s run, they are a period of public performances before opening night, which can last anywhere from several days to, in the notorious case of 2011’s “Spider Man: Turn Off the Dark,” 180-some performances. (More recently, previews for “West Side Story” were extended by two weeks while Isaac Powell, who plays Tony, recovered from a knee injury.) As such, previews are as much a part of a play’s creative process as its closed rehearsals.

While the intimacy of a studio is a safe space for experimentation and development, only once an audience of strangers enters the theater can a director, playwright and actors know for sure what’s landing and what’s falling flat. Changes to dialogue, costumes, lighting cues come daily until the show is “frozen,” when the script and blocking are set. Critics are then invited to previews, and their reviews are traditionally published opening night.

The process can result in a whole character sent packing, an intermission axed or pages of script inserted, only to be chucked out days later. Rehearsals can often be called during previews, which means a cast could go over new lines at a morning practice, only to perform an old script that night.

Nothing so extreme was required for “The Perplexed.” Still, over the course of three weeks and 23 previews, monologues were scrapped, blocking was restaged, 50-cent words were replaced with accessible synonyms and a final bow featuring the actors holding champagne glasses was tried once — then promptly trashed.

“For me, it’s all about figuring out what people are getting,” said Greenberg, whose Tony Award-winning play “Take Me Out” is being revived by [*Second Stage Theater*](https://2st.com/) in April.

“Until you get into rehearsal, you’re talking to yourself,” he explained. In the studio with a director and actors, a playwright has the benefit of clarifying his intentions, but all that changes in previews. “Then you get in front of a bunch of strangers, and you can hear when something is mystifying.”

Greenberg is as versed in the city’s educated, upper-middle class as a sommelier who knows his wine list, its undertones, its hints and everything else that gives nuance. His most recent works, “[*Our Mother’s Brief Affair*](https://2st.com/)” (2016) and the Tony-nominated “   [*The Assembled Parties*](https://2st.com/)” (2013), were both directed by Meadow.

“The Perplexed” is a drawing-room play, literally — it is set in a lavish home library of an unseen, Jewish billionaire host, Berland Stahl — and figuratively. Like some characters from Greenberg’s previous works, the members of the wedding party here belong to a privileged, insular world, yet feel adrift amid changing cultural tides. While the countdown to a midnight ceremony ticks on, they hash out drama old and new.

We meet the bride (Tess Frazer) and her parents, City Councilwoman Evy Arlen-Stahl (Margaret Colin) and Joseph Stahl (Frank Wood), who is the billionaire’s disinherited son. Evy goes way back, both in business and pleasure, with the lawyer Ted Resnik (Gregg Edelman), the father of the groom (JD Taylor). Ted’s self-righteous, do-gooder wife is Natalie Hochberg-Resnik (Ilana Levine).

Also in the mix are Evy’s son, Micah (Zane Pais), a medical student who stars in gay adult films on the side; her writer brother (Patrick Breen); a former rabbi from South Carolina (Eric William Morris) dealing with some meshugas of his own; and one ***working-class*** character, Berland’s Guyanese aide Patricia Persaud (Anna Itty).

“The Perplexed” is a social-issue casserole, a tumble of ingredients culled from the zeitgeist — porn, feminism, 1 percent-level wealth — that could each warrant its own entree. Instead, they are tossed into a single Pyrex to roast among the other flavors; audiences will decide whether this style is adept or clumsy.

“This is a play that has political references and issues about morality and your politics and your reaction to change,” says Meadow. “But this is not a piece of agitprop.”

In an explosive Act II scene, Evy finds herself alone with Ted for the first time in 20 years. She expresses fear that her son’s extracurricular activities have put her campaign for City Council Speaker in jeopardy. And they needle her sense of irrelevance now that her breed of progressive Jewish female is no longer as revolutionary as it once was.

In the first preview, she explains to Ted, “Pornography, statistics tell us, is used by an overwhelming majority of the adult population, and to consider yourself superior to an enterprise people of your ilk enjoy is the grossest hypocrisy, and to approve of its existence as I, with significant reservations, do, while stipulating that it be the work of other people’s children, is of course, insupportable.”

By the end of the first week of previews, that monologue was gone, leaving an extended tender silence in its place.

“Now it’s an emotional moment,” Colin said. “It’s not the conflict of her politics.”

For all script changes, no matter how minute, Greenberg gets the final say. Even something as seemingly imperceptible as adding “then” to combine two sentences into one warranted a conversation.

“For us, the opinion of the playwright is god,” said Meadow during the February 21 rehearsal. “We don’t run cuts or changes that the playwright doesn’t want to do.”

She received his blessing via text message.

Sometimes, the dialogue change isn’t about the words, but about delivery, as was the case with an exchange between the groom and Patricia, the caregiver. Depending on her reading of a single line, Itty could determine whether Patricia is acquiescent or self-possessed.

“It’s the nuance that makes all the difference in how you perceive a character,” said Meadow. By the ninth preview, Itty was playing the character as keenly aware of the imbalance of power between her and the family.

With such a text-heavy play, Meadow must make sure that each prop, sound cue and stage direction supports what the characters are saying onstage.

While the play requires no costume changes, Colin’s skirt had to show a stain, supposedly from a water main break in Evy’s district, because it is constantly referred to in the dialogue. The combination of dye and water created a subtle ombre effect on her burgundy taffeta skirt rather than a noticeable sartorial disaster. So in the ninth preview, it was replaced with a bright red, full-length wool crepe skirt with a muddied hem befitting an explosion of New York’s finest brown gush.

By the time the production opens, the script will have been updated dozens of times. All the revamping and tweaking during previews was, as ever, time-consuming. But to Greenberg, it’s a necessary part of the process.

“You’re responsible to people’s time, and I think that’s the main responsibility when you’re writing a play,” he said. “You are taking their time from them, so you have to give it back.”

PHOTOS: Far left, another rehearsal offstage for “The Perplexed” included, from left, Frank Wood, Gregg Edelman and Ilana Levine. Near left, the cast members Margaret Colin, Wood, Levine and Edelman worked out the kinks in a preview last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C5)

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2020

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[***Joe Biden’s Stunning Super Tuesday Comeback; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBS-CKW1-DXY4-X05X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 4, 2020 Wednesday 00:56 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; letters

**Length:** 1273 words

**Highlight:** Readers analyze the reasons for his strong showing and what it means for Bernie Sanders.

**Body**

Readers analyze the reasons for his strong showing and what it means for Bernie Sanders.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Big Night for Biden Serves Notice to Sanders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/us/politics/super-tuesday-primary-winners.html)” (front page, March 4):

“We know Joe. But most importantly, Joe knows us.” With those nine words, Representative Jim Clyburn of South Carolina kicked off an incredible week for Joe Biden and for the Democratic Party. His endorsement, followed by a Biden landslide in South Carolina, more important endorsements and a superb Super Tuesday make clear what most Democrats want.

In the last three years, President Trump has enabled North Korea and Iran to become more dangerous and made a mess of our important alliances. Mr. Biden’s comeback shows that having a plan for that or creating a revolution are less important than the security of “Joe knows us.”

Elliott Miller

Bala Cynwyd, Pa.

To the Editor:

I could easily call myself a democratic socialist. I believe that Medicare is a lifesaver for senior citizens and that it should be extended to all Americans. What is the virtue in a college education that burdens people for years with loans? My heart is with Bernie.

And yet I voted for Joe. I don’t believe that the country is ready for a revolution, and Bernie would find it impossible to advance his agenda if he won — which I fear he might not. The time is not right for Bernie, and defeating Donald Trump is the top priority.

Lou Raye Nichol

Cary, N.C.

To the Editor:

The real hero of Super Tuesday was Elizabeth Warren. It was her courage, clarity and strategic skill that hit Mike Bloomberg in his first debate. She made him confront the grievances many had about his past. She demonstrated how ill prepared he was. This was a major blow to his threat to Joe Biden.

Thankfully, Mr. Bloomberg has shown the courage and integrity to step aside and play another role in taking the White House. I hope Senator Warren’s immense strengths are put to work in rebuilding our country in a Biden administration.

Nancy Milio

Chapel Hill, N.C.

To the Editor:

In terms of policy, I’m a big Bernie Sanders fan. But, most of all, I’m committed to defeating President Trump, the political nightmare of my lifetime. I have trouble forgiving Joe Biden for his handling of the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings. But he is a decent man with reasonably progressive instincts. Apparently, he can draw the African-American community (Obama coattails) and the white ***working-class*** guys.

He needs progressives to turn out — not to blow the election off entirely or vote third-party — so why not a ticket of Joe Biden (with a commitment to just one term) and Elizabeth Warren (who can excite so many of us)? Joe and Elizabeth, time for a private conversation? This is a very critical time.

Michael Rooke-Ley

Eugene, Ore.

To the Editor:

There are psychological explanations for Joe Biden’s strength in the Super Tuesday voting. In the context of fearful times, when facing a novel deadly pandemic, people gravitate toward the familiar and calming, which Mr. Biden supplies, rather than Bernie Sanders’s change and excitement.

Psychology also explains generational differences among voters’ reactions to two candidates in their late 70s. Older voters seek Mr. Biden’s continuity while youths seek Mr. Sanders’s change.

Carol Goldberg

New York

The writer is a psychologist.

To the Editor:

Can the Democratic Party afford to lose its left wing? Until Tuesday, I was planning to vote for A.B.T. (Anyone But Trump) come November. But the Democratic establishment’s rush to derail Bernie Sanders’s campaign is making me think twice.

I do not know what Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar were offered in exchange for their endorsement of Joe Biden. Cabinet positions would be my best guess. This smells very bad and is very discouraging to those of us who wish to steer our party in what we believe to be the right direction.

The establishment may think we have nowhere else to go, but that would be wrong. I voted Green Party when, for example, I could not stomach supporting Gore-Lieberman in 2000. I am perfectly ready to do that again.

Please do not take us for granted.

Irvin Cemil Schick

Newton, Mass.

To the Editor:

This country was built on the backs of black enslaved Africans. Now it is their descendants who are exercising their franchise to save our democracy.

Cathryn Cushing

Portland, Ore.

To the Editor:

Re “[*5 Takeaways From a Super Tuesday That Changed the Democratic Race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/us/politics/super-tuesday-primary-winners.html)” (nytimes.com, March 3):

Perhaps the most striking takeaway is the utter failure of the massive amounts of money spent by Michael Bloomberg to have a discernible impact on the Super Tuesday outcome. Over the years, the obsessive quest for campaign contributions by candidates and elected officials on both sides of the aisle and at all levels of our political system has increasingly undermined public confidence in our government. Thank you, Michael Bloomberg, for opening our eyes and teaching us all this profoundly important lesson.

Paul Jellinek

Mercerville, N.J.

To the Editor:

It seems that the Democratic race has come down to two elderly men, one with a history of heart trouble and the other who may be having more and more trouble keeping his mind from wandering. Democrats, and all voters, have the right to know all they can about the health of these candidates. The public should demand that Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden have complete physical and psychological workups, and that the full results be released.

The nation’s future well-being is too important to be left to guesses and hope about the candidates’ physical and psychological ability to handle the job they seek.

Jonathan J. Margolis

Brookline, Mass.

To the Editor:

After the Super Tuesday results, Bernie Sanders’s supporters are justifiably disappointed. But what they need to realize is that a Joe Biden presidency would be only a beginning, not an end to their quest. Mr. Biden is no ideologue. He’s “pushable,” and if elected, he will owe the progressive wing big time if it supports him.

Progressives need to go to the streets and use every other means to promote their aims if Mr. Biden is elected. Want “Medicare for all,” climate change or an end to college debt? Ask for it! And keep asking! But sit on your hands now and the penalty is four more years of President Trump, unrestrained this time by the need to be re-elected. A very dark place, indeed.

Jay Schleifer

Wellington, Fla.

To the Editor:

Joe Biden just had the biggest night of his long political career. Let the fretting and carping begin anew among Democrats. However, before recommencing eating itself, allow me to humbly suggest the party take a moment to celebrate.

Democrats have fought big battles in the past and won. The biggest question now is, can they stop fighting each other long enough to meet the challenge ahead? Namely, defeating Donald Trump in the fall. I believe that how they choose to face this challenge will shape the identity of the party for years to come.

Joe Elliott

Asheville, N.C.

To the Editor:

It was heartening to see Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar and Mike Bloomberg step aside in favor of Joe Biden in a true show of unity for a larger cause. I now ask supporters of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren whether they are so attached to their progressive vision (much of which I share) that they will take a substantial risk of four more years of President Trump’s court picks, four more years of assaults on our democracy and four more years during which the warming of our planet may become unstoppable.

James Van Cleve

Claremont, Calif.

PHOTO: Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. spoke to supporters in Los Angeles on Super Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Josh Haner/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2020

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[***Trump’s Cult of Animosity Shows No Sign of Letting Up; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6336-DG71-JBG3-6012-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 7, 2021 Wednesday 10:08 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3040 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** As long as the former president dominates the G.O.P., “this animosity coalition will define the party.”

**Body**

In 2016, Donald Trump recruited voters with the highest levels of animosity toward African Americans, assembling a “schadenfreude” electorate — voters who take pleasure in making the opposition suffer — that continues to dominate the Republican Party, even in the aftermath of the Trump presidency.

With all his histrionics and theatrics, Trump brought the dark side of American politics to the fore: the alienated, the distrustful, voters willing to sacrifice democracy for a return to white hegemony. The [*segregationist segment*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) of the electorate has been a permanent fixture of American politics, shifting between the two major parties.

For more than two decades, [*scholars*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) and [*analysts*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) [*have written*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) about the growing [*partisan antipathy*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) and [*polarization*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) that have turned America [*into two warring camps*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), politically speaking.

[*Lilliana Mason*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), a political scientist at Johns Hopkins, makes the case via Twitter that Trump has “served as a lightning rod for lots of regular people who hold white Christian supremacist beliefs.” The solidification of their control over the Republican Party “makes it seem like a partisan issue. But this faction has been around longer than our current partisan divide.” In fact, “they are not loyal to a party — they are loyal to white Christian domination.”

Trump’s success in transforming the party has radically changed the path to the Republican presidential nomination: the traditional elitist route through state and national party leaders, the Washington lobbying and interest group community and top fund-raisers across the country no longer ensures success, and may, instead, prove a liability.

For those seeking to emulate Trump — Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley, Ron DeSantis, for example — the basic question is whether Trump’s trajectory is replicable or whether there are unexplored avenues to victory at the 2024 Republican National Convention.

When Trump got into the 2016 primary race, “he did not have a clear coalition, nor did he have the things candidates normally have when running for president: political experience, governing experience, or a track record supporting party issues and ideologies,” [*Joseph Uscinski*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), a political scientist at the University of Miami, wrote in an email. Lacking these traditional credentials, Trump sought out “the underserved market within the Republican electorate by giving those voters what they might have wanted, but weren’t getting from the other mainstream selections.”

The objectives of the Trump wing of the Republican Party stand out in other respects, especially in the strength of its hostility to key Democratic minority constituencies.

[*Julie Wronski*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), a political scientist at the University of Mississippi — a co-author, with Mason and [*John Kane*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) of N.Y.U., of a just published paper, “[*Activating Animus: The Uniquely Social Roots of Trump Support*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/)” — put it this way in reply to my emailed query:

The Trump coalition is motivated by animosity toward Blacks, Hispanics, Muslims and L.G.B.T. This animosity has no bearing on support for any of the other G.O.P. elites or the party itself. Warmth toward whites and Christians equally predict support for Trump, other G.O.P. elites, and the party itself. The only area where Trump support is different than other G.O.P. support is in regards to harnessing this out-group animus.

For as long as Trump remains the standard-bearer of the Republican Party, Wronski continued, “this animosity coalition will define the party.”

Animosity toward these four Democratic-aligned minority groups is not limited to Republican voters. Mason, Wronski and Kane created an “animus to Democrat groups” scale, ranked from zero at the least hostile to 1.0 at the most. Kane wrote me that

approximately 18 percent of Democrats have scores above the midpoint of the scale (which would mean negative feelings/animus). For Independents, this percentage grows to 33 percent. For Republicans, it jumps substantially to 45 percent.

The accompanying graphic demonstrates Kane’s point.

The three authors go on:

Animosity toward Democratic-linked groups predicts Trump support, rather remarkably, across the political spectrum. Further, given the decisive role that Independents can play in elections, these results suggest that reservoirs of animosity are not necessarily specific to a particular party, and may therefore be tapped by any political elite.

Before Trump took center stage in 2015, Republican leaders were determined to “stymie Democratic policy initiatives, resist compromise, and make it clear that Republicans desire to score political victories and win back power from Democrats,” Kane wrote in his email, but “establishment Republicans generally did not openly demonize, much less dehumanize, Democratic politicians at the national level.”

Trump, Kane continued,

wantonly disregarded this norm, and now Trump’s base may come to expect future Republican elites to be willing to do the same. If this practice eventually comes to be seen as a “winning strategy” for Republican politicians as a whole, it could bring us into a new era of polarization wherein Republican cooperation with the “[*Demon Rats”*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) is seen not just as undesirable, but thoroughly unconscionable.

Most significantly, in Mason’s view, is that

there is a faction in American politics that has moved from party to party, can be recruited from either party, and responds especially well to hatred of marginalized groups. They’re not just Republicans or Democrats, they’re a third faction that targets parties.

Bipartisanship, Mason continued in a [*lengthy Twitter thread*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), “is not the answer to the problem. We need to confront this particular faction of Americans who have been uniquely visible and anti-democratic since before the Civil War (when they were Democrats).”

In their paper, Mason, Wronski and Kane conclude:

This research reveals a wellspring of animus against marginalized groups in the United States that can be harnessed and activated for political gain. Trump’s unique ability to do so is not the only cause for normative concern. Instead, we should take note that these attitudes exist across both parties and among nonpartisans. Though they may remain relatively latent when leaders and parties draw attention elsewhere, the right leader can activate these attitudes and fold them into voters’ political judgments. Should America wish to become a fully multiracial democracy, it will need to reconcile with these hostile attitudes themselves.

[*Adam Enders*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), a political scientist at the University of Louisville, and Uscinski, in their June 2021 paper “[*On Modeling the Social-Psychological Foundations of Support for Donald Trump*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/)” describe a “Trump voter profile”: “an amalgamation of attitudes about, for example, racial groups, immigrants and political correctness — that rivals partisanship and ideology as predictors of Trump support and is negatively related to support for mainstream Republican candidates.”

In an email, Enders described this profile as fitting those attracted to Trump’s

relatively explicit appeal to xenophobia, racial prejudice, authoritarianism, sexism, conspiracy thinking, in combination with his outsider status that gives him credibility as the anti-establishment candidate. The Trump voter profile is a constellation of social-psychological attitudes — about various racial groups, women, immigrants, and conspiracy theories — that uniquely predict support for Donald Trump.

Uscinski and Enders are the lead authors of a forthcoming paper, “[*American Politics in Two Dimensions: Partisan and Ideological Identities versus Anti-Establishment Orientations*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/),” in which they argue that

Our current conceptualization of mass opinion is missing something. Specifically, we theorize that an underappreciated, albeit ever-present, dimension of opinion explains many of the problematic attitudes and behaviors gripping contemporary politics. This dimension, which we label “anti-establishment,” rather than explaining one’s attitudes about and behaviors toward the opposing political coalition, captures one’s orientation toward the established political order irrespective of partisanship and ideology.

In the case of Trump and other anti-democratic leaders around the world, Uscinski and Enders contend that

anti-establishment sentiments are an important ingredient of support for populist leaders, conspiratorial beliefs, and political violence. And, while we contend that this dimension is orthogonal to the left-right dimension of opinion along which partisan and ideological concerns are oriented, we also theorize that it can be activated by strategic partisan politicians. As such, phenomena which are oftentimes interpreted as expressions of “far-right” or “far-left” orientations may not be borne of left-right views at all, but rather of the assimilation of anti-establishment sentiments into mainstream politics by elites.

Anti-establishment voters, Uscinski and Enders write, “are more likely to believe that the ‘one percent’ controls the economy for their own good, believe that a ‘deep state’ is embedded within the government and believe that the mainstream media is ‘deliberately’ misleading us.” Such voters “are more prevalent among younger people, those with lower incomes, those with less formal education, and among racial and ethnic minority groups. In other words, it is groups who have historically occupied a tenuous position in the American socio-economic structure.”

The most intensely partisan voters — very strong Democrats and very strong Republicans — are the least anti-establishment, according to Uscinski and Enders:

Those on the extremes of partisan and ideological identity exhibit lower levels of most of these psychological predispositions. In other words, extreme partisans and ideologues are more likely to express civil attitudes and agreeable personality characteristics than less extreme partisans and ideologues; this contradicts growing concerns over the relationship between left-right extremism and antisocial attitudes and behaviors. We suspect this finding is due to strong partisans and ideologues being wedded to, and entrenched within, the established political order. Their organized, relatively constrained orientation toward the political landscape is built on the objects of establishment politics: the parties, party elites and familiar ideological objects.

That, in turn, leads Uscinski and Enders to another contrarian conclusion:

We find that an additional “anti-establishment” dimension of opinion can, at least partially, account for the acceptance of political violence, distrust in government, belief in conspiracy theories, and support for “outsider” candidates. Although it is intuitive to attribute contemporary political dysfunction to left-right extremism and partisan tribalism, we argue that many elements of this dysfunction stem from the activation of anti-establishment orientations.

One politician whose appeal was similar to Trump’s, as many have [*noted*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), was [*George Wallace*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), the segregationist governor of Alabama, who ran for president four times in the 1960s and 1970s, openly using anti-Black rhetoric.

[*Omar Wasow*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), a political scientist at Pomona College, cites Wallace in an email:

There has always been a sizable bloc of American voters eager to support candidates articulating explicit appeals to out-group antipathy. Segregationist George Wallace, for example, won approximately 13.5 percent of the national three-way presidential vote in 1968.

Republican candidates before Trump used so-called dog-whistle themes designed to capitalize on white racial fears, Wasow pointed out, in such a way that they

could appeal to those animated by racial threat while also holding together a larger, winning coalition. That Trump was able to campaign like Wallace yet build a winning state-level coalition in 2016 like Nixon is remarkable but not obviously repeatable on a national scale, even by Trump himself (as evidenced in 2020). Regionally, however, Trump’s style of overt ethnonationalist rhetoric will likely have enough support to remain highly viable for congressional and state-level candidates.

In their July 3 paper, “[*Partisan Schadenfreude and the Demand for Candidate Cruelty*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/),” [*Steven W. Webster*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), [*Adam N. Glynn*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) and [*Matthew P. Motta*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), political scientists at Indiana University, Emory and Oklahoma State, explore “the prevalence of partisan schadenfreude — that is, taking ‘joy in the suffering’ of partisan others.”

In it, they argue that a “sizable portion of the American mass public engages in partisan schadenfreude and these attitudes are most commonly expressed by the most ideologically extreme Americans.”

In addition, Webster, Glynn and Motta write, these voters create a “demand for candidate cruelty” since these voters are “more likely than not to vote for candidates who promise to pass policies that ‘disproportionately harm’ supporters of the opposing political party.”

In response to my emailed inquiries, Webster answered:

Schadenfreude is a bipartisan attitude. In our study, the schadenfreude measure ranges from 0-6. For Republicans, the mean score on this measure is 2.81; for Democrats, it is 2.67. Notably, there is a considerable amount of variation in how much partisans express schadenfreude: some express very little schadenfreude, while others exhibit an extraordinary amount. Those who identify as a ‘strong Democrat’ or a ‘strong Republican’ tend to express greater levels of schadenfreude than those who do not strongly identify with their party.

The kind of pain voters would like to see inflicted on their adversaries varies by ideology, partisanship and issue. Webster argues that “among those who accept the scientific consensus that climate change is occurring and is not attributable to natural causes, over one-third agreed that climate change deniers ‘get what they deserve when disasters like hurricanes make landfall where they live.’”

Democrats and Republicans express two very different forms of schadenfreude over the Covid-19 pandemic, and Trump often capitalized on this. Trump’s supporters, Webster wrote,

thrived off his willingness to upset the “right” people, which is certainly an aspect of schadenfreude. In many ways, Trump’s supporters were (and are) motivated by their frustrations over a society that appears to be moving away from one that they desire. So, this makes Trump’s willingness go “against the grain,” so to speak, an attractive feature.

Webster went on:

Democrats experience schadenfreude when individuals do not follow CDC health guidelines and get sick from the coronavirus. In a similar manner, Republicans tend to express schadenfreude when people lose their job due to businesses following government regulations on the economy during the pandemic.

Along parallel lines, [*Christopher Sebastian Parker*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/), a political scientist at the University of Washington, wrote me:

Trump stoked anger. Anger is typically a reaction to perceived injustice and threat. Action to correct the perceived injustice, and to neutralize the threat, is the general behavioral response. Trump’s “surprise” victory in 2016 is, at least in part, a response on the part of the reactionary right to recover from the ‘injustice’ of having a Black president, and to neutralize the threat associated with perceived social change.

Trump appealed to voters, Parker continued, who “wanted ‘their’ country back, so they mobilized in an effort to make that happen.” These kinds of appeals can work in both directions.

“In some of my own research,” Parker wrote,

I showed that when we primed Black people with material that depicted Trump as a threat to Black people, they were far more likely to report their intention to mobilize in the 2020 election than those who didn’t have this prime. In short, explicit appeals are the order of the day.

From one vantage point, there is a legitimate argument that Trump has not really changed the Republican Party.

In an article in Vox in August of 2020, “[*Trump was supposed to change the G.O.P. But the G.O.P. changed him*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/),” Jane Coaston, now the host of The Times’s podcast “The Argument,” wrote:

The Trumpification of the Republican Party was not the remaking of the Republican Party into a populist outfit. Instead, it was the reshaping of Trump into a mainline Republican, one who values the “[*beautiful boaters*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/)” over ***working-class*** voters whose politics were more heterodox than any observer realized back in 2016. The desire for populism Trump observed was real, but he didn’t believe in it. As one conservative pundit told me, while Trump exploited a vacuum in conservative thought, “what’s so sad is that he never fulfilled or developed it.”

More recently, my Times colleague Alexander Burns [*wrote on July 4*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) about “the frustrating reality of political competition these days: The president — any president — might be able to chip away at voters’ skepticism of his party or their cynicism about Washington, but he cannot engineer a broad realignment in the public mood.”

The electorate, Burns noted,

is not entirely frozen, but each little shift in one party’s favor seems offset by another small one in the opposite direction. Mr. Trump improved his performance with women and Hispanic voters compared with the 2016 election, while Mr. Biden expanded his party’s support among moderate constituencies like male voters and military veterans.

All true. But at the same time Trump has mobilized and consolidated a cohort that now exercises control over the Republican Party, a renegade segment of the electorate, perhaps as large as one-third of all voters, which disdains democratic principles, welcomes authoritarian techniques to crush racial and cultural liberalism, seeks to wrest away the election machinery and suffers from the mass delusion that Trump won last November.

Regardless of whether Trump runs again, he has left an enormous footprint — a black mark — on American politics, which will stain elections for years to come.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://pcppe.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/american-political-party-systems/).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jordan Gale for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Previews Take Plays From Larva To Butterfly***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBP-CJ91-DXY4-X3F7-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Tweaks to dialogue, costumes and lighting cues came daily, as the cast and crew of Richard Greenberg's new play prepared for opening night.

The final sound cue for ''The Perplexed,'' Richard Greenberg's new comedy about two estranged, wealthy families brought together by their children's impending nuptials, is offstage laughter. Heralding the arrival of long-awaited guests, it's supposed to be jubilant.

Instead, at the first preview of the show last month at New York City Center, the laugh track rang like a witch's cackle.

''It felt too sardonic to me,'' Lynne Meadow, the longtime artistic director of Manhattan Theater Club who's helming the production, said afterward.

It took at least seven more tries to finally capture the ideal sound effect. Now it was just a matter of solidifying dozens of other decisions before the play's official premiere on Tuesday.

Previews are a unique, enduring feature of the theater world: Kicking off a show's run, they are a period of public performances before opening night, which can last anywhere from several days to, in the notorious case of 2011's ''Spider Man: Turn Off the Dark,'' 180-some performances. (More recently, previews for ''West Side Story'' were extended by two weeks while Isaac Powell, who plays Tony, recovered from a knee injury.) As such, previews are as much a part of a play's creative process as its closed rehearsals.

While the intimacy of a studio is a safe space for experimentation and development, only once an audience of strangers enters the theater can a director, playwright and actors know for sure what's landing and what's falling flat. Changes to dialogue, costumes, lighting cues come daily until the show is ''frozen,'' when the script and blocking are set. Critics are then invited to previews, and their reviews are traditionally published opening night.

The process can result in a whole character sent packing, an intermission axed or pages of script inserted, only to be chucked out days later. Rehearsals can often be called during previews, which means a cast could go over new lines at a morning practice, only to perform an old script that night.

Nothing so extreme was required for ''The Perplexed.'' Still, over the course of three weeks and 23 previews, monologues were scrapped, blocking was restaged, 50-cent words were replaced with accessible synonyms and a final bow featuring the actors holding champagne glasses was tried once -- then promptly trashed.

''For me, it's all about figuring out what people are getting,'' said Greenberg, whose Tony Award-winning play ''Take Me Out'' is being revived by Second Stage Theater in April.

''Until you get into rehearsal, you're talking to yourself,'' he explained. In the studio with a director and actors, a playwright has the benefit of clarifying his intentions, but all that changes in previews. ''Then you get in front of a bunch of strangers, and you can hear when something is mystifying.''

Greenberg is as versed in the city's educated, upper-middle class as a sommelier who knows his wine list, its undertones, its hints and everything else that gives nuance. His most recent works, ''Our Mother's Brief Affair'' (2016) and the Tony-nominated ''The Assembled Parties'' (2013), were both directed by Meadow.

''The Perplexed'' is a drawing-room play, literally -- it is set in a lavish home library of an unseen, Jewish billionaire host, Berland Stahl -- and figuratively. Like some characters from Greenberg's previous works, the members of the wedding party here belong to a privileged, insular world, yet feel adrift amid changing cultural tides. While the countdown to a midnight ceremony ticks on, they hash out drama old and new.

We meet the bride (Tess Frazer) and her parents, City Councilwoman Evy Arlen-Stahl (Margaret Colin) and Joseph Stahl (Frank Wood), who is the billionaire's disinherited son. Evy goes way back, both in business and pleasure, with the lawyer Ted Resnik (Gregg Edelman), the father of the groom (JD Taylor). Ted's self-righteous, do-gooder wife is Natalie Hochberg-Resnik (Ilana Levine).

Also in the mix are Evy's son, Micah (Zane Pais), a medical student who stars in gay adult films on the side; her writer brother (Patrick Breen); a former rabbi from South Carolina (Eric William Morris) dealing with some meshugas of his own; and one ***working-class*** character, Berland's Guyanese aide Patricia Persaud (Anna Itty).

''The Perplexed'' is a social-issue casserole, a tumble of ingredients culled from the zeitgeist -- porn, feminism, 1 percent-level wealth -- that could each warrant its own entree. Instead, they are tossed into a single Pyrex to roast among the other flavors; audiences will decide whether this style is adept or clumsy.

''This is a play that has political references and issues about morality and your politics and your reaction to change,'' says Meadow. ''But this is not a piece of agitprop.''

In an explosive Act II scene, Evy finds herself alone with Ted for the first time in 20 years. She expresses fear that her son's extracurricular activities have put her campaign for City Council Speaker in jeopardy. And they needle her sense of irrelevance now that her breed of progressive Jewish female is no longer as revolutionary as it once was.

In the first preview, she explains to Ted, ''Pornography, statistics tell us, is used by an overwhelming majority of the adult population, and to consider yourself superior to an enterprise people of your ilk enjoy is the grossest hypocrisy, and to approve of its existence as I, with significant reservations, do, while stipulating that it be the work of other people's children, is of course, insupportable.''

By the end of the first week of previews, that monologue was gone, leaving an extended tender silence in its place.

''Now it's an emotional moment,'' Colin said. ''It's not the conflict of her politics.''

For all script changes, no matter how minute, Greenberg gets the final say. Even something as seemingly imperceptible as adding ''then'' to combine two sentences into one warranted a conversation.

''For us, the opinion of the playwright is god,'' said Meadow during the February 21 rehearsal. ''We don't run cuts or changes that the playwright doesn't want to do.''

She received his blessing via text message.

Sometimes, the dialogue change isn't about the words, but about delivery, as was the case with an exchange between the groom and Patricia, the caregiver. Depending on her reading of a single line, Itty could determine whether Patricia is acquiescent or self-possessed.

''It's the nuance that makes all the difference in how you perceive a character,'' said Meadow. By the ninth preview, Itty was playing the character as keenly aware of the imbalance of power between her and the family.

With such a text-heavy play, Meadow must make sure that each prop, sound cue and stage direction supports what the characters are saying onstage.

While the play requires no costume changes, Colin's skirt had to show a stain, supposedly from a water main break in Evy's district, because it is constantly referred to in the dialogue. The combination of dye and water created a subtle ombre effect on her burgundy taffeta skirt rather than a noticeable sartorial disaster. So in the ninth preview, it was replaced with a bright red, full-length wool crepe skirt with a muddied hem befitting an explosion of New York's finest brown gush.

By the time the production opens, the script will have been updated dozens of times. All the revamping and tweaking during previews was, as ever, time-consuming. But to Greenberg, it's a necessary part of the process.

''You're responsible to people's time, and I think that's the main responsibility when you're writing a play,'' he said. ''You are taking their time from them, so you have to give it back.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/theater/the-perplexed-previews.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/theater/the-perplexed-previews.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Far left, another rehearsal offstage for ''The Perplexed'' included, from left, Frank Wood, Gregg Edelman and Ilana Levine. Near left, the cast members Margaret Colin, Wood, Levine and Edelman worked out the kinks in a preview last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C5)

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2020

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[***In Bid for Party Unity, Biden Moves Beyond Restoring the Pre-Trump Era***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YWT-F7K1-DXY4-X09M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Trying to win over progressives and aware that the coronavirus crisis is upending the political landscape, Joe Biden is increasingly using the language of systemic disruption.

**Body**

Trying to win over progressives and aware that the coronavirus crisis is upending the political landscape, Joe Biden is increasingly using the language of systemic disruption.

Throughout the Democratic presidential primary, [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) rivals criticized his focus on restoring America to the pre-   [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) era, accusing him of promoting a backward-looking political vision that ignored the deep-rooted causes of the nation’s problems.

Mr. Biden’s message to voters sometimes fueled that perception: He constantly invoked the [*Obama*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) legacy. He leaned on longtime party donors and endorsements from establishment Democrats — some of whom had been out of office for years. He criticized some of the progressive ideas of his primary rivals.

But as he steps into the general election having vanquished the party’s left wing, and the nation reels from a pandemic that has devastated the economy, Mr. Biden is striking fewer of the moderate notes that won him the nomination, instead courting progressives with a new openness to systemic disruption.

The clearest sign of that shift came on Wednesday, when Mr. Biden announced a slate of joint policy task forces with Senator Bernie Sanders focused on issues ranging from climate change to criminal justice reform. The task force members include stalwart Biden allies, but also a who’s who of “Medicare for all” champions, advocates for eliminating college debt, and critics of the Obama administration’s immigration policy — the kind of activists who have long been skeptical of Mr. Biden’s more incremental instincts.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, perhaps the nation’s most prominent young progressive, is co-chair of the climate change task force along with former Secretary of State John Kerry, a significant development as Mr. Biden seeks to improve his standing with younger and more liberal voters.

While the task forces have yet to convene, and it is far from clear whether they will produce policy results or simply the appearance of political harmony, Mr. Biden is plainly trying to unite the most progressive wing of the party with the Democratic establishment. That’s a goal critical to delivering a big Democratic vote against President Trump, and his [*united Republican Party,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) in November.

“I think I can speak for a lot of young people in that I was not motivated or inspired by Biden’s refrain of a return to normalcy,” said Varshini Prakash, the executive director of the progressive climate activism group Sunrise Movement, who will join Ms. Ocasio-Cortez on the climate policy working group. “If you want to energize our generation, give us a vision of what we’re fighting for — and not just what we’re fighting against.”

In recent weeks, Mr. Biden has detailed an agenda that increasingly features progressive policies and language. Where he once [*pitched a message anchored in electability*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html), he has now embraced a rhetorical stew that mixes the “hope” of former President Barack Obama with the populism of Mr. Sanders and Senator Elizabeth Warren.

It’s a reflection of political sensitivity to the national mood, which risks turning to overwhelming anger as economic pain builds. But it is also an implicit acknowledgment that Mr. Biden cannot win by merely promising to remove Mr. Trump.

“Yes, I’ve endorsed Vice President Biden and yes, we’re working to help organize progressives,” said Representative Barbara Lee of California, a former chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. “But we have to make sure that an agenda that speaks to the aspirations of all Americans is an agenda that he embraces.”

In recent weeks, Mr. Biden’s words and his policies have drifted left.

He announced [*a new plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) last week focusing on systemic racism, and   [*indicated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) in a Snapchat interview that he supported a federal rent bailout. In discussing big businesses and stimulus money, he recently snarled in a   [*Politico interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html), “This is the second time we’ve bailed their asses out.”

And this month, he was [*co-author of an op-ed article*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) with Ms. Warren in McClatchy newspapers, acknowledging that “for many Americans, our economy wasn’t working even before the devastation of the Covid-19 crisis.”

“The blinders have been taken off,” Mr. Biden said at a recent fund-raiser. “Because of this Covid crisis, I think people are realizing: ‘My Lord. Look at what is possible.’”

Such a messaging shift presents both opportunities and challenges for Mr. Biden, who spent much of the primary [*keenly focused*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) on how a presidential candidate’s promises would play in moderate states and in down-ballot races in the general election.

His recent words have been met with skepticism from progressive critics, who argue that his long legislative record in Washington suggests that the current changes are cosmetic. At the same time, at another fund-raiser, a donor told Mr. Biden’s wife that the candidate was already moving too far to the left — an illustration of the competing forces Mr. Biden must navigate.

Mr. Biden’s advisers have indicated to donors and other supporters this spring that the campaign is focused on uniting the Democratic Party before turning to broader general election outreach.

Jared Bernstein, who during Mr. Biden’s vice-presidential tenure served as his chief economic adviser and continues to informally advise him, said it was a “fair conclusion” that Mr. Biden’s calls for change had grown more pointed in recent weeks. Mr. Bernstein said that the economic ruin and the struggles of the Trump administration “loom very large for him,” given [*Mr. Biden’s role in leading the Obama administration’s response*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) to the recession in 2009.

“Like many of us, he’s trying to suss out whether we’re at a kind of turning point,” Mr. Bernstein said, “where on the other side of this virus a lot of people are going to look around and say, ‘We need a far more competent government sector that can insulate us from shocks that come fast and furiously in a global economy.’”

More urgently, the mark of a successful campaign will be if ***working-class*** Americans believe that “Joe Biden’s on my side and Donald Trump betrays workers,” said Senator Sherrod Brown, a pro-labor Democrat of Ohio, who speaks regularly with Mr. Biden’s staff.

In any earlier presidential cycle, Mr. Biden’s policy proposals could have been considered far-reaching — promoting a public option for health care, for example, and [*embracing the overarching themes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html) of the Green New Deal to combat climate change.

But throughout the primary, he opposed many of progressives’ litmus-test issues. He also predicted that the Republican Party will have an “epiphany” once Mr. Trump is out of office, a view of political compromise that some Democrats believe is out of step with Trump-era tribalism.

Despite that skepticism, party leaders who have recently endorsed him, including Mr. Obama, Mr. Sanders and Ms. Warren, have each pitched Mr. Biden’s potential administration as one capable of ushering in an era of progressive change.

[*Mr. Obama, in his endorsement video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/politics/trump-biden-subpoena.html), even hinted at the criticism lodged by Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and others, saying: “There’s too much unfinished business for us to just look backwards. We have to look to the future.”

At a recent virtual fund-raiser, Mr. Biden described a need to move in a bolder direction — while also avoiding Mr. Sanders’s brand of democratic socialism.

“Look at the institutional changes we can make — without us becoming a socialist country, or any of that malarkey,” Mr. Biden said.

The remark ruffled some on the left who thought Mr. Biden was being dismissive, while some conservatives accused him of using a crisis to press his agenda. But amid skyrocketing unemployment and significant disapproval of Mr. Trump’s handling of the crisis, it captured how Mr. Biden is one of many politicians adjusting their ideological framing to the scale of the current crisis.

Former Representative Steve Israel of New York, a Biden ally, said the former vice president must navigate a fine line: engage progressives without alienating moderates, like those who helped him secure the nomination.

“You cannot afford to allow a swath of the electorate to sit home stewing on Election Day,” he said.

PHOTOS: Early in the Democratic primary process, Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s references to the Obama legacy and his work as vice president were not enough to win over more left-leaning members of his party. Since then he has extended a hand to progressives like Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, above, and Barbara Lee of California, above left. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MARK MAKELA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Senator Bernie Sanders with the Rev. Jesse Jackson in March. Mr. Sanders has agreed to help Mr. Biden assess policy options. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 20, 2020

**End of Document**



[***What Happens Next?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6181-7KR1-DXY4-X3V8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2020 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section P; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1819 words

**Byline:** By Jeremy W. Peters

**Body**

Inside the Zoom salons, Senate-office conversations and 2024 jockeying that will shape the future of the G.O.P.

The election of 2020 ended for Republican Party leaders a lot like the election of 2016 began: As much as they may want to move on from Donald J. Trump, he won't let them -- and neither will the voters.

After losing the White House to Joseph R. Biden Jr. and the popular vote in seven presidential elections since 1980, and facing the possibility of defeat in Arizona and Georgia where losses were once unthinkable, Republicans were grappling with how to untangle the man from a movement that is likely to dictate party politics for years.

Even in defeat, Republicans saw clear indicators of the enduring power of Trump-style populism. By the time Mr. Biden gave his victory speech on Saturday evening, Mr. Trump had received 7.4 million more votes than he did in 2016 -- one million more in the battleground of Florida alone. Republicans cut into the Democratic majority in the House with wins in several swing districts from Iowa to New York, where they followed Mr. Trump's slash-and-burn playbook of branding his opponents as far-left hysterics.

No one seems to be under the illusion that Mr. Trump will fade quietly. All week, as he launched an extraordinary, baseless attack on the integrity of the election, few in his party challenged claims that he was being cheated of a victory. Privately, some began discussing the possibility that he might not concede, which would put them in the awkward position of having to choose whether to defend him until Mr. Biden's inauguration in two and a half months.

This dynamic presents a problem for the Republicans who will run for office after Mr. Trump is no longer the leader of the party, on paper at least. In particular, Republicans in their 30s and 40s see a road map to the bigger and more diverse coalition that the party has tried to build for two decades, if they can salvage the more popular aspects of the president's appeal to middle-class Americans while jettisoning the racial grievances he fanned.

From inside Senate offices, think tanks and over off-the-record salons on Zoom, the conversations about what's next have grown in urgency now that the final months of the Trump presidency are at hand.

''He is sort of the king with no heirs,'' said Oren Cass, the executive director of American Compass, a group that hosts monthly online happy hours of Capitol Hill staff and policy experts to debate the successes and failures of the Trump agenda. Mr. Cass said Mr. Trump's defeat set up a clash between more conventional Republicans who, on the one hand, took the attitude that ''this too shall pass, and we can go back to doing to what we were doing before,'' and those who think the president ''called attention to a certain set of issues and voters that certainly the center-right wasn't paying enough attention to.''

Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, who said he had tried to reimagine Trumpism with ''a mute button'' for the president, expressed a view that had taken hold among conservatives -- one that would seem to rule out any reflective, autopsy-style self-assessment of how they lost.

The fact that Mr. Trump's defeat was not the blowout critics had hoped, Mr. Rubio said, means that the anticipated repudiation of Trumpian politics was wrong. ''Trump was going to get wiped out, the G.O.P. was going to get wiped out,'' he said, running through often-repeated predictions. ''Meanwhile, Republicans are going to probably hold the Senate and make up to a 10-seat gain in the House.''

While Mr. Rubio said he could not imagine a scenario in which Mr. Trump was not in the picture -- ''He's not going to just vanish into a building'' -- the president's strong support among Latino voters in Florida (47 percent) and Texas (40 percent) showed how the party could expand a ''multiethnic, ***working-class*** coalition'' that did not fit neatly inside the left-right paradigm.

''I think that a lot of people just don't realize that when it comes to identity,'' Mr. Rubio said, ''the identity tied to your employment, your culture, you standard of living, your values, is much more powerful than the pronunciation of your last name.''

Navigating the unavoidable, disruptive force that is Mr. Trump complicates an already difficult job for conservatives like Mr. Rubio, 49. First, Republicans need to convince more voters of color that they are welcoming, despite embracing Mr. Trump and his divisive message. ''If someone expresses hatred or disdain for people like you, it's going to make it hard for them to vote for you,'' Mr. Rubio said.

They also need to demonstrate that Republicans can be the party for Americans who are struggling economically -- many of whom were won over by Mr. Trump's message -- not just the party that cuts taxes for corporations and dismantles government regulations.

A ''pro-worker'' Republican Party, as described by the likes of Senator Josh Hawley, 40, of Missouri, would require a sea change in the way its members tend to balk at spending when there is a Democratic president.

Mr. Hawley, like Mr. Rubio, has been vocal about the need to pass a second coronavirus relief package, breaking with Republicans who have expressed concerns about growing deficits. Some conservatives have proposed less conventional ways of appealing to the party's core constituencies, including social conservatives, by embracing ideas typically associated with Democrats, like paid family leave.

Yuval Levin, a scholar with the American Enterprise Institute who has been convening discussions with leading conservatives about the post-Trump landscape, said it would be unwise for Republicans not to embrace the pro-middle-class parts of the Trump agenda that he campaigned on in 2016, but then largely abandoned. ''It's not really even Trump's message, Mr. Levin said. ''He's been president for four years, and his only legislative accomplishment is a perfectly traditional tax cut bill.''

If Mr. Trump did anything, Mr. Levin said, it was to shatter the notion that voters want Republicans to talk about smaller government. ''A lot of people have been instinctively, reflexively saying, 'We can't be spending this kind of money right now.' And I'm thinking, what voters want that? Who's saying don't give us money?'' he said.

For starters, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas. He, Nikki R. Haley and other Republicans who want a starring role in the party's post-Trump reboot have revived Tea Party-like critiques of government stimulus. This year, Ms. Haley resigned from the board of Boeing after the company asked for federal aid to help weather the pandemic-induced recession. She cited her ''strong convictions that this is not the role of government.''

Other conservatives say that Republicans need to accept that Mr. Trump realigned the party's coalition away from wealthy, well-educated people in the suburbs, and that they should not obsess over winning those voters back.

Twenty-five years ago, Republican voters were more likely than Democrats to have a college degree. Now the reverse is true, with college graduates making up 41 percent of Democratic voters compared with 30 percent of Republican voters, according to the Pew Research Center.

''We are, by and large, no longer the party of white college graduates,'' said Rachel Bovard, senior director of policy at the Conservative Partnership Institute. ''That was the Reagan coalition, and the Reagan coalition doesn't exist anymore.''

Florida provided a model for what the future could look like. Mr. Trump easily won there, two Democratic members of Congress lost their seats, and voters approved a measure to increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2026 -- with 61 percent support. In a post-election memo, the Trump campaign noted how its improvement over 2016 came not from suburban or rural counties, but ''from larger, more urban counties.''

Gov. Larry Hogan of Maryland, a Republican elected twice in a heavily Democratic state, is credited with showing how his party can appeal in Black communities and with other traditionally left-leaning constituents by focusing on a middle-class message. He has one of the highest approval ratings of any governor in the country, with equal support from white and Black voters.

Unlike other Republicans, Mr. Hogan has been public in his criticism of the president, and said he cast a write-in vote for Ronald Reagan. Reflecting on 2020, he argued that when Republicans look at how they lost, the answer won't be voter fraud but rather a president who insisted on making his re-election about resentment and blame instead of how he would make the American economy work for everyone.

''One, he didn't focus on the things that he ran on the first time. And he didn't accomplish a lot for those folks,'' Mr. Hogan said. ''Two, the tone of anger and division turned off voters who might have been receptive to that message.''

Still, Mr. Hogan said, the election was neither a total repudiation of Mr. Trump or an embrace of Democrats. ''It wasn't a rejection of the Republican Party,'' he said. ''It was not an acceptance of the far left.''

Republicans disagree on how deeply Mr. Trump has changed the party. In their most hopeful assessment, they argued that his influence was most noticeable in matters of style and tone, and that was not permanent. Dwindling are the days, some said, of Republican candidates bringing cardboard cutouts of Mr. Trump to campaign events, cursing in their ads and competing for the honor to claim they first embodied his belligerent style as someone who was ''Trump before Trump.''

''We've got to figure out again how to be happy warriors like Reagan,'' said Scott Walker, the former governor of Wisconsin who lost his seat in the Democratic rebound of 2018. He is now chief executive of Young America's Foundation, where he is focused on college students, a group that has recoiled from the Republican Party under Mr. Trump.

Republicans, he said, need to do a better job of settling on a message that is more inclusive and begins ''with the premise that even those you disagree with can be inherently good.''

A Republican strategist, Kristen Soltis Anderson, said it would be a mistake for the party to gloss over its failures, especially with younger voters, women and the minority groups that broke overwhelmingly for Mr. Biden. ''He showed us part of the formula,'' she said of Mr. Trump. ''Now we've got to find someone who can get us the rest of the way.''

But Ms. Anderson's research shows how difficult it may be finding someone else who can hold together and expand the Trump coalition. A poll last month from her firm, Echelon Insights, asked Republicans and Republican-leaning independents if they considered themselves a supporter of Mr. Trump or of the Republican Party.

Fifty-eight percent picked Mr. Trump.

Annie Karni contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/08/us/politics/republican-party-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/08/us/politics/republican-party-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The election results were not a rejection of the Republican Party, one governor said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2020

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[***When It’s This Easy at the Top, It’s Harder for Everyone Else***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y9P-1WP1-DXY4-X1BG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 28, 2020 Friday 15:07 EST

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**Byline:** Nelson D. Schwartz

**Highlight:** America has always known haves and have-nots. But what was a tiered system is morphing into a caste system.

**Body**

America has always known haves and have-nots. But what was a tiered system is morphing into a caste system.

A $1,000 seat at Yankee Stadium, in the first few rows along the baseline, is known as a Legends ticket. Holders bypass the long lines of fans waiting to enter the park by conventional means, whisked in by security guards who greet them like family. They enjoy a private dining room and concierge access, and they are separated from lesser fans by a concrete moat.

It has been a long time since sporting events were essentially communal experiences, and it’s no secret that the industry caters to the wealthy. But what struck me about the Legends experience, when I shelled out for a pair of seats one autumn Sunday, was something called the Harman Lounge.

It’s a club within the Legends club, and there’s nothing particularly unique about it — just more gray suede couches, another bar and some TVs. The only thing that makes the Harman Lounge special is that it is restricted to fans sitting in the first row and only the first row. It exists solely to exclude fans who are not at the absolute top.

I had gone to Yankee Stadium in search of what I call the Velvet Rope Economy, and in the Harman Lounge I found something like its apotheosis. Whatever the arena — health care, education, work, leisure — on one side of the velvet rope is a friction-free existence. Red tape is cut, appointments are secured, doors are opened. On the other side, friction is practically the defining characteristic, with middle- and ***working-class*** Americans facing an increasingly zero-sum fight for a decent seat on the plane, a college scholarship, even a doctor’s appointment.

There has always been a gap between the haves and have-nots, but what was a tiered system in America is [*morphing into a caste system*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/business/economy/velvet-rope-economy.html). As the rich get richer and more businesses focus exclusively on serving them, there is less attention and shabbier service for everybody who’s not at the pinnacle.

[This article is adapted from Nelson D. Schwartz’s new book, “[*The Velvet Rope Economy: How Inequality Became Big Business*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/business/economy/velvet-rope-economy.html),” published by Doubleday.]

This trend doesn’t merely delight the wealthy — it also exacerbates the isolation and abandonment of everyone else. Anger and resentment are hardening into permanent features of our politics. President Trump regularly inveighs against the elite, and the Democratic front-runner, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, makes attacks on “millionaires and billionaires” a hallmark of his campaign. Consumer dissatisfaction is high despite low unemployment and steady hiring gains.

Among the purveyors of elite experiences, however, business has never been better. The creation of products like Yankee Stadium’s Harman Lounge is driven by straightforward economics: As more money accumulates in fewer hands, attracting this contingent is essential if profits are to grow.

“By definition, the 1 percent is always just 1 percent, but that group has gotten much wealthier and their purchasing power is bigger,” said Geoff Yang, a co-founder of Redpoint Ventures and one of Silicon Valley’s most successful venture capitalists.

Meanwhile, ordinary experiences deteriorate in quality, and the motivation to pay more for an upgrade and better treatment becomes more urgent, even for Americans who don’t consider themselves part of the elite.

The political and social repercussions go beyond symbolism — they have a real impact on government policies and fiscal priorities. For instance, when corporate decision makers, members of Congress and especially the political donor class routinely bypass traffic jams and deteriorating trains and buses and get to the airport via a [*luxury helicopter service*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/business/economy/velvet-rope-economy.html) like Blade, the political impetus to improve public transit fades.

The ease of catching a commercial flight at the deluxe new private terminal at Los Angeles International Airport — the first of its kind in the country, with a $4,500 annual membership plus a $3,000 fee per trip — makes it that much easier for those who can afford it to forget about the decrepit main terminal, with its claustrophobic hallways and overcrowded waiting areas.

Similarly, if wealthier consumers can hack the hospital game and see specialists before everyone else, or employ high-priced counselors to gain special access to the Ivy League, health care and education reform become much less pressing.

Nowhere is the segmentation worse, or anger more evident, than up in the air. With nine different groups to board a plane, flying has explicitly become an exercise in class distinction. The frustration isn’t confined to rhetoric. A [*2016 study on air rage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/business/economy/velvet-rope-economy.html) by Katherine A. DeCelles of the University of Toronto and Michael I. Norton of Harvard Business School found a surprisingly robust link between onboard incidents and what they call “physical and situational inequality.”

What the researchers discovered as they sifted through the data was remarkable. When passengers boarded at the front of the aircraft and had to walk through the premium cabin to get to coach, the odds of an outburst in economy doubled. Nor was the anger limited to the back of the plane. On those flights where coach passengers traipsed their way through first class upon boarding, unruly behavior among elite passengers was nearly 12 times as likely.

The extremely rich don’t see even first-class fliers, let alone those in coach. Take Nick Hanauer, a Seattle entrepreneur worth hundreds of millions of dollars. As an early investor in Amazon, Mr. Hanauer gets around in his personal Dassault Falcon 900LX jet, which retails for $43 million. Money provides him with a kind of all-encompassing E-ZPass, enabling him to zip past the everyday obstacles the rest of us have to contend with.

“This is my life — I see it everywhere,” Mr. Hanauer said. “I haven’t waited in a line in 10 years.”

But for all his wealth, Mr. Hanauer said, he has a gnawing fear that the widening gulf between economic winners like himself and ordinary Americans is unsustainable. “If you’re not genuinely concerned about the future of the United States, you are not paying attention,” he said.

In some cases, money can mean the difference between life and death. In California, private firefighters sent by insurers saved the vineyards and estates of a fortunate few during the recent spate of wildfires, even as neighboring homes were reduced to ashes. For $50,000, private health care consultants can steer cancer patients into potentially lifesaving clinical trials.

The evidence of this trend isn’t merely anecdotal, either. The richest 1 percent of Americans live nearly 15 years longer on average than the poorest 1 percent, according to [*a 2016 study*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/business/economy/velvet-rope-economy.html) in JAMA. And that disparity is increasing.

It’s getting impossible to imagine that we’re all in it together as a society. Because the hard truth is we’re not. On the other side of the velvet rope, millions of Americans are going about their daily lives, paying their taxes and trying to make ends meet, even as they wait longer to see a doctor or to get through security at the airport because richer Americans are jumping the line.

“If this continues unabated, we’re done,” said Mr. Hanauer, who in 2013 started Civic Ventures, a think tank aimed at creating a more level playing field. “This won’t be a capitalist system — it’ll be a feudal system. You can’t shred the norms of reciprocity that make social cohesion possible and expect to have a functioning democracy. It’s just not going to work.”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Taylor Callery FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Trump Lost the Race. But Republicans Know It’s Still His Party.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6181-GR71-JBG3-64X3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2020 Monday 19:23 EST

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**Byline:** Jeremy W. Peters

**Highlight:** Inside the Zoom salons, Senate-office conversations and 2024 jockeying that will shape the future of the G.O.P.

**Body**

Inside the Zoom salons, Senate-office conversations and 2024 jockeying that will shape the future of the G.O.P.

The election of 2020 ended for [*Republican Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html) leaders a lot like the election of 2016 began: As much as they may want to move on from Donald J. Trump, he won’t let them — and neither will the voters.

After losing the White House to Joseph R. Biden Jr. and the popular vote in seven presidential elections since 1980, and facing the possibility of defeat in Arizona and Georgia where losses were once unthinkable, Republicans were grappling with how to untangle the man from a movement that is likely to dictate party politics for years.

Even in defeat, Republicans saw clear indicators of the enduring power of Trump-style populism. By the time Mr. Biden gave his victory speech on Saturday evening, Mr. Trump had received 7.4 million more [*votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html) than he did in 2016 — [*one million more*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html) in the battleground of Florida alone. Republicans cut into the Democratic majority in the House with wins in several swing districts from Iowa to New York, where they followed Mr. Trump’s slash-and-burn playbook of branding his opponents as far-left hysterics.

No one seems to be under the illusion that Mr. Trump will fade quietly. All week, as he launched an extraordinary, baseless attack on the integrity of the election, [*few in his party challenged claims*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html) that he was being cheated of a victory. Privately, some began discussing the possibility that he might not concede, which would put them in the awkward position of having to choose whether to defend him until Mr. Biden’s inauguration in two and a half months.

This dynamic presents a problem for the Republicans who will run for office after Mr. Trump is no longer the leader of the party, on paper at least. In particular, Republicans in their 30s and 40s see a road map to the bigger and more diverse coalition that the party has tried to build for two decades, if they can salvage the more popular aspects of the president’s appeal to middle-class Americans while jettisoning the racial grievances he fanned.

From inside Senate offices, think tanks and over off-the-record salons on Zoom, the conversations about what’s next have grown in urgency now that the final months of the Trump presidency are at hand.

“He is sort of the king with no heirs,” said Oren Cass, the executive director of American Compass, a group that hosts monthly online happy hours of Capitol Hill staff and policy experts to debate the successes and failures of the Trump agenda. Mr. Cass said Mr. Trump’s defeat set up a clash between more conventional Republicans who, on the one hand, took the attitude that “this too shall pass, and we can go back to doing to what we were doing before,” and those who think the president “called attention to a certain set of issues and voters that certainly the center-right wasn’t paying enough attention to.”

Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, who said that the president’s critics would probably be happier if there were “a mute button” that allowed people to only see policy, expressed a view that had taken hold among conservatives — one that would seem to rule out any reflective, autopsy-style self-assessment of how they lost.

The fact that Mr. Trump’s defeat was not the blowout critics had hoped, Mr. Rubio said, means that the anticipated repudiation of Trumpian politics was wrong. “Trump was going to get wiped out, the G.O.P. was going to get wiped out,” he said, running through often-repeated predictions. “Meanwhile, Republicans are going to probably hold the Senate and make up to a 10-seat gain in the House.”

While Mr. Rubio said he could not imagine a scenario in which Mr. Trump was not in the picture — “He’s not going to just vanish into a building” — the president’s strong support among Latino voters in Florida ([*47 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html)) and Texas ([*40 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html)) showed how the party could expand a “multiethnic, ***working-class*** coalition” that did not fit neatly inside the left-right paradigm.

“I think that a lot of people just don’t realize that when it comes to identity,” Mr. Rubio said, “the identity tied to your employment, your culture, your standard of living, your values, is much more powerful than the pronunciation of your last name.”

Navigating the unavoidable, disruptive force that is Mr. Trump complicates an already difficult job for conservatives like Mr. Rubio, 49. First, Republicans need to convince more voters of color that they are welcoming, despite embracing Mr. Trump and his divisive message. “If someone expresses hatred or disdain for people like you, it’s going to make it hard for them to vote for you,” Mr. Rubio said.

They also need to demonstrate that Republicans can be the party for Americans who are struggling economically — many of whom were won over by Mr. Trump’s message — not just the party that cuts taxes for corporations and dismantles government regulations.

A “pro-worker” Republican Party, as described by the likes of Senator Josh Hawley, 40, of Missouri, would require a sea change in the way its members tend to balk at spending when there is a Democratic president.

Mr. Hawley, like Mr. Rubio, has been vocal about the need to pass a second coronavirus relief package, breaking with Republicans who have expressed concerns about growing deficits. Some conservatives have proposed less conventional ways of appealing to the party’s core constituencies, including social conservatives, by embracing ideas typically associated with Democrats, like paid family leave.

Yuval Levin, a scholar with the American Enterprise Institute who has been convening discussions with leading conservatives about the post-Trump landscape, said it would be unwise for Republicans not to embrace the pro-middle-class parts of the Trump agenda that he campaigned on in 2016, but then largely abandoned. “It’s not really even Trump’s message,” Mr. Levin said. “He’s been president for four years, and his only legislative accomplishment is a perfectly traditional tax cut bill.”

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For starters, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas. He, Nikki R. Haley and other Republicans who want a starring role in the party’s post-Trump reboot have revived Tea Party-like critiques of government stimulus. This year, Ms. Haley resigned from the board of Boeing after the company asked for federal aid to help weather the pandemic-induced recession. She cited her “strong convictions that this is not the role of government.”

Other conservatives say that Republicans need to accept that Mr. Trump realigned the party’s coalition away from wealthy, well-educated people in the suburbs, and that they should not obsess over winning those voters back.

Twenty-five years ago, Republican voters were more likely than Democrats to have a college degree. Now the reverse is true, with college graduates making up 41 percent of Democratic voters compared with 30 percent of Republican voters, [*according to*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html) the Pew Research Center.

“We are, by and large, no longer the party of white college graduates,” said Rachel Bovard, senior director of policy at the Conservative Partnership Institute. “That was the Reagan coalition, and the Reagan coalition doesn’t exist anymore.”

Florida provided a model for what the future could look like. Mr. Trump easily [*won there*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html), two Democratic members of Congress lost their seats, and voters approved a measure to increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2026 — with 61 percent support. In a post-election memo, the Trump campaign noted how its improvement over 2016 came not from suburban or rural counties, but “from larger, more urban counties.”

Gov. Larry Hogan of Maryland, a Republican elected twice in a heavily Democratic state, is credited with showing how his party can appeal in Black communities and with other traditionally left-leaning constituents by focusing on a middle-class message. He has one of the highest approval ratings of any governor in the country, with equal support from white and Black voters.

Unlike other Republicans, Mr. Hogan has been public in his criticism of the president, and said he cast a write-in vote for Ronald Reagan. Reflecting on 2020, he argued that when Republicans look at how they lost, the answer won’t be voter fraud but rather a president who insisted on making his re-election about resentment and blame instead of how he would make the American economy work for everyone.

“One, he didn’t focus on the things that he ran on the first time. And he didn’t accomplish a lot for those folks,” Mr. Hogan said. “Two, the tone of anger and division turned off voters who might have been receptive to that message.”

Still, Mr. Hogan said, the election was neither a total repudiation of Mr. Trump or an embrace of Democrats. “It wasn’t a rejection of the Republican Party,” he said. “It was not an acceptance of the far left.”

Republicans disagree on how deeply Mr. Trump has changed the party. In their most hopeful assessment, they argued that his influence was most noticeable in matters of style and tone, and that was not permanent. Dwindling are the days, some said, of Republican candidates bringing cardboard cutouts of Mr. Trump to campaign events, [*cursing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html) in their ads and [*competing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html) for the honor to claim they first embodied his belligerent style as someone who was “Trump before Trump.”

“We’ve got to figure out again how to be happy warriors like Reagan,” said Scott Walker, the former governor of Wisconsin who lost his seat in the Democratic rebound of 2018. He is now chief executive of Young America’s Foundation, where he is focused on college students, a group that has recoiled from the Republican Party under Mr. Trump.

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A Republican strategist, Kristen Soltis Anderson, said it would be a mistake for the party to gloss over its failures, especially with younger voters, women and the minority groups that broke overwhelmingly for Mr. Biden. “He showed us part of the formula,” she said of Mr. Trump. “Now we’ve got to find someone who can get us the rest of the way.”

But Ms. Anderson’s research shows how difficult it may be finding someone else who can hold together and expand the Trump coalition. A poll last month from her firm, Echelon Insights, asked Republicans and Republican-leaning independents if they considered themselves a supporter of Mr. Trump or of the Republican Party.

Fifty-eight percent picked Mr. Trump.

Annie Karni contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: The election results were not a rejection of the Republican Party, one governor said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Lockdowns and Shuttered Factories Add to the Travails That China's Migrants Face***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8S-T2B1-DXY4-X36K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1298 words

**Byline:** By Javier C. Hernández

**Body**

Rural itinerant workers are being blocked from cities, kicked out of apartments and rejected by companies as the authorities impose strict controls to stem the spread of the virus.

Clutching a gray plastic suitcase filled with most of his belongings -- a blanket, a toothbrush, a pair of white sneakers and a comb -- Wang Sheng goes from factory to factory in southern China begging for a job. The answer is always no.

Mr. Wang, 49, used to be able to find work in Shenzhen, a sprawling industrial megacity. But factories are turning him away because he is from Hubei Province, the center of China's coronavirus epidemic, even though he hasn't lived there in years.

''There's nothing I can do,'' said Mr. Wang, who has only a few dollars left in savings, lives off plain noodles and rents a small room for about $60 a month. ''I'm just by myself, isolated and helpless.''

China's roughly 300 million rural migrants have long lived on the margins of society, taking on grueling work for meager wages and limited access to public health care and education. But now they are among the hardest hit as China's leader, Xi Jinping, calls for a ''people's war'' to contain the virus and the authorities impose controls across broad swaths of the country.

As outsiders, rural migrants, no matter where they are from, are an easy target. Many factories are afraid to restart operations in case their workers are carrying the virus, raising concerns that the government's controls could smother the economy. Local officials have barred many migrants from crossing city lines. Landlords have kicked them out of their apartments. Some are crammed into hotels or sleeping under bridges or on sidewalks.

''We have struggled so much already,'' Liu Wen, 42, a factory worker in Zhengzhou, a city in central China, who was evicted from her apartment because she had returned from her husband's hometown in the southern province of Guangdong and her landlord worried she might be carrying the virus. She now is living with her husband and two children in a hotel. ''Now we've lost hope.''

On Sunday, Mr. Xi acknowledged that the situation in China remained ''grim and complex,'' but urged party officials to not only continue their efforts to contain the virus but also to focus on restarting production.

''We must turn pressure into motivation, be good at turning crisis into opportunity, orderly restore production and living order,'' he said.

But the strict lockdowns imposed across the country make it difficult for rural workers to return to cities; only about a third have done so, according to official statistics. Many workers are stuck in the countryside after traveling there last month to celebrate the Lunar New Year holiday.

Mr. Xi, already under scrutiny for the Chinese government's slow and erratic response to the coronavirus outbreak, now faces pressure to quell anger among low-income families and dispel broader fears of an economic downturn. The party has long staked its legitimacy on the idea that it can deliver prosperity and protect the ***working class***.

''The Chinese Communist Party leadership does not like to be criticized for neglecting or abandoning workers,'' said Jane Duckett, the director of the Scottish Center for China Research at the University of Glasgow. ''Their ideological underpinnings -- Marxism-Leninism, socialism -- lie in being a party of the 'workers and peasants.'''

Ms. Duckett said the party was probably wary of discontent among workers. Mr. Xi has said that the government should watch employment closely and that companies should avoid large-scale layoffs.

The virus, which has killed at least 2,400 people and sickened nearly 77,000 in China alone, has brought parts of the Chinese economy, the world's second largest, to a near standstill. While some factories have started up again in recent days, many are still closed or operating well below capacity, with parts in short supply and workers stranded hundreds of miles away.

Businesses across a variety of sectors -- manufacturing, construction and transportation -- have ordered their employees to stay home, usually without pay. That has created strains for many migrants, who earn barely enough to keep up with the rising cost of living in Chinese cities and often hold little in savings.

While wages are low, migrants can still earn more in the cities than they would in the countryside, where jobs are scarce. They are willing to go to cities for a shot at a better life, even if they must live in crowded workers' dormitories or run-down apartments.

Yang Chengjun, 58, who lives in northeast China and sometimes works as a carpenter, says he and his son are living off the land now, relying on rice and vegetables they grow and struggling ''just to stay alive.'' Mr. Yang worries the family will run out of money within a month.

''The pressure on migrant workers was always great,'' Mr. Yang said. ''The epidemic adds insult to injury.''

Their struggles have been made worse by local officials who have helped fuel a perception that rural migrants pose a threat to public health and should be treated as potential carriers of the virus.

In some cities, migrants have been forced into quarantine in facilities run by the government, according to reports on social media. In others, like Wuxi in the east, workers from afar have been barred from entering and warned that they would be ''seriously dealt with'' if they resisted.

China's strict population controls have worsened the plight of many migrant families.

The Mao-era household registration system, known as hukou, makes it difficult for people from the countryside to change their legal residence to cities. As a result, they are considered outsiders -- even if they have lived in cities for decades -- and have limited access to health care, schools, pensions and other social benefits.

As the coronavirus has spread, some workers who have come down with pneumonia and other symptoms say they have been unable to find affordable care in major cities.

While the government now provides free care to those found to have the coronavirus, many hospitals are overwhelmed and lack the resources to officially diagnose the virus. As a result, some migrant workers living in cities say they have been forced to pay thousands of dollars in medical expenses to treat sick relatives.

In Hubei, where the outbreak began in December, many workers worry that the economic pain will continue for months or longer. The province, which is home to more than 10 million migrant workers, remains shut off from the rest of China, and business has ground to a halt.

Huang Chuanyuan, a 46-year-old construction worker in Hubei, has stopped buying meat to save money. His employer, a Chinese construction company, told him that he had no choice but to wait at home.

''I don't want to think about the future now,'' said Mr. Huang, who has a wife and three children. ''The more I think about it, the more stressed I get.''

As their struggles have mounted, some workers have pushed local officials to do more to help reopen businesses. But their pleas are often met with silence, as local governments work to contain the virus.

Mr. Wang, the migrant worker who has been going from factory to factory in Shenzhen, worries it may be months before he can find a job. He spends his days scouring online job ads and watching news about the virus.

Frustrated about his job prospects, Mr. Wang recently posted a poem on social media about the sense of isolation and distress he felt. He criticized the local government for not doing more to help workers.

''You suffer loneliness by yourself, but you are still discriminated against,'' he wrote. ''The Labor Department, now silent. And me: alone in Shenzhen.''

Albee Zhang contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/23/business/economy/coronavirus-china-migrant-workers.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/23/business/economy/coronavirus-china-migrant-workers.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Migrant workers heading south had their temperatures taken before boarding a bus in Guizhou Province on Feb. 18. Many factories are afraid to restart operations amid the coronavirus epidemic. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2020

**End of Document**



[***French Politicians Agree Crime Is Rising. The Data Says It Isn't.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60VY-9T31-JBG3-645F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1684 words

**Byline:** By Norimitsu Onishi and Constant Méheut

**Body**

Statistics show a steady decline in major crimes. But what has intensified are the challenges to France's traditional national identity, and the jockeying in the race to be the next president.

PARIS -- In the Babel Tower of French politics, everyone agrees at least on this: Crime is out of control.

The leader of the far right warned recently that France was a ''security shipwreck'' sinking into ''barbarity.'' A traditional conservative conjured up the ultraviolent dystopia of ''A Clockwork Orange.'' On the left, the presumed Green Party candidate in the next presidential contest described the insecurity as ''unbearable.''

And in the middle, President Emmanuel Macron's ministers warned of a country ''turning savage'' -- the ''ensauvagement'' of France -- as they vowed to get tough on crime and combat the ''separatism'' of radical Muslims.

The only catch? Crime isn't going up.

The government's own data show that nearly all major crimes are lower than they were a decade ago or three years ago. Despite a one-year spike, the 970 homicides recorded in 2019 were lower than the 1,051 in 2000. Over all, crime rose in the 1970s through the mid-1980s before declining and stabilizing.

But like elsewhere, and mirroring the campaign in the United States, the debate over crime tends to be a proxy -- in France's case, for debates about immigration, Islam, race, national identity and other combustible issues that have roiled the country for years.

The intensity of the current rhetoric comes after a spate of incidents over the summer -- including violence on Bastille Day and the beating of a 44-year-old man after he asked a customer at a laundromat to wear a mask -- that for many typified a particularly terrible year for France.

The economy is still reeling from one of Europe's strictest coronavirus lockdowns this spring, and its traditional social fabric is being increasingly challenged by racial and ethnic minorities and by women who have protested injustices such as sexual abuse and police violence.

''Let's put it bluntly: For France, this summer has been a murderous summer,'' said Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Rally and Mr. Macron's main rival in the last presidential election, and his presumed challenger in the next one, in April 2022.

But notably, even at the height of the Yellow Vest protests two years ago, when looting and rampaging through wealthy districts of Paris had become a weekly occurrence, there was very little talk of crime as a major social issue.

The Yellow Vest movement was overwhelmingly white. This year, many of France's largest demonstrations, which were mostly peaceful, were inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and the killing of George Floyd in the United States, which forced the issue of police brutality to the front of the political agenda.

In Ms. Le Pen's view, the current insecurity stemmed directly from the ''systematic targeting of the police by the anti-police campaigns of racial activists.''

In a poster for a by-election later this month in northern France, Ms. Le Pen appears next to the local candidate with the message: ''During the summer of 2020, several French people have been killed by scum stemming from immigration. Without political action, this could happen one day to those close to you, your brothers, your sisters, your children...''

More than any other French politician, Ms. Le Pen has zeroed in on the issue of crime. She and her supporters in the National Rally have tied it directly to immigration from Africa, which they fiercely oppose, and framed it as a threat to French civilization with words like ''ensauvagement'' and ''barbarity.''

''In Rome, barbarians didn't have the same values as the Romans,'' Philippe Olivier, a close aide to Ms. Le Pen and a member of the European Parliament, said in an interview. ''Romans admitted the barbarians: Rome ended up collapsing.''

As the idea of ''ensauvagement'' -- long a dog whistle of the far right -- has been adopted even by Mr. Macron's own ministers, Mr. Olivier described it as ''an ideological victory.''

''This theme can take us to victory in the regional and departmental elections, and then in the presidential election,'' he said. ''We're on our ground. It's a home game.''

According to a poll published last week, 70 percent of respondents said the use of ''ensauvagement'' was justified in describing France's security situation. More significantly, positive assessment of Mr. Macron's handling of crime had dropped to 27 percent -- down from 32 percent last October and from 41 percent in April 2018.

The importance of crime among voters has put Mr. Macron in a dilemma: how to appear tough on crime without embracing the loaded language of the far right.

So far, Mr. Macron has avoided pronouncing judgment on the term. Last week, he appeared visibly annoyed when a reporter asked him about the word ''ensauvagement,'' replying that ''actions are important.''

''You've done the Kama Sutra on 'ensauvagement' for the past 15 days,'' Mr. Macron added, meaning that the media had analyzed it from every possible position.

Crime rates began climbing in the 1970s through the mid-1980s because of a confluence of events. Economically, it was a period that witnessed the end of three decades of rapid growth known as ''Les Trente Glorieuses,'' or ''the Glorious 30.''

But then came the 1973 oil crisis, economic instability, recession and high unemployment -- especially among ***working class*** youths who turned to petty crime and caused a rise in delinquency, said Laurent Bonelli, a political scientist and expert on the history of crime at Paris Nanterre University.

Demographically, France had a young population, with the median age at a postwar low of about 31 -- the current median age is about 41. In 1976, France also legalized family reunification, marking the start of an influx of immigrants from sub-Saharan and Northern Africa.

Those factors helped turn crime into a hot-button issue in the late 1970s, and it has episodically defined presidential politics since.

''Security became a political issue, with politicians making law and order their trademark,'' Mr. Bonelli said.

The National Rally, the far-right party formerly known as the National Front, became a political force in the mid-1980s under Ms. Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie Le Pen.

In 2002, the Socialist candidate, Lionel Jospin, an early front-runner, failed to qualify for the second round of the presidential election largely because he was regarded as being weak on crime. Instead, Mr. Le Pen reached the runoff phase for the first time, eventually losing in a landslide to the conservative, Jacques Chirac.

But in the following presidential election, of 2007, Mr. Le Pen performed poorly, losing votes to a politician who had fully grasped the importance of crime as an issue: Nicolas Sarkozy. Mr. Sarkozy, as interior minister, had once said that he would clean out an immigrant-heavy banlieue, or suburb, ''with a Kärcher'' -- a high-pressure water hose used to wash off graffiti.

In July, Mr. Macron, acutely aware of the electoral importance of crime as an issue, chose as his new interior minister and head of the national police a very close ally of Mr. Sarkozy, Gérald Darmanin. Mr. Darmanin, who has become the government's face against crime, has also unapologetically defended the use of the word ''ensauvagement.''

In the prelude to the 2017 presidential election, Mr. Macron portrayed himself as a progressive candidate and successfully dodged the themes of crime that pervaded the discourse of his main opponent, Ms. Le Pen.

But over the past year, he has been moving progressively to the right, in an effort to appeal to an electorate that has become ''more conservative, more right-wing,'' said Vincent Martigny, a professor of political science at the University of Nice.

''He is being careful not to lose points in a presidential race that has already started,'' Mr. Martigny said.

Presidential contenders across the political spectrum are jumping on the issue of crime.

The actual numbers behind crime trends have been lost in the heated language.

Christophe Soullez, head of the National Observatory of Crime and Criminal Justice, a government-financed monitor, said that, over the past 20 years, ''there is indeed a stability of violence in general.''

According to annual reports produced by the government's National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies since 2006, acts of physical violence outside the home have decreased by 8 percent from 2006 to 2018; thefts with physical violence or threat have dropped by 61 percent in the same period.

In the last two years available, 2017 and 2018, thefts with physical violence or threat decreased by 21 percent, and acts of physical violence outside the home increased about 7 percent.

Sexual violence is the category with the sharpest increase in the past decade, more than doubling according to police data. But much of the rise reflected an increase in complaints resulting from a growing awareness of sexual violence, fueled by the #MeToo movement, said Laurent Mucchielli, a sociologist who specializes in violence and delinquency at the National Center for Scientific Research, France's national research organization.

Internationally, France's per capita homicide rate -- 1.16 per 100,000 people in 2018 -- was about the same as most parts of Britain, according to data from the European Commission, while Germany's rate was 0.76. France's rate was far lower than that of the United States, which was five per 100,000 people in 2018, according to F.B.I. data.

Asked why the official data belied a surge in crime, Mr. Olivier, of the far-right National Rally, accused the French government of doctoring the real figures since the 1970s.

''At all levels, the numbers are being doctored. We're like children who cover our eyes and the reality disappears,'' he said. ''But I'm going tell you, we don't give a damn about the quarrel over the numbers. Fundamentally, these are sandbox quarrels.''

Antonella Francini contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/17/world/europe/france-crime.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/17/world/europe/france-crime.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right party National Rally, has spoken of ''the anti-police campaigns of racial activists.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY VALERY HACHE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A12)

**Load-Date:** September 18, 2020

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[***A Commercial Flatters China's Young, and Generations Clash***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YX2-SSR1-JBG3-621J-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Li Yuan

**Body**

A commercial extolling Chinese youths has set off a debate over whether they are too nationalistic -- and their prospects too limited -- for the country's good.

China's version of the ''OK boomer'' clash began when a famous middle-age actor praised the younger generation as if the country's teenagers and 20-somethings were heaven-sent gifts.

''All those people who complain that each generation is worse than the last should look at you the way I'm looking at you -- full of admiration,'' said He Bing, a film and television star with a baritone voice, in a commercial for a Chinese online video service.

China's young people benefit from education, travel and all the world's knowledge, said Mr. He, over images of young people scuba diving, skydiving, kayaking, racing sports cars, playing professional online games and touring Japan, France, Antarctica and other exotic destinations.

''Because of you,'' he said, ''the world likes China more.''

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The commercial, shown online and on state-run television, provoked an immediate nationwide backlash. Today's youths are too brainwashed, too nationalistic and too eager to snitch on professors and other public figures who don't toe the Communist Party line, said prominent members of China's ''boomer'' generation, who remember a time when the country seemed more open and accepting.

Many in the younger generation looked at the images on the commercial of affluent, happy young people and didn't recognize themselves. China's biggest boom years are over, many think. China's older generation, having amassed all the money and power, is simply trying to co-opt them with flattery.

''There are still young people in China without cellphone or internet connection,'' a viewer wrote on Bilibili, the video website that made the commercial, in a comment that received more than 16,000 likes. ''Young Chinese should think hard about who we are, how we are faring and what we want. Don't be fooled by outside voices.''

The clash playing out across the Chinese internet over the past week amounts to a debate about the future of the world's other superpower -- specifically, for the minds and the souls of China's younger generation. These tensions have been simmering for a long time, but the coronavirus outbreak -- and the Chinese government's propaganda campaign to play down its initial missteps -- have brought those tensions to the fore.

Every society has its generational differences, but in China they are stark.

China's boomers, who were born in the 1960s and 1970s, are as lucky as the American baby boomers born after World War II. China was opening up after nearly 30 years of political turmoil and economic mismanagement under Mao Zedong. Jobs were plentiful. Housing was cheap. And while the party kept an iron grip on political power, society began to open up to new ideas. Before they were blocked beginning about a decade ago, we could use Google and Wikipedia and read The New York Times's website. The future seemed bright.

China is a very different country now, especially for Chinese people born after 1990, or China's Generation Z. Its economy in recent months shrank for the first time since the Mao era as the country grappled with the coronavirus. One estimate put the unemployment rate at 20 percent. At the same time, housing in major cities is as out of reach for members of Generation Z as it is for their contemporaries in New York and San Francisco.

China may be the second-largest economy in the world and have more billionaires than the United States, but the real disposable personal income per capita in 2019 was only $4,334, just one-tenth that of Americans'.

China has embarked on a more authoritarian road under the leadership of Xi Jinping, with the government playing a bigger role in nearly every aspect of society. China's internet is largely cut off from the rest of the globe. Other countries are taking a harder line against Beijing.

Chinese state media is trying to distract the youth from these realities. The Bilibili video's message is in line with Beijing's to the young generation: You're lucky to live in China today, and you should shout down critical voices. The People's Daily, the Communist Party's official newspaper, its tabloid the Global Times and many other official media outlets shared the video on social media, even though it's a commercial for a private internet company.

The Bilibili commercial -- timed for May 4, a government-endorsed day for commemorating patriotic youth -- was a sensation. It was ranked the No. 1 video on Bilibili's own platform, with more than 20 million views for the week. On Weibo, the Twitter-like social media platform, it was viewed 50 million times. Bilibili, which has 130 million users, saw its stock price rise by 11 percent in three days.

But some young people aren't buying it. On Bilibili and other social media platforms, many wrote that the video was for the haves, not the have-nots. It also confused the freedom to consume, they said, with the freedom to make choices based on free will.

''The speech reminded me of the flattering tricks the adults played when I was little,'' Cheng Xinyu, a high school senior in the southwestern city of Chengdu, said in an interview. ''Like, 'You're so good that you certainly won't eat that candy.'''

The video's description of her generation's free choices? ''I just laughed when that part came up,'' Ms. Cheng said.

Further underscoring the wealth gap, some posted on Bilibili's comments section Article 1 of the Chinese Constitution: ''The People's Republic of China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the ***working class*** and based on the alliance of workers and peasants.''

Many older people recoiled at the lionization of a generation in which many members, accustomed to a life of propaganda, blindly defend the government.

Many young people are among those who have used ''traitor'' to describe Fang Fang, the Wuhan-based writer who kept an online diary about the city under lockdown and demanded accountability. These young warriors have reported at least two professors who support Fang Fang to their universities.

''We who were born after 1995 pledge that we will not follow the likes of Fang Fang,'' said the most-liked comment on the Global Times Weibo post of the Bilibili video. ''We will bring down those sinners.''

They argue on China's behalf on the world stage as well, sometimes using software to bypass the censorship infrastructure for access to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Their belligerence prompted some boomers to compare them to Mao's Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, with some using the mocking nickname ''little pinks.''

Many boomers felt compelled to speak out.

''I'm that person who says every day that this generation is worse than mine,'' Su Qing, a journalist, wrote in a line-by-line rebuttal of Mr. He's speech. ''I don't envy you.''

Mr. Su mocked Mr. He's contention that young Chinese people have access to all the knowledge that the world has to offer and the freedom to make choices.

''Congratulations! You have the rights to criticize the United States and the traitors. Everything else is 404,'' he wrote, referring to the error message for censored web pages and sites.

''Because of your overseas online expeditions, the world knows that there are radical young people in China,'' he wrote. ''The world had only seen such young people in Germany in the past.''

Li Houchen, a former internet executive and now a podcast host, urged people to boycott Bilibili, saying the video is part of the ''propaganda business.''

In an emotional podcast, he accused the members of the young generation of indulging in consumerism and becoming the tool and mouthpiece of the authorities, saying they had become the ''henchmen'' of the system by reporting people they disagree with to the authorities. ''Of course, your generation is worse than mine.''

The authorities, Mr. Li said, once condemned the youths' fixation on video games and animation. ''Now they need the young people to attack the likes of Fang Fang,'' he said. ''They need the young people to control the public opinions, so they started flattering the young generation.''

If anything, it's the age of uncertainty and enormous challenges, Mr. Li argued.

''Are we living in a time that rewards hard work, kindness and honesty? Or are we living in a time of lies and fear?'' he added. ''Are we living in a boom time, or are we living in a time of enormous challenges?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/14/technology/china-bilibili-generation-youth.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/14/technology/china-bilibili-generation-youth.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jialun Deng FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2020

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[***With Shift in Language, Biden Reaches Out to Party's Doubters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YWW-0761-JBG3-6096-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Katie Glueck and Astead W. Herndon

**Body**

Trying to win over progressives and aware that the coronavirus crisis is upending the political landscape, Joe Biden is increasingly using the language of systemic disruption.

Throughout the Democratic presidential primary, Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s rivals criticized his focus on restoring America to the pre-Trump era, accusing him of promoting a backward-looking political vision that ignored the deep-rooted causes of the nation's problems.

Mr. Biden's message to voters sometimes fueled that perception: He constantly invoked the Obama legacy. He leaned on longtime party donors and endorsements from establishment Democrats -- some of whom had been out of office for years. He criticized some of the progressive ideas of his primary rivals.

But as he steps into the general election having vanquished the party's left wing, and the nation reels from a pandemic that has devastated the economy, Mr. Biden is striking fewer of the moderate notes that won him the nomination, instead courting progressives with a new openness to systemic disruption.

The clearest sign of that shift came on Wednesday, when Mr. Biden announced a slate of joint policy task forces with Senator Bernie Sanders focused on issues ranging from climate change to criminal justice reform. The task force members include stalwart Biden allies, but also a who's who of ''Medicare for all'' champions, advocates for eliminating college debt, and critics of the Obama administration's immigration policy -- the kind of activists who have long been skeptical of Mr. Biden's more incremental instincts.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, perhaps the nation's most prominent young progressive, is co-chair of the climate change task force along with former Secretary of State John Kerry, a significant development as Mr. Biden seeks to improve his standing with younger and more liberal voters.

While the task forces have yet to convene, and it is far from clear whether they will produce policy results or simply the appearance of political harmony, Mr. Biden is plainly trying to unite the most progressive wing of the party with the Democratic establishment. That's a goal critical to delivering a big Democratic vote against President Trump, and his united Republican Party, in November.

''I think I can speak for a lot of young people in that I was not motivated or inspired by Biden's refrain of a return to normalcy,'' said Varshini Prakash, the executive director of the progressive climate activism group Sunrise Movement, who will join Ms. Ocasio-Cortez on the climate policy working group. ''If you want to energize our generation, give us a vision of what we're fighting for -- and not just what we're fighting against.''

In recent weeks, Mr. Biden has detailed an agenda that increasingly features progressive policies and language. Where he once pitched a message anchored in electability, he has now embraced a rhetorical stew that mixes the ''hope'' of former President Barack Obama with the populism of Mr. Sanders and Senator Elizabeth Warren.

It's a reflection of political sensitivity to the national mood, which risks turning to overwhelming anger as economic pain builds. But it is also an implicit acknowledgment that Mr. Biden cannot win by merely promising to remove Mr. Trump.

''Yes, I've endorsed Vice President Biden and yes, we're working to help organize progressives,'' said Representative Barbara Lee of California, a former chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. ''But we have to make sure that an agenda that speaks to the aspirations of all Americans is an agenda that he embraces.''

In recent weeks, Mr. Biden's words and his policies have drifted left.

He announced a new plan last week focusing on systemic racism, and indicated in a Snapchat interview that he supported a federal rent bailout. In discussing big businesses and stimulus money, he recently snarled in a Politico interview, ''This is the second time we've bailed their asses out.''

And this month, he was co-author of an op-ed article with Ms. Warren in McClatchy newspapers, acknowledging that ''for many Americans, our economy wasn't working even before the devastation of the Covid-19 crisis.''

''The blinders have been taken off,'' Mr. Biden said at a recent fund-raiser. ''Because of this Covid crisis, I think people are realizing: 'My Lord. Look at what is possible.'''

Such a messaging shift presents both opportunities and challenges for Mr. Biden, who spent much of the primary keenly focused on how a presidential candidate's promises would play in moderate states and in down-ballot races in the general election.

His recent words have been met with skepticism from progressive critics, who argue that his long legislative record in Washington suggests that the current changes are cosmetic. At the same time, at another fund-raiser, a donor told Mr. Biden's wife that the candidate was already moving too far to the left -- an illustration of the competing forces Mr. Biden must navigate.

Mr. Biden's advisers have indicated to donors and other supporters this spring that the campaign is focused on uniting the Democratic Party before turning to broader general election outreach.

Jared Bernstein, who during Mr. Biden's vice-presidential tenure served as his chief economic adviser and continues to informally advise him, said it was a ''fair conclusion'' that Mr. Biden's calls for change had grown more pointed in recent weeks. Mr. Bernstein said that the economic ruin and the struggles of the Trump administration ''loom very large for him,'' given Mr. Biden's role in leading the Obama administration's response to the recession in 2009.

''Like many of us, he's trying to suss out whether we're at a kind of turning point,'' Mr. Bernstein said, ''where on the other side of this virus a lot of people are going to look around and say, 'We need a far more competent government sector that can insulate us from shocks that come fast and furiously in a global economy.'''

More urgently, the mark of a successful campaign will be if ***working-class*** Americans believe that ''Joe Biden's on my side and Donald Trump betrays workers,'' said Senator Sherrod Brown, a pro-labor Democrat of Ohio, who speaks regularly with Mr. Biden's staff.

In any earlier presidential cycle, Mr. Biden's policy proposals could have been considered far-reaching -- promoting a public option for health care, for example, and embracing the overarching themes of the Green New Deal to combat climate change.

But throughout the primary, he opposed many of progressives' litmus-test issues. He also predicted that the Republican Party will have an ''epiphany'' once Mr. Trump is out of office, a view of political compromise that some Democrats believe is out of step with Trump-era tribalism.

Despite that skepticism, party leaders who have recently endorsed him, including Mr. Obama, Mr. Sanders and Ms. Warren, have each pitched Mr. Biden's potential administration as one capable of ushering in an era of progressive change.

Mr. Obama, in his endorsement video, even hinted at the criticism lodged by Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and others, saying: ''There's too much unfinished business for us to just look backwards. We have to look to the future.''

At a recent virtual fund-raiser, Mr. Biden described a need to move in a bolder direction -- while also avoiding Mr. Sanders's brand of democratic socialism.

''Look at the institutional changes we can make -- without us becoming a socialist country, or any of that malarkey,'' Mr. Biden said.

The remark ruffled some on the left who thought Mr. Biden was being dismissive, while some conservatives accused him of using a crisis to press his agenda. But amid skyrocketing unemployment and significant disapproval of Mr. Trump's handling of the crisis, it captured how Mr. Biden is one of many politicians adjusting their ideological framing to the scale of the current crisis.

Former Representative Steve Israel of New York, a Biden ally, said the former vice president must navigate a fine line: engage progressives without alienating moderates, like those who helped him secure the nomination.

''You cannot afford to allow a swath of the electorate to sit home stewing on Election Day,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/us/politics/joe-biden-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/us/politics/joe-biden-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Early in the Democratic primary process, Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s references to the Obama legacy and his work as vice president were not enough to win over more left-leaning members of his party. Since then he has extended a hand to progressives like Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, above, and Barbara Lee of California, above left. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MARK MAKELA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator Bernie Sanders with the Rev. Jesse Jackson in March. Mr. Sanders has agreed to help Mr. Biden assess policy options. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Voices of a Tragedy in 'Coal Country'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8K-R1K1-DXY4-X1N7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 23, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1176 words

**Byline:** By Julia Jacobs

**Body**

Six years after the explosion that killed 29 coal miners in West Virginia, family members and co-workers of the dead weren't answering phone calls from the New York playwright.

That writer, Jessica Blank, wanted to know if they would be interested in sharing their stories for the play she was creating with her husband and frequent collaborator, Erik Jensen. The couple are best known for ''The Exonerated,'' based on interviews with former death-row prisoners who were wrongfully convicted.

For their latest documentary project, the Public Theater commissioned them to write about the mining tragedy that sent reporters flooding into the tiny rural community of Montcoal, W.Va., on April 5, 2010. A decade later, the play would tell the stories of the miners and their loved ones after the rest of the country stopped listening.

But no one was calling back.

''Then I realized,'' said Blank, who is also the play's director. ''This is a place where you have to show your face.''

In April 2016, she took a trip down to Charleston, W.Va., where the mining company's former chief executive, Donald L. Blankenship, was being sentenced to prison after he was convicted of conspiring to violate federal safety standards at the nonunion Upper Big Branch mine. There, she introduced herself to the family members of the dead miners. Later on, they introduced her to others.

The resulting play, ''Coal Country,'' which is now in previews and opens on March 3, is an artfully edited patchwork of memories from the days before and after the explosion ripped through the mine and tore families apart. Among the voices are a miner who lost three family members in the blast; a union loyalist troubled to observe workers intimidated into silence by their new bosses; and a wife who had vainly begged her husband to put his safety first.

Blank and Jensen want Manhattan theatergoers to sit and listen to these stories of people who live deep in Trump country, where coal mining is inextricably linked with daily life and the national press tends to only visit when there's a disaster.

It's a well-known refrain that theater is a way to facilitate empathy, and these playwrights noticed a specific lack of it between their subjects and their audience.

''Theater has tremendous untapped power in a country where we're so divided,'' Blank said, ''where, I believe, most of our problems can be traced back to a lack of empathy.''

Interspersed in the monologue-driven show is a score of haunting folk music, by the singer-songwriter Steve Earle, that combines work songs, love songs and odes to the dead.

Starting out on the project, Earle, who is from Texas, was more familiar with West Virginia than Blank, who describes herself as growing up among the ''East Coast intelligentsia,'' or Jensen, a product of ***working class*** Minnesota. Earle often stops in West Virginia while on tour with his band, but even he felt disconnected from that part of the country.

''I was getting concerned that people like me that think they're 'down with the working guy' have completely lost touch with the people they're supposedly championing,'' he said.

Earle plans to release an album in May called ''Ghosts of West Virginia,'' comprised mostly of songs he wrote for ''Coal Country.'' His challenge: ''How do I make a record that speaks to people who didn't vote the same way that I did?''

In May 2016, days before West Virginia voted overwhelmingly for Donald J. Trump in the Republican primary, the two playwrights and the folk musician were staying at a Holiday Inn in Beckley, W.Va., about an hour's drive from the homes where they would interview surviving miners and the family members of the deceased.

Each interview took about four hours, and they could be overwhelmingly emotional. In one conversation, a miner described the dark, claustrophobic trip far underground, where the best coal was found. In others, the men and women recalled exactly where they were when they first got news of something bad happening down in the mine.

Stories like these became the building blocks for the script (some liberties were taken with the exact language). The play is suffused with testimony about union rights and corporate greed, but it often gets down to small everyday moments like a husband and wife in bed sharing their most pressing worries.

Making art about recent real-life tragedies can be sensitive, and often questions are asked about who should be given the power to tell those stories.

Through their interviews with the former death row inmates and then Iraqi refugees, which they made into another documentary play, ''Aftermath,'' Blank and Jensen have learned how to earn the trust of people who have gone through harrowing tragedy. They have a rule against pursuing interviews with people who are wary of telling their stories. And they know that it helps to share bits of their own trauma to even the emotional playing field.

''You have to show up,'' Jensen said of the process, ''and you have to, in your heart, know that this is not about you.''

On one wall of the play's East Village rehearsal space is a large timeline of the day of the tragedy, the worst U.S. mining disaster in 40 years. Below it is a timeline of the aftermath, with important events written with a marker or pen.

Blankenship was indicted in 2014 after several investigations determined that the owner of the mine, Massey Energy Company, routinely ignored safety violations. In 2016, he was sentenced to one year in prison for the conspiracy conviction. (The former energy executive has continued to challenge his conviction amid attempts to launch a political career.)

Ezra Knight, the actor playing a mine employee named Roosevelt Lynch Jr., who lost his father in the explosion, said workshopping the play doubled as a master class in understanding Appalachia. The actors learned terms like ''longwall'' (where the high-quality coal is found) and studied how coal is mined from it (sheared off, the script says, like a cheese slicer ''cutting through hot butter'').

They all found themselves imagining what it was like to spend several hours a day in tight quarters underground in temperatures that shifted between blistering heat and freezing cold.

''I get uptight just going through the Holland Tunnel,'' Jensen said. ''I wouldn't make it.''

The four men and three women depicted in the play will be invited to see the show, but the playwrights made sure they knew that their presence wasn't expected. After all, Blank said, they are the people who know the story best; the people that she and her husband most want the play to reach are those who know little about it.

Members of the cast are split on whether they want to be told that the people they are playing show up in the audience, Knight said. ''I want to know,'' he added. ''I want to meet him before the show and talk to him afterward.''

The mining families who can't make it to New York for the play may have another chance. The playwrights hope that, one day, they can bring ''Coal Country'' to West Virginia.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/theater/coal-country-public-theater.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/theater/coal-country-public-theater.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Jessica Blank, left, and her husband, Erik Jensen, top left, created ''Coal Country'' with the singer-songwriter Steve Earle, top right. Ezra Knight, far left, and Thomas Kopache, of the cast. Above, shifting benches at a rehearsal. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEVIN YALKIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

A sign at a home near the Upper Big Branch coal mine in Montcoal, W.Va., after the explosion that killed 29 miners in 2010. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAUL LOEB/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Inside the New York City Bodegas Going Viral on TikTok***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8B-VWF1-JBG3-639R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 22, 2020 Saturday 07:36 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1203 words

**Byline:** Aaron Randle

**Highlight:** Captured on video, the unique culture of the colorful corner stores is winning fans around the world.

**Body**

Inside the New York City Bodegas Going Viral on TikTok

The short video clip is filmed from behind a store counter.

“If you get this question right,” the cameraman, a store clerk, can be heard telling a customer, “you have five seconds to pick up whatever you want.”

“All right,” says the customer, a man with a gray beard.

“Ten times 10 minus 50,” the clerk says.

“Fifty!” the man answers instantly.

“Five! Four!” the clerk shouts, counting down.

The man turns around quickly toward the small store’s shelves and bends down to reach for his prize.

“Not my cat!” the clerk yells.

The video has been viewed more than five million times on the video-sharing platform TikTok, elevating the profile of the clerk, Ahmed Alwan, and bodega culture itself.

It’s no longer necessary to live in New York to get a feel for the city’s [*bodegas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html), thanks to Mr. Alwan and others who use TikTok to post funny video clips that highlight the stores’ distinctive culture. They’re going viral in the process.

Mr. Alwan plays the [*math game*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html) with regular customers at Lucky Candy Deli in the Bronx. A 20-year-old borough native of Yemeni heritage, he has close to 500,000 TikTok followers and he has been featured in reports on [*CNN*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html), [*Al Jazeera*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html) and several local television stations.

New Yorkers have long regarded bodegas — the 24-hour neighborhood institutions where shoppers can pick up everything from sandwiches and snacks to iPhone chargers and cold medicine — with something like reverence.

In a nod to the stores’ significance to life in the city, the comedians Desus Nice and the Kid Mero, who are now known [*for their late-night show on Showtime*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html), started a podcast called “[*Bodega Boys*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html)” in 2015.

Part pantries, part community centers, bodegas are typically found in New York’s ***working-class*** neighborhoods. They are hyperlocal businesses by nature. But because of social media, bodega culture is now winning fans around the world.

“We’re taking New York and putting it in the palms of people’s hands,” said John Calzado, 27, whose TikTok handle is [*@Mr\_Nuevayol*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html).

Mr. Calzado, who was born and raised in Corona, Queens, has amassed over 370,000 followers on TikTok with videos that celebrate, and [*poke fun*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html) at, New York’s Dominican culture. The videos have earned more than three million likes.

“You can’t have that culture without the bodega,” he said.

Stuffed with products in colorful packages and home to rotating casts of even more colorful characters, bodegas are highly visual settings. That makes them a great match for TikTok, where more than two million videos can be found under the “bodega” hashtag.

For those in their teens and 20s, TikTok and other video-sharing platforms — rather than traditional TV, radio or more text-based apps like Facebook or Twitter — are the main tools for exploring unfamiliar cultures.

“What’s not obvious to many is how essential the social-video format has been to how Generation Z learns” about “new businesses, about culture, about politics,” said Nikhil Srinivasan, a founder of the market-research firm Zebra IQ, which focuses on the demographic.

That includes New York’s unique corner stores.

“I forget that there are people who don’t know what bodegas are,” said Ezzaddin Alsaedi, who immigrated from Yemen as a child and grew up in the Bronx. He goes by [*@izzy.tube*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html) on TikTok.

“Everyone needs a bodega in their life” said Mr. Alsaedi, 20, adding that he did not understand how anyone could go more than a day without visiting one.

He might be biased, he conceded: He has worked at his family’s Bronx bodega, Happy Deli Grocery, since he was 15.

Being there practically every day, Mr. Alsaedi said, he had gathered some hilarious tales. How could he not share them once TikTok came along, he said.

“The daily life of what happens in a bodega, it’s [*comedy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html),” he said. “I think people like that [*my videos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html) add a little comedy to their day.”

The clips that Mr. Calzado, Mr. Alsaedi and Mr. Alwan share are humorous. But Mr. Alwan’s math game, in which he gives snacks away as prizes, is not just for laughs.

The videos, he said, illuminated the generous, family spirit that bodega workers share with the people they serve.

Most customers who appear in Mr. Alwan’s videos are[*longtime regulars*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html)who have been known to take advantage of an unwritten honor code common to bodegas: Loyal shoppers can grab a few necessities on credit, with the understanding that they will settle up later.

Mr. Alwan said that while he almost always obliged such requests, he realized in January that the math problems could add a little fun to the transactions.

“For me it wasn’t about going viral,” he said. “When I first started I didn’t want to put myself on there. I just wanted the people to see the reactions from my customers and how it made them feel.”

Mr. Alwan has posted more than two dozen videos featuring math games. He is off screen in almost all of them.

“It’s not about helping me,” he said. “It’s about helping my customers.”

Mr. Alwan said he had inherited his altruistic spirit from his father, who has owned the bodega, a short walk from Crotona Park, for more than a decade. “When I was a little kid, anyone that would ask my dad for credit, he’d always help them.”

In the past month, Mr. Alwan said, math-game winners had been rewarded with more than $400 worth of goods. He covers the cost from the $350 paycheck he gets every two weeks.

He started a [*GoFundMe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/nyregion/nyc-crime-bodegas.html) campaign to help pay for the groceries won during the game, and he has already raised around $9,000. He said that he would use the money to replace the items he gives away and to make donations to needy customers.

The bodega workers who make TikTok videos all seem to feel that the relationship between customers and those who work in the stores is unique.

“Going to your neighborhood bodega, it’s kind of wholesome,” Mr. Calzado said. “You know the guy behind the counter, you know the guys walking in. You feel comfortable. There’s a sense of family. I think people can feel that. Or they want to.”

That feeling is part of what has sparked mass interest. Mr. Alwan, Mr. Calzado and Mr. Alsaedi all said they had received messages from around the United States, and beyond.

“I have one commenter, I think from London or something, he said he’s coming to New York and that I’ve got to get him a chopped cheese,” Mr. Alsaedi said with a laugh, referring to the classic bodega sandwich.

“Guys from England talking about coming to New York for a chopped cheese because of TikTok,” he said. “That’s crazy.”

PHOTOS: Ahmed Alwan captures daily life at his father’s bodega in the Bronx through videos that he posts on TikTok. Below, Gabriel Valdez passed Mr. Alwan’s math quiz, which gave him five seconds to raid the shelves.; Mr. Alwan, left in the mirror, and his brother Youssef at the Lucky Candy Deli, which naturally has its own bodega cat, Fluffy. Mr. Alwan said the videos were a way to connect with customers. “For me it wasn’t about going viral,” he said.; Ezzaddin Alsaedi, above, has worked at his family’s bodega, Happy Deli Grocery, in the Bronx since he was 15. John Calzado, right, at La Campiña Deli in the Bronx, said videos are a way of “taking New York and putting it in the palms of people’s hands.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2020

**End of Document**



[***All Things Unequal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8K-R1K1-DXY4-X1S3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 23, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 1; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1482 words

**Byline:** By Orlando Patterson

**Body**

THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PUZZLEA Living History From Reconstruction to TodayBy Melvin I. Urofsky

For two and a half centuries America enslaved its black population, whose labor was a critical source of the country's capitalist modernization and prosperity. Upon the abolition of legal, interpersonal slavery, the exploitation and degradation of blacks continued in the neoslavery system of Jim Crow, a domestic terrorist regime fully sanctioned by the state and courts of the nation, and including Nazi-like instruments of ritualized human slaughter. Black harms and losses accrued to all whites, both to those directly exploiting them, and indirectly to all enjoying the enhanced prosperity their social exclusion and depressed earnings made possible. When white affirmative action was first developed on a large scale in the New Deal welfare and social programs, and later in the huge state subsidization of suburban housing -- a major source of present white wealth -- blacks, as the Columbia political scientist Ira Katznelson has shown, were systematically excluded, to the benefit of the millions of whites whose entitlements would have been less, or whose housing slots would have been given to blacks in any fairly administered system. In this unrelenting history of deprivation, not even the comforting cultural productions of black artists were spared: From Thomas ''Daddy'' Rice in the early 19th century right down to Elvis Presley, everything of value and beauty that blacks created was promptly appropriated, repackaged and sold to white audiences for the exclusive economic benefit and prestige of white performers, who often added to the injury of cultural confiscation the insult of blackface mockery.

It is this inherited pattern of racial injustice, and its persisting inequities, that the American state and corporate system began to tackle, in a sustained manner, in the middle of the last century. The ambitious aim of Melvin I. Urofsky's ''The Affirmative Action Puzzle: A Living History From Reconstruction to Today'' is a comprehensive account of the nonwhite version of affirmative action. This is a complex and challenging historical task, given that ''no other issue divides Americans more.'' But Urofsky, by and large, has executed it well. Following the United States Commission on Civil Rights, he defines affirmative action as a program that provides remedy for the historical and continuing discrimination suffered by certain groups; that seeks to bring about equal opportunity; and that specifies which groups are to be protected. Urofsky explores nearly all aspects of the program -- its legal, educational, economic, electoral and gender dimensions, from its untitled beginnings during Reconstruction to the present. The one major missing part of the puzzle in his otherwise thorough account is the military, which is unfortunate since, as the military sociologist Charles Moskos pointed out, ''nowhere else in American society has racial integration gone as far or has black achievement been so pronounced.'' This deserved a long chapter.

Urofsky claims not to make the case for or against affirmative action but admits to being ''conflicted'' on the matter. He distinguishes between what he calls soft and hard affirmative action, the first aimed at removing barriers only, the second attempting positive action that results in the observable betterment of the excluded group. He repeatedly says that he favors soft affirmative action. But, to his credit, the ''facts on the ground'' that he assiduously marshals indicate that merely providing equal opportunity does not work, for reasons eloquently spelled out by President Lyndon Johnson in his celebrated 1965 commencement address at Howard University: ''It is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates.''

Urofsky reveals that many presidents, administrators and activists, while proclaiming soft affirmative action, have struggled to make it work. Some, like John F. Kennedy, and especially Johnson, as well as Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, have publicly voiced their support for colorblind, anti-quota, equal opportunity only, and individualistic rather than group-based approaches, while quietly allowing their administrators to craft pragmatic programs that did just the opposite, to the benefit of the disadvantaged. Some, like Ronald Reagan and the elder George Bush, have openly attempted to abolish the program but failed. Richard Nixon (who else?) made it the centerpiece of arguably the most Machiavellian strategy in modern American political history: His Philadelphia Plan, with its blatant minority business set-asides and insistence on craft unions' acceptance of blacks, was the most extreme hard version of the program ever undertaken, resulting in major improvements for blacks at all levels of the economy, to the applause of nearly every black leader. But it was also, deliberately, a key element in his notorious Southern strategy, successfully shattering the traditional bond between white ***working-class*** union members and the Democratic Party, and paving the way for the Reagan Democrats and the modern Republican ascendancy.

The nation's jurists have been just as divided in their approaches, and Urofsky deploys his legal expertise to great effect in analyzing the numerous cases that have been argued over the policy. The irony of this struggle is that the courts have reached a compromise, saving the program by completely redefining its rationale from the original aim of remedying centuries of black disadvantage to that of promoting diversity, which, one might argue, could be achieved in the complete absence of blacks. Urofsky's analysis of the DeFunis, Bakke and Weber cases of the 1970s is a gem. It not only clarifies for the layman the cases' legal niceties but also concludes, instructively, that the less celebrated Weber case of 1979, in which it was decided that Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act ''did not foreclose private race-conscious affirmative action plans,'' may have been the most consequential. It gave the private sector far more flexibility than government and academia in designing affirmative action programs.

It is in academia that affirmative action battles have been most ferociously fought, and Urofsky devotes two chapters to this. The first focuses on the turmoil of the '70s, especially the City University of New York's botched open enrollment program and the problem of minority faculty recruitment; the second deals with the current situation, and the shift from compensation to diversity as affirmative action's main justification. The curious feature of this entire debate is that it is largely a praetorian squabble about who has the right to attend the nation's most elite colleges and to join the nation's elite. Urofsky agrees with Derek Bok and William Bowen (''The Shape of the River,'' 1998) that it is a question of ''principle versus principle, not principle versus expediency.'' In fact, the issue is of relatively small consequence to the 75 percent of the nation's colleges, many of them first-rate, that teach the vast majority of American students and accept nearly all applicants.

''The Affirmative Action Puzzle'' deserves a better closing chapter. Urofsky claims that no coherent picture emerges from his painstaking study. To the question of whether disadvantaged minorities have benefited from the program, he answers, ''Yes ... and No.'' It is questionable, however, whether affirmative action could have solved all or even most of the problems of blacks, women and other disadvantaged groups. That surely must await more fundamental structural and political changes that might address America's chronic postindustrial inequality and labor precariousness. The remarkable thing is that affirmative action is now an integral part of the moral, cultural, military, political and economic fabric of the nation. Its businesses, educational system and political directorate have largely embraced it and the court undoes it at the cost of its own legitimacy. Even Donald Trump claims that ''I'm fine with affirmative action. We've lived with it for a long time.'' It has profoundly transformed the lives and opportunities of a substantial number of black people and the public honor of all of them.

The great merit of this meticulously researched, honestly crafted work is that it allows readers to draw their own conclusions about the value of this uniquely American experiment, quite independent of the author's own conflicted views about it.Orlando Patterson's ''Slavery and Social Death'' was recently reissued. His latest book is ''The Confounding Island: Jamaica and the Postcolonial Predicament.''THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PUZZLEA Living History From Reconstruction to TodayBy Melvin I. UrofskyIllustrated. 570 pp. Pantheon Books. $35.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/books/review/the-affirmative-action-puzzle-melvin-i-urofsky.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/books/review/the-affirmative-action-puzzle-melvin-i-urofsky.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Demonstrators march in Washington in support of affirmative action, 1977. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS) (B20)

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Inside the Bodega: Snacks, Smokes And Viral Fame***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8B-W251-DXY4-X00X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 22, 2020 Saturday

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

**Length:** 1099 words

**Byline:** By Aaron Randle

**Body**

Inside the New York City Bodegas Going Viral on TikTok

The short video clip is filmed from behind a store counter.

''If you get this question right,'' the cameraman, a store clerk, can be heard telling a customer, ''you have five seconds to pick up whatever you want.''

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It's no longer necessary to live in New York to get a feel for the city's bodegas, thanks to Mr. Alwan and others who use TikTok to post funny video clips that highlight the stores' distinctive culture. They're going viral in the process.

Mr. Alwan plays the math game with regular customers at Lucky Candy Deli in the Bronx. A 20-year-old borough native of Yemeni heritage, he has close to 500,000 TikTok followers and he has been featured in reports on CNN, Al Jazeera and several local television stations.

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He might be biased, he conceded: He has worked at his family's Bronx bodega, Happy Deli Grocery, since he was 15.

Being there practically every day, Mr. Alsaedi said, he had gathered some hilarious tales. How could he not share them once TikTok came along, he said.

''The daily life of what happens in a bodega, it's comedy,'' he said. ''I think people like that my videos add a little comedy to their day.''

The clips that Mr. Calzado, Mr. Alsaedi and Mr. Alwan share are humorous. But Mr. Alwan's math game, in which he gives snacks away as prizes, is not just for laughs.

The videos, he said, illuminated the generous, family spirit that bodega workers share with the people they serve.

Most customers who appear in Mr. Alwan's videos are longtime regulars who have been known to take advantage of an unwritten honor code common to bodegas: Loyal shoppers can grab a few necessities on credit, with the understanding that they will settle up later.

Mr. Alwan said that while he almost always obliged such requests, he realized in January that the math problems could add a little fun to the transactions.

''For me it wasn't about going viral,'' he said. ''When I first started I didn't want to put myself on there. I just wanted the people to see the reactions from my customers and how it made them feel.''

Mr. Alwan has posted more than two dozen videos featuring math games. He is off screen in almost all of them.

''It's not about helping me,'' he said. ''It's about helping my customers.''

Mr. Alwan said he had inherited his altruistic spirit from his father, who has owned the bodega, a short walk from Crotona Park, for more than a decade. ''When I was a little kid, anyone that would ask my dad for credit, he'd always help them.''

In the past month, Mr. Alwan said, math-game winners had been rewarded with more than $400 worth of goods. He covers the cost from the $350 paycheck he gets every two weeks.

He started a GoFundMe campaign to help pay for the groceries won during the game, and he has already raised around $9,000. He said that he would use the money to replace the items he gives away and to make donations to needy customers.

The bodega workers who make TikTok videos all seem to feel that the relationship between customers and those who work in the stores is unique.

''Going to your neighborhood bodega, it's kind of wholesome,'' Mr. Calzado said. ''You know the guy behind the counter, you know the guys walking in. You feel comfortable. There's a sense of family. I think people can feel that. Or they want to.''

That feeling is part of what has sparked mass interest. Mr. Alwan, Mr. Calzado and Mr. Alsaedi all said they had received messages from around the United States, and beyond.

''I have one commenter, I think from London or something, he said he's coming to New York and that I've got to get him a chopped cheese,'' Mr. Alsaedi said with a laugh, referring to the classic bodega sandwich.

''Guys from England talking about coming to New York for a chopped cheese because of TikTok,'' he said. ''That's crazy.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/22/nyregion/inside-the-new-york-city-bodegas-going-viral-on-tiktok.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/22/nyregion/inside-the-new-york-city-bodegas-going-viral-on-tiktok.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ahmed Alwan captures daily life at his father's bodega in the Bronx through videos that he posts on TikTok. Below, Gabriel Valdez passed Mr. Alwan's math quiz, which gave him five seconds to raid the shelves.

Mr. Alwan, left in the mirror, and his brother Youssef at the Lucky Candy Deli, which naturally has its own bodega cat, Fluffy. Mr. Alwan said the videos were a way to connect with customers. ''For me it wasn't about going viral,'' he said.

Ezzaddin Alsaedi, above, has worked at his family's bodega, Happy Deli Grocery, in the Bronx since he was 15. John Calzado, right, at La Campiña Deli in the Bronx, said videos are a way of ''taking New York and putting it in the palms of people's hands.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2020

**End of Document**



[***State Polls Adjusted After 2016, but May Still Tilt to the Left***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YWN-07W1-DXY4-X43S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 13, 2020 Wednesday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; National Desk

**Length:** 1386 words

**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

The risk of a systematic error is lower this time, but there are still issues that seem to tilt these surveys to the left.

To most, Joe Biden's clear lead in recent state polls suggests that he has the early edge in the race for the presidency. To others, it's not so meaningful. After all, Hillary Clinton also held a clear lead in the state polls, and yet Donald J. Trump won the election.

Four years later, it's fair to wonder whether there is a serious risk of another systematic polling error. The answer is not cut and dried.

There is always a chance of a systematic polling error, even when the reasons aren't evident in advance. This time, there are obvious causes for concern. Many state polls suffer from the same methodological issues that were partly or even largely responsible for the miss four years ago, despite many opportunities to improve. Yet at the same time, many of the major causes of error in 2016 seem somewhat less acute.

What's better than in 2016: undecided voters

One major source of the 2016 polling error is much less of a factor than it was four years ago: voters who are undecided or say they will vote for a minor-party candidate. These voters appeared to break overwhelmingly toward Mr. Trump, especially in the relatively white, ***working-class*** battleground states.

This time, far fewer voters are telling pollsters they're undecided, and that means less room for a late shift among these voters to cause a polling error. At this point in 2016, about 20 percent of voters either supported a minor-party candidate or said they were undecided. Today, the number is about half that level.

What's a little better than in 2016: education weighting

Another source of polling error was the failure of many state pollsters to adjust their samples to adequately represent voters without a college degree. Voters with a college degree are far likelier to respond to telephone surveys than voters without one, and in 2016 the latter group was far likelier to support Mr. Trump. Over all, weighting by education shifted the typical national poll by around four percentage points toward Mr. Trump, helping explain why the national polls fared better than state polls.

Four years later, weighting by education remains just as important. The gap in the preference of white voters with or without a college degree is essentially unchanged, despite the appeal Mr. Biden was supposed to have with less educated white voters.

In The New York Times/Siena College surveys conducted in October, Mr. Biden's combined lead over Mr. Trump in the core six battleground states -- Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Arizona, Florida and North Carolina -- was two percentage points. That lead would have been six percentage points had it not been weighted by education or turnout (which correlates with education).

More pollsters are weighting by education today than four years ago. It could still be better, but over all, 46 percent of the more than 30 pollsters who have released a state survey since March 1 appeared to weight by self-reported education, up from around 20 percent of battleground state pollsters in 2016.

Some of the increase is because a handful of pollsters have decided to start weighting by education, a prominent example being the Monmouth University poll. But more of the change is because of the high volume of state online polls, which have always been likelier than state telephone surveys to weight by education.

What could be worse than in 2016: new online polls

There has been a surge in new online-only state polls. Over the last month, there have been 13 such surveys, representing nearly half of the pollsters who have conducted state polls over this period. In contrast, only 10 online-only pollsters conducted surveys over the final three weeks of the 2018 election, which was about 10 percent of all of the pollsters who conducted surveys in that period.

Online polling isn't necessarily bad. Many are sophisticated and comparable in quality to a typical live-interview telephone survey. But most of these new state polls take a simple approach: Contact the members of a large online panel, then weight those respondents by standard census demographics and maybe recalled vote choice in 2016 (more on that later). This is inexpensive and easy, but most pollsters have concluded that it's not great. The panels just aren't sufficiently representative, especially in small states, to expect a simple methodology to yield a high-quality result.

Until recently, few pollsters have tried to use this approach in state polling (Morning Consult is the most prolific example of a pollster that has done it nationally). But the early evidence suggests that these kind of state polls might lean to the left.

Perhaps the best early data is the AP/NORC/VoteCast polling ahead of the midterms, which combined a traditional telephone survey of 40,000 respondents with a large nonprobability online sample of 110,000 respondents. The online-only element of the survey was fairly comparable to most of the online surveys released in recent weeks, and it wouldn't have fared well without calibration using the live-interview surveys. It would have overestimated the Democratic result by an average of about five percentage points across 71 races.

Similarly, the new online polls tend to lean to the left of the state telephone polls so far this cycle. In polls conducted since March 15, Mr. Biden has run 6.6 percentage points ahead of Mrs. Clinton's margin in online state polls, compared with a gain of 3.7 points in live-interview telephone surveys. Notably, the latter figure comes very close to Mr. Biden's gain in national polls -- about four points -- over the same period.

Over the long run, these polls might make up a smaller share of the battleground polling than they have so far. But it seems inevitable that new online polls will represent a larger share of state polls this cycle, and so far the best indications are that they'll lean to the left.

What could be worse than in 2016: recalled vote weighting

More and more, pollsters with fairly mediocre sampling methods are relying on a new tool to bring their results closer to reality: recalled 2016 vote. Here, the pollster asks respondents whether they voted for Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Trump, then adjusts the sample so that the recalled vote choice matches the actual result of the 2016 election.

Weighting on recalled vote choice certainly has its advantages. You could probably hammer even the worst survey into the ballpark. You could probably get a plausible poll result for Wyoming using a sample of New Yorkers this way.

But although this is a surefire way to reduce error, it is very hard to execute without risking a modest systematic bias. And here again, the bias would tend to be toward the Democrats.

There's a large body of evidence suggesting that people are likelier to recall voting for the winner and less likely to recall voting for the loser. If so, polls weighting on recalled past vote would tend to be biased toward the party that lost the prior election.

It seems that this effect is, at the very least, substantially diminished compared with a decade ago. Even so, it might still be there. In the Times/Siena polls from October, for instance, 6 percent of 2016 voters refused to say whether they backed Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Trump. Those voters backed Mr. Biden by a two-to-one margin, suggesting that they were probably likelier to have supported Mrs. Clinton.

Another issue is that today's registered voters aren't exactly the same as those of four years ago: In the interim some people have either died, reached voting age, or moved elsewhere. So it is not appropriate to assume that people who voted in 2016, and are now registered to vote, backed Mr. Trump or Mrs. Clinton by the same margin as in the 2016 result.

It is hard to say whether this is generalizable, but over all 13 percent of the voters who took the Times/Siena polls in 2016 are no longer on their state voter file, and those voters backed Mrs. Clinton by a six-point margin, compared with a one-point lead for Mr. Trump among those who remain registered in the state. Here again, recalled vote weighting might bias a poll by only one percentage point in Mr. Biden's favor, but the risks start to add up.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/upshot/polls-2020-trump-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/upshot/polls-2020-trump-biden.html)

**Graphic**

Disinfecting voting booths in Madison, Wis., last month. Adjustments in polling could have big implications in battleground states. STEVE APPS/WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***China’s ‘OK Boomer’: Generations Clash Over the Nation’s Future; The New New World***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YWV-BHM1-DXY4-X14R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 14, 2020 Thursday 21:20 EST

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**Section:** TECHNOLOGY

**Length:** 1414 words

**Byline:** Li Yuan

**Highlight:** A commercial extolling Chinese youths has set off a debate over whether they are too nationalistic — and their prospects too limited — for the country’s good.

**Body**

A commercial extolling Chinese youths has set off a debate over whether they are too nationalistic — and their prospects too limited — for the country’s good.

China’s version of the [*“OK boomer”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/29/style/ok-boomer.html) clash began when a famous middle-age actor praised the younger generation as if the country’s teenagers and 20-somethings were heaven-sent gifts.

“All those people who complain that each generation is worse than the last should look at you the way I’m looking at you — full of admiration,” said He Bing, a film and television star with a baritone voice, in [*a commercial for a Chinese online video service*](https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1FV411d7u7?from=search&amp;seid=9683769204442570447).

China’s young people benefit from education, travel and all the world’s knowledge, said Mr. He, over images of young people scuba diving, skydiving, kayaking, racing sports cars, playing professional online games and touring Japan, France, Antarctica and other exotic destinations.

“Because of you,” he said, “the world likes China more.”

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/IRzplsoYm0M)]

The commercial, shown online and on state-run television, provoked an immediate nationwide backlash. Today’s youths are [*too brainwashed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/05/technology/china-propaganda-patriotism.html), [*too nationalistic*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/25/world/asia/china-freedoms-control.html) and too eager to [*snitch on professors and other public figures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/01/world/asia/china-student-informers.html) who don’t toe the Communist Party line, said prominent members of China’s “boomer” generation, who remember a time when the country seemed more open and accepting.

Many in the younger generation looked at the images on the commercial of affluent, happy young people and didn’t recognize themselves. China’s biggest boom years are over, many think. China’s older generation, having amassed all the money and power, is simply trying to co-opt them with flattery.

“There are still young people in China without cellphone or internet connection,” a viewer wrote on Bilibili, the video website that made the commercial, in a comment that received more than 16,000 likes. “Young Chinese should think hard about who we are, how we are faring and what we want. Don’t be fooled by outside voices.”

The clash playing out across the Chinese internet over the past week amounts to a debate about the future of the world’s other superpower — specifically, for the minds and the souls of China’s younger generation. These tensions have been simmering for a long time, but the coronavirus outbreak — and the [*Chinese government’s propaganda campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/28/world/asia/china-coronavirus-response-propaganda.html) to [*play down its initial missteps*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/business/china-coronavirus-propaganda.html) — have brought those tensions to the fore.

Every society has its generational differences, but in China they are stark.

China’s boomers, who were born in the 1960s and 1970s, are as lucky as the American baby boomers born after World War II. China [*was opening up*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/18/world/asia/china-rules.html) after nearly 30 years of political turmoil and economic mismanagement under Mao Zedong. Jobs were plentiful. Housing was cheap. And while the party kept an iron grip on political power, society began to open up to new ideas. Before they were blocked beginning about a decade ago, we could use Google and Wikipedia and read The New York Times’s website. The future seemed bright.

China is a very different country now, especially for Chinese people born after 1990, or China’s Generation Z. Its economy in recent months [*shrank for the first time since the Mao era*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/business/china-coronavirus-economy.html) as the country grappled with the coronavirus. One estimate put the unemployment rate at 20 percent. At the same time, housing in major cities [*is as out of reach*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/22/business/china-housing-property-tax.html) for members of Generation Z as it is for their contemporaries in New York and San Francisco.

China may be the second-largest economy in the world and have more billionaires than the United States, but the real disposable personal income per capita in 2019 was only $4,334, just one-tenth that of Americans’.

China has embarked on a more authoritarian road [*under the leadership of Xi Jinping*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/26/world/asia/china-xi-jinping-authoritarianism.html), with the government playing a bigger role in [*nearly every aspect of society*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/21/world/asia/china-communist-party-xi-jinping.html). China’s internet is [*largely cut off*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/02/business/china-internet-censor.html) from the rest of the globe. Other countries [*are taking a harder line*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/17/world/asia/coronavirus-china-xi-jinping.html) against Beijing.

Chinese state media is trying to distract the youth from these realities. The Bilibili video’s message is in line with Beijing’s to the young generation: You’re lucky to live in China today, and you should shout down critical voices. The People’s Daily, the Communist Party’s official newspaper, its tabloid the Global Times and many other official media outlets shared the video on social media, even though it’s a commercial for a private internet company.

The Bilibili commercial — timed for May 4, a government-endorsed day for commemorating patriotic youth — was a sensation. It was ranked the No. 1 video on Bilibili’s own platform, with more than 20 million views for the week. On Weibo, the Twitter-like social media platform, it was viewed 50 million times. Bilibili, which has 130 million users, saw its stock price rise by 11 percent in three days.

But some young people aren’t buying it. On Bilibili and other social media platforms, many wrote that the video was for the haves, not the have-nots. It also confused the freedom to consume, they said, with the freedom to make choices based on free will.

“The speech reminded me of the flattering tricks the adults played when I was little,” Cheng Xinyu, a high school senior in the southwestern city of Chengdu, said in an interview. “Like, ‘You’re so good that you certainly won’t eat that candy.’”

The video’s description of her generation’s free choices? “I just laughed when that part came up,” Ms. Cheng said.

Further underscoring the wealth gap, some posted on Bilibili’s comments section Article 1 of the Chinese Constitution: “The People’s Republic of China is a socialist state under the people’s democratic dictatorship led by the ***working class*** and based on the alliance of workers and peasants.”

Many older people recoiled at the lionization of a generation in which many members, accustomed to [*a life of propaganda*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/06/technology/china-generation-blocked-internet.html), blindly defend the government.

Many young people are among those who have used “traitor” to describe [*Fang Fang*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/14/world/asia/coronavirus-china-fang-fang-author.html), the Wuhan-based writer who kept an online diary about the city under lockdown and demanded accountability. These young warriors have reported at least two professors who support Fang Fang to their universities.

“We who were born after 1995 pledge that we will not follow the likes of Fang Fang,” said the most-liked comment on the Global Times Weibo post of the Bilibili video. “We will bring down those sinners.”

They argue on China’s behalf on the world stage as well, sometimes using software to bypass the censorship infrastructure for access to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Their belligerence prompted some boomers to compare them to Mao’s Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, with some using the mocking nickname “little pinks.”

Many boomers felt compelled to speak out.

“I’m that person who says every day that this generation is worse than mine,” Su Qing, a journalist, wrote in a line-by-line rebuttal of Mr. He’s speech. “I don’t envy you.”

Mr. Su mocked Mr. He’s contention that young Chinese people have access to all the knowledge that the world has to offer and the freedom to make choices.

“Congratulations! You have the rights to criticize the United States and the traitors. Everything else is 404,” he wrote, referring to the error message for censored web pages and sites.

“Because of your overseas online expeditions, the world knows that there are radical young people in China,” he wrote. “The world had only seen such young people in Germany in the past.”

Li Houchen, a former internet executive and now a podcast host, urged people to boycott Bilibili, saying the video is part of the “propaganda business.”

In an emotional podcast, he accused the members of the young generation of indulging in consumerism and becoming the tool and mouthpiece of the authorities, saying they had become the “henchmen” of the system by reporting people they disagree with to the authorities. “Of course, your generation is worse than mine.”

The authorities, Mr. Li said, once condemned the youths’ fixation on video games and animation. “Now they need the young people to attack the likes of Fang Fang,” he said. “They need the young people to control the public opinions, so they started flattering the young generation.”

If anything, it’s the age of uncertainty and enormous challenges, Mr. Li argued.

“Are we living in a time that rewards hard work, kindness and honesty? Or are we living in a time of lies and fear?” he added. “Are we living in a boom time, or are we living in a time of enormous challenges?”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jialun Deng FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Coronavirus Lockdowns Torment an Army of Poor Migrant Workers in China***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8M-V9C1-DXY4-X27K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 23, 2020 Sunday 13:54 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1330 words

**Byline:** Javier C. Hernández

**Highlight:** Rural itinerant workers are being blocked from cities, kicked out of apartments and rejected by companies as the authorities impose strict controls to stem the spread of the virus.

**Body**

Rural itinerant workers are being blocked from cities, kicked out of apartments and rejected by companies as the authorities impose strict controls to stem the spread of the virus.

Clutching a gray plastic suitcase filled with most of his belongings — a blanket, a toothbrush, a pair of white sneakers and a comb — Wang Sheng goes from factory to factory in southern China begging for a job. The answer is always no.

Mr. Wang, 49, used to be able to find work in Shenzhen, a sprawling industrial megacity. But factories are turning him away because he is from Hubei Province, the center of China’s coronavirus epidemic, even though he hasn’t lived there in years.

“There’s nothing I can do,” said Mr. Wang, who has only a few dollars left in savings, lives off plain noodles and rents a small room for about $60 a month. “I’m just by myself, isolated and helpless.”

China’s roughly 300 million rural migrants have long lived on the margins of society, taking on grueling work for meager wages and limited access to public health care and education. But now they are among the hardest hit as China’s leader, Xi Jinping, calls for a “[*people’s war*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html)” to contain the virus and the authorities   [*impose controls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html) across broad swaths of the country.

As outsiders, rural migrants, no matter where they are from, are an easy target. Many factories are [*afraid to restart operations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html) in case their workers are carrying the virus, raising   [*concerns*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html) that the government’s controls could smother the economy. Local officials have barred many migrants from crossing city lines. Landlords have kicked them out of their apartments. Some are crammed into hotels or sleeping under bridges or on sidewalks.

“We have struggled so much already,” Liu Wen, 42, a factory worker in Zhengzhou, a city in central China, who was evicted from her apartment because she had returned from her husband’s hometown in the southern province of Guangdong and her landlord worried she might be carrying the virus. She now is living with her husband and two children in a hotel. “Now we’ve lost hope.”

On Sunday, Mr. Xi acknowledged that the situation in China remained “grim and complex,” but urged party officials to not only continue their efforts to contain the virus but also to focus on restarting production.

“We must turn pressure into motivation, be good at turning crisis into opportunity, orderly restore production and living order,” he said.

But the strict lockdowns imposed across the country make it difficult for rural workers to return to cities; only about a third have done so, according to official statistics. Many workers are stuck in the countryside after traveling there last month to celebrate the Lunar New Year holiday.

Mr. Xi, already under scrutiny for the Chinese government’s [*slow and erratic response*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html) to the coronavirus outbreak, now faces pressure to quell anger among low-income families and dispel broader fears of an economic downturn. The party has long staked its legitimacy on the idea that it can deliver prosperity and protect the ***working class***.

“The Chinese Communist Party leadership does not like to be criticized for neglecting or abandoning workers,” said Jane Duckett, the director of the Scottish Center for China Research at the University of Glasgow. “Their ideological underpinnings — Marxism-Leninism, socialism — lie in being a party of the ‘workers and peasants.’”

Ms. Duckett said the party was probably wary of discontent among workers. Mr. Xi has said that the government should watch employment closely and that companies should avoid large-scale layoffs.

The virus, which has killed at least 2,400 people and sickened nearly 77,000 in China alone, has brought parts of the Chinese economy, the world’s second largest, to a near standstill. While some factories have started up again in recent days, many are still closed or operating well below capacity, with parts in short supply and workers stranded hundreds of miles away.

Businesses across a variety of sectors — manufacturing, construction and transportation — have ordered their employees to stay home, usually without pay. That has created strains for many migrants, who earn barely enough to keep up with the rising cost of living in Chinese cities and often hold little in savings.

While wages are low, migrants can still earn more in the cities than they would in the countryside, where jobs are scarce. They are willing to go to cities for a shot at a better life, even if they must live in crowded workers’ dormitories or run-down apartments.

Yang Chengjun, 58, who lives in northeast China and sometimes works as a carpenter, says he and his son are living off the land now, relying on rice and vegetables they grow and struggling “just to stay alive.” Mr. Yang worries the family will run out of money within a month.

“The pressure on migrant workers was always great,” Mr. Yang said. “The epidemic adds insult to injury.”

Their struggles have been made worse by local officials who have helped fuel a perception that rural migrants pose a threat to public health and should be treated as potential carriers of the virus.

In some cities, migrants have been forced into quarantine in facilities run by the government, according to reports on social media. In others, like Wuxi in the east, workers from afar have been barred from entering and warned that they would be “seriously dealt with” if they resisted.

China’s strict population controls have worsened the plight of many migrant families.

The Mao-era household registration system, known as [*hukou*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html), makes it difficult for people from the countryside to change their legal residence to cities. As a result, they are considered   [*outsiders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html) — even if they have lived in cities for decades — and have limited access to health care,   [*schools*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html), pensions and other social benefits.

As the coronavirus has spread, some workers who have come down with pneumonia and other symptoms say they have been unable to find affordable care in major cities.

While the government now provides free care to those found to have the coronavirus, many hospitals are overwhelmed and lack the resources to officially diagnose the virus. As a result, some migrant workers living in cities say they have been forced to pay thousands of dollars in medical expenses to treat sick relatives.

In Hubei, where the outbreak began in December, many workers worry that the economic pain will continue for months or longer. The province, which is home to more than 10 million migrant workers, remains shut off from the rest of China, and business has ground to a halt.

Huang Chuanyuan, a 46-year-old construction worker in Hubei, has stopped buying meat to save money. His employer, a Chinese construction company, told him that he had no choice but to wait at home.

“I don’t want to think about the future now,” said Mr. Huang, who has a wife and three children. “The more I think about it, the more stressed I get.”

As their struggles have mounted, some workers have pushed local officials to do more to help reopen businesses. But their pleas are often met with silence, as local governments work to contain the virus.

Mr. Wang, the migrant worker who has been going from factory to factory in Shenzhen, worries it may be months before he can find a job. He spends his days scouring online job ads and watching news about the virus.

Frustrated about his job prospects, Mr. Wang recently posted a [*poem*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/asia/xi-jinping-coronavirus.html) on social media about the sense of isolation and distress he felt. He criticized the local government for not doing more to help workers.

“You suffer loneliness by yourself, but you are still discriminated against,” he wrote. “The Labor Department, now silent. And me: alone in Shenzhen.”

Albee Zhang contributed research.

PHOTO: Migrant workers heading south had their temperatures taken before boarding a bus in Guizhou Province on Feb. 18. Many factories are afraid to restart operations amid the coronavirus epidemic. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2020

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[***The College Money Crisis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60VR-7PR1-JBG3-62H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

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**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. The C.D.C. makes the case for masks. The West Coast gets a rainy reprieve. And U.S. higher education faces troubles bigger than the virus.

The coronavirus has caused [*severe budget problems*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) for American higher education. But many colleges’ financial troubles are much larger than the virus. They have been building for years and stem, above all, from a breakdown in this country’s hodgepodge system of paying for higher education.

Given the importance of higher education — for [*scientific research*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), [*entrepreneurship*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) and ultimately [*American living standards*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — I want to use today’s newsletter to talk about this breakdown.

The current system arose after World War II and depended on three sources of money: students (and their parents); the federal government; and state governments. Of those, state governments were supposed to provide the most money. That’s why many Americans attend something known as a state college.

Over time, though, state officials came to a realization. If they cut their higher-education budgets, colleges could make up the shortfall by raising tuition. Many other state-funded programs, like health care, highways, prisons and K-12 education, have no such alternative.

“In every economic downturn since the 1980s, states have disproportionately cut college and university budgets,” Kevin Carey writes in a new Washington Monthly article that [*offers an exceptionally clear description of the problem*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Since 2008, states have cut inflation-adjusted per-student spending by 13 percent, [*according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

These budget cuts have left most colleges struggling for resources, even as elite colleges, both private and public, can raise substantial revenue from tuition and alumni donations. Not surprisingly, inequality in higher education [*has grown*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Many poor and middle-class students who excel in high school attend colleges with inadequate resources and low graduation rates — and end up with student debt but no degree.

And research repeatedly shows that college matters: Graduates are more likely than nongraduates to be [*employed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), to earn [*good salaries*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), to be [*happy*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) and to live [*long lives*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

The decline in state support for higher education is unlikely to reverse itself, and most middle-class families can’t easily afford to pay rapidly rising tuition bills. That leaves the federal government. A central question, then, is whether it will step in — or whether a college education will become ever more of a luxury good.

Potential solutions: Joe Biden [*has proposed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) a big expansion of federal support for higher education, which would make college free for any family earning less than $125,000 a year. President Trump [*does not have a plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to make college less expensive.

Carey, who works at the New America think tank, argues that Biden’s plan sends too much money to elite colleges that don’t need it. Carey [*instead proposes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) a new federal program in which colleges — including community and technical colleges — could choose to receive more funding in exchange for charging a simple, affordable tuition.

THREE MORE BIG STORIES

1. Trump scorns his own scientists

Robert Redfield, the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [*told Congress*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that universal mask-wearing could bring the pandemic under control within a few months. Redfield also said vaccines might not be available for most Americans until the middle of 2021.

Hours later, [*Trump rebuked Redfield*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), questioning the value of masks and saying a vaccine would be available to the public more quickly. Public health experts said it was the latest example of the president giving false or misleading information about the coronavirus.

Other virus news:

* The Big Ten [*reversed its decision*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to call off the football season after coming under intense pressure from coaches, players, fans and Trump.

1. An [*experimental drug*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) based on the antibody of a Covid-19 patient appears to be effective in treating the virus, the drug’s maker, Eli Lilly, announced. Independent experts have not yet vetted the research.

2. Fire and rain

After weeks of fires, [*the prospect of scattered showers in the Pacific Northwest*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) raised hopes for better firefighting conditions in coming days. Some parts of [*California saw clearer air*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), but with no significant rain clouds in sight, the state “remains dry and ripe for wildfires,” the state fire agency said.

A closer look: In an Oregon mountain town, dozens of people and nine firefighters mounted a last stand after wildfires left them trapped on the shores of a reservoir. [*The Times tells their story*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Not just the U.S.: In 2020, the Arctic, Siberia, Indonesia, Australia, Brazil and Argentina also [*experienced their worst wildfires*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in decades.

3. Running the November numbers

To retake the Senate, Democrats need to win five out of the 12 competitive races this year (and also take the vice presidency, which breaks Senate ties). Yesterday, the party got some good news in three state polls.

The Democratic nominees hold significant leads in Maine and Arizona. In South Carolina, a heavily Republican state, the race between Senator Lindsey Graham and his Democratic challenger, Jaime Harrison, is tied.

How to make sense of these numbers? [*The Times has created a new page*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) where Nate Cohn, one of our polling experts, will be analyzing the latest polls every day. The page also contains charts tracking the presidential polls.

Here’s what else is happening

* [*Sally made landfall in Alabama*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)as a Category 2 hurricane and moved through the Florida Panhandle, bringing flooding even as it weakened to a tropical depression.

1. The Federal Reserve expects interest rates to [*stay near zero until at least 2023*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. A graphic video of a man physically abusing his wife has [*set off a debate in China about the prevalence of domestic violence*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) and the legal system’s response.
3. Barack Obama’s memoir, “A Promised Land,” [*will be published in November*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) after the election. The 768-page book, spanning 2008 to 2011, will be the first of two volumes.
4. The Department of Homeland Security is investigating allegations that immigrant women detained at a privately run detention center in Georgia [*had their uteruses removed without their consent*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
5. Attorney General William Barr gave a speech accusing Justice Department staff members of playing politics and [*defending his right to insert himself in cases as he sees fit*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), even if his actions may benefit the president and his allies.
6. The W.N.B.A. star Maya Moore [*married the man she helped free from prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) by putting her basketball career on pause.
7. Lives Lived: Stanley Crouch, a prolific author, essayist and columnist, challenged conventional thinking on race and avant-garde music. The fiercely iconoclastic social critic elevated the invention of jazz into a metaphor for the contributions that Black people have made to American democracy. [*He died at 74.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)

IDEA OF THE DAY: The ‘Fair Tax’

Many states have tax systems that are regressive: They take a greater share of income from the poor than the rich. And because a disproportionate share of the richest taxpayers are white, these state tax systems also widen racial wealth gaps.

In Illinois, for example, the lowest-earning fifth of the population pays 14.4 percent of its income in state and local taxes, according to [*a new study*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. The middle-earning fifth pays 12.6. The highest-earning 1 percent of residents pays 7.4 percent.

This year, Illinoisans will vote on whether to change this system, through a constitutional amendment to authorize a more progressive tax, called the Fair Tax. It would cut taxes for the 97 percent of residents who make less than $250,000 in taxable income — and raise taxes for the remaining 3 percent, according to the study. If the Fair Tax had been in place over the past two decades, it would have effectively transferred $50 billion in wealth from this richest 3 percent to everyone else.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, CYCLE

Tomato time

Make the most of end-of-season tomatoes with [*this flavorful risotto*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Once you master the basic technique, the variations are endless. Basil, red peppers or corn all make great additions.

The gangsters of 1990

This fall is the 30th anniversary of “Goodfellas,” the Martin Scorsese classic that came out the same year as several other gangster movies, including “Miller’s Crossing” and “The Godfather Part III.”

Most gangster movies focus on the big bosses and godfathers; “Goodfellas” and its descendants — including “Boogie Nights” and “Pulp Fiction” — are about the grinders, the middlemen, the ***working-class*** thugs. Read more about [*the influential mob movies of 1990*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Relief at the Tour de France

The world’s most prestigious cycling race, the Tour de France, is in its final week, with some 500 miles of racing left. The [*race has chugged along despite early concerns*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that it could trigger new waves of virus infections.

“Fans of the Tour have been scarcer on the sides of the road, and selfies and autographs are forbidden,” The Times’s Elian Peltier writes. “For the most part, the stringent protocols put in place to keep the 2020 edition safe appear to be working.”

Basketball confinement: The Times’s sports reporter Marc Stein spent 54 days in the N.B.A. bubble — largely in a 314-square-foot hotel room. [*This is the gear he couldn’t live without*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Diversions

* Meet [*the “King of Sting”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — a man in a leather fedora who made his name getting stung by a parade of nasty insects on YouTube.

1. The late-night comedy hosts [*dissected Trump’s forum with voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in Philadelphia this week.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Apples and oranges (five letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. The Times is hiring [*an editorial director for Games*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), overseeing the team responsible for everything from [*the Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about last week’s fire at Europe’s largest refugee camp. The latest “[*Popcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” considers TikTok’s relationship to music.

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Students attended a Health Assessment class at Penn State last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Patrick Mansell/Penn State FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***A Big Win for Democrats in California Came With a Gut Check for Liberals***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617B-2WN1-DXY4-X3GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Joe Biden received one of the highest margins in the nation in California, but a look at how the state’s ballot measures were decided shows a more complex picture of the electorate.

**Body**

Joe Biden received one of the highest margins in the nation in California, but a look at how the state’s ballot measures were decided shows a more complex picture of the electorate.

OAKLAND, Calif. — The message that [*California*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/kamala-harris-senate-replacement.html) voters sent in the presidential election was unequivocal: With almost two-thirds of ballots counted so far going for [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration), the nation’s most populous state put up mammoth numbers for the Democrats. But dig a little deeper into the results and a more complex picture of the Golden State voter emerges, of strong libertarian impulses and resistance to some quintessentially liberal ideas.

[*In a series of referendums*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-california.html), voters in California rejected [*affirmative action*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/18/us/politics/affirmative-action-university-of-north-carolina-court.html), decisively shot down an expansion of rent control and eviscerated a law that gives greater labor protections for ride-share and delivery drivers, a measure that had the strong backing of labor unions. A measure that would have raised taxes on commercial landlords to raise billions for a state that sorely needs revenue also seemed on track for defeat.

The full force of the election results provided something of a gut check for liberals in a state that plays a big role in the Democratic Party and often offers insights into where the rest of the nation might be headed.

“The results in California show the Democrats that you can go too far,” said Bob Shrum, a former Democratic strategist and the director of the Dornsife Center for the Political Future at the University of Southern California. “California is a very liberal state that is now resistant to higher taxes and welcoming to the new gig economy, which is where the industry was created.”

That is not to say California is lurching rightward. The state is unwaveringly Democratic up and down the ranks of its government. Democrats have a supermajority in the Legislature, and the governor and lieutenant governor are Democrats. Even the state’s chief justice, Tani Cantil-Sakauye, quit the Republican Party two years ago and became an independent.

Pockets of unambiguous liberalism stayed strong on Tuesday with San Francisco voters saying yes to liberal priorities including affordable housing, police oversight and new taxes on companies whose highest-paid manager makes more than 100 times the level paid to its local workers.

And on many ballot measures, California voters validated the state’s liberal reputation. They rejected an expansion of penalties for some crimes and restored voting rights for felons who are on parole, securing the state’s position as a national leader in reducing mass incarceration and reforming its criminal justice system.

[Want to get our daily newsletter California Today by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/california-today).]

This year’s mixed results, however, were not an anomaly. California has always had competing impulses. The state that is home to Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the House of Representatives, also produced icons of conservatism including Ronald Reagan. Some of the most prominent conservative voices during the Trump presidency hail from California, including Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader; Devin Nunes, the outspoken congressman and staunch Trump ally; and Stephen Miller, the hard-line anti-immigration White House adviser.

This has put California on the front lines of many political battles. The affirmative action measure on the ballot this year, for example, dated to 1996. That year, 55 percent of the state’s electorate voted to ban the use of race, ethnicity, national origin or gender in public hiring, contracting and university admissions.

The proposition that California voted on this time would have repealed the ban and was supported by a who’s who of the Democratic Party in the state, including Kamala Harris, the senator and vice-presidential candidate. But it was defeated by almost the same margin with which it had passed originally.

Analysts saw a reflection of the state’s demographic complexity in the vote.

“It’s always difficult to do proposition campaigns in a state of 40 million people,” said Anthony Rendon, a Democrat and the speaker of the California Assembly. “But our racial and ethnic groups are more complicated and divided than they used to be, in a bunch of different ways.”

Since 2014, no one racial or ethnic group has constituted a majority of California’s population. Thirty-nine percent of California residents are Latino, 37 percent are white, 15 percent are Asian-American, 6 percent are Black and fewer than 1 percent are Native American or Pacific Islander, according to the 2018 American Community Survey.

Against that backdrop, Mr. Rendon said, affirmative action is difficult to define, with different meanings to different generations, ethnic groups and income brackets. In most of the state’s ***working-class***, inland counties, [*Californians voted to keep it banned*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-california-proposition-16-repeal-ban-on-affirmative-action.html). Only wealthier, left-leaning urban areas such as Los Angeles and the Bay Area supported bringing racial and ethnic preferences back into the public sector.

And in statewide polls, Latino voters expressed ambivalence — [*one survey*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2pr670k8?) done shortly before the election showed that only 40 percent of the state’s Latinos supported the proposition. Many white and Asian-American Californians opposed the measure, fearing that higher admissions for underrepresented minorities might mean less room for their own children in the University of California system. Some young voters did not even understand the concept, Mr. Rendon said.

That complexity extends to the state’s Democratic majority, Mr. Rendon added. “When the left is united in California,” he said, “we win.” But on issues from bail reform to rent control, he said, the party’s factions — progressive, moderate, coastal, inland — “were not all on the same page” this election year.

The way voters approached taxes was also nuanced. Local ballot initiatives were set to generate at least $15 billion in new bond authorizations, according to the [*California Local Government Finance Almanac*](http://californiacityfinance.com/Votes2011prelim.pdf). But the biggest tax question of the election — whether to raise property taxes on corporations and other large landowners — looked headed for defeat.

For all their liberal leanings on issues like the environment, California voters have long been less welcoming to new taxes than their reputation would suggest. For 40 years the pillar of local finance has been Proposition 13, the 1978 measure that limited local property taxes and has been considered politically untouchable ever since.

Expecting a Democratic wave, a coalition of public employees’ unions and progressive groups targeted 2020 as a moment to peel back part of the law. Their measure, [*Proposition 15*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/27/business/economy/california-property-tax-proposition-15.html), would have removed the Proposition 13 tax limits on commercial properties like office buildings and industrial parks, continuing to shield homeowners while [*raising an estimated $6.5 billion to $11.5 billion a year*](https://lao.ca.gov/BallotAnalysis/Proposition?number=15&amp;year=2020) for public schools and local governments. The measure was trailing on Thursday, suggesting that, even if it wins, close to half of voters remain fiercely protective of Proposition 13.

California is unique in its reliance on direct democracy to decide some of the most crucial issues of the day. Ballots bulge with so many initiatives they might be better described as booklets. And it is not just ideology or the zeitgeist that can determine the outcome. Corporate interests, wealthy donors and advocacy organizations spend what amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars on initiatives every election.

The proposition that repealed the labor protections for ride-share and delivery drivers saw more than $200 million in campaign spending, breaking national records for a ballot initiative.

More than $100 million was also spent on another hot-button measure, rent control. Polls showed that the housing crisis was the No. 1 concern for state voters, and Gov. Gavin Newsom dedicated the bulk of his [*State of the State*](https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/02/19/governor-newsom-delivers-state-of-the-state-address-on-homelessness/) speech to the state’s worst-in-the-nation homeless problem. And yet voters up and down the state resoundingly rejected efforts to expand tenants’ rights and rent control.

The most prominent example was the failure of Proposition 21, a ballot initiative that would have given local governments more leeway to cap rental rates but was decisively defeated, according to The Associated Press. That marked the [*second time*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/business/economy/california-rent-control-tenants.html) in two years California voters have rejected rent control by wide margins, and for the most part local attempts have not fared any better: On Tuesday, voters in [*Sacramento*](https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/election/article246845737.html) and [*Burbank*](https://www.sfvbj.com/news/2020/nov/04/burbank-nixes-rent-control-calabasas-may-tax-canna/) also rejected rent control proposals.

“I keep thinking of this house I saw in a pretty affluent neighborhood that had a ‘Biden Harris’ sign and ‘No on 21’ sign,” said Tony Roshan Samara, program director of land use and housing at Urban Habitat, a Bay Area policy and advocacy organization. “That captures it. People will vote Democratic but when it comes to these issues of land and property, they vote in the interest of landowners.”

Californians are sometimes described as moderate on fiscal matters but liberal on social ones. That seemed mainly consistent with the passage of a number of criminal justice measures, perhaps most importantly the rejection of an initiative that would have made it harder for people convicted of certain felonies to be considered for early release from prison.

Jerry Brown, the state’s former governor, called the vote a “decisive repudiation” of punitive sentences and a “milestone” in California’s evolution from the 1980s and 1990s, when the state, amid crime waves and the crack epidemic, led the way on mass incarceration.

“There’s a lot of work to be done in this field, but California is showing the way in a very positive and I think creative way,” Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Brown spent $1 million left over from his campaign funds to defeat the measure, which was supported by police unions and get-tough-on-crime politicians and would have reimposed restrictions on early releases and toughen sentences for certain crimes.

What do voters think about voting for Democrats and at the same time not supporting Democratic-led initiatives? José Legaspi, a Los Angeles resident who runs shopping centers in Latino communities across the country, said he hardly saw a contradiction. He voted for Mr. Biden and did not think twice about opposing the measure that would raise taxes on commercial properties.

“I truly believe in paying taxes,” he said. “However there is a point at which one should limit how much more in taxes one should personally pay.”

Thomas Fuller and Conor Dougherty reported from Oakland, Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, and Tim Arango from Los Angeles. Jill Cowan and Miriam Jordan contributed reporting from Los Angeles.

Thomas Fuller and Conor Dougherty reported from Oakland, Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, and Tim Arango from Los Angeles. Jill Cowan and Miriam Jordan contributed reporting from Los Angeles.

PHOTO: Watching vote tallies at a San Francisco street party on Tuesday night. “The results in California show the Democrats that you can go too far,” one analyst said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P6)

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[***Donald Trump, Unmasked; The conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YWK-61H1-DXY4-X313-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

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**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Highlight:** We’re all in this together. Almost all.

**Body**

We’re all in this together. Almost all.

Gail Collins: Bret, I’ve been musing a lot lately about masks. When I walk around my neighborhood, almost every single person is wearing one — even people who are way more than six feet away from the next pedestrian. Because, I guess, it’s a sign of solidarity. We’re all in this together.

Only one person I can think of never wears a mask. And that is …

Bret Stephens: Let me guess:

#MrWeHaveContainedThis?

#MrCoronavirusIsVeryMuchUnderControlInTheUSA?

#MrOneDayIt’sLikeAMiracle, It’sGoingToDisappear?

Gail, I think we’re thinking about one and the same guy: Mr. Lead By Example. The only spot of brightness here is that I’m becoming somewhat less confident about my prediction that Donald Trump is going to win re-election.

Gail: Well, that’s certainly a nice thought for us to begin with. But any new particular reason? I know he’s a horrible person with no ability to run anything, but that hasn’t gotten in his way so far.

Bret: Well, I try not to underestimate Trump politically in about the same way I try not to underestimate the resilience of the notorious [*honey badger*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg).

Gail: Well, the honey badger is a lot cuter. I’d put Trump more in the murder hornet category. But go on.

Bret: He’s going into the race with some enormous advantages: money, social media and the usual perquisites of incumbency. The [*betting odds*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg) are still in his favor. And Rasmussen has Trump’s favorable/unfavorable ratings evenly matched, at 49 percent.

But things are very different now than they were even a month ago. Trump managed to screw up this crisis in at least six catastrophic ways. He failed to take the Covid threat seriously. He presided over a fumbling bureaucratic response. He embarrassed himself in his press conferences. He tried to throw money at the problem without effectively administering the funds. He demonstrated near-zero empathy with the victims of the disease or their families. And he never really articulated a sensible alternative to the lockdown strategy.

Gail: Yeah, you’d certainly think all that would be a problem.

Bret: The latest polls I’ve seen have him trailing Biden in must-win states like Pennsylvania and North Carolina. One recent poll by The Dallas Morning News has him tied in Texas, which doesn’t mean Biden can win there but suggests Trump’s base may be having some second thoughts. I was particularly struck by a Times story noting that the president’s support among the [*65-plus demographic has slumped very sharply*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg). That’s not a demographic he can afford to lose, given that I don’t exactly predict a tidal wave of support among younger voters entering the worst job market in recorded history.

Gail: I like the idea of Trump losing the older voters and the younger voters. Got to watch out for those middle-aged folks, though.

Bret: All this means there’s an [*opportunity for Joe Biden*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg), provided he can articulate not just a biting critique of Trump but a compelling rationale for his candidacy. He just hasn’t done it so far. What would you propose?

Gail: I wish Biden looked a little more geared up when it came to things like campaign structure and fund-raising. But for the big message — I think he can afford to wait awhile. Stay in his basement, do 10 million virtual visits a day and let Trump continue to irritate the hell out of everybody.

The Democrats do need a big plan for the fall, obviously. Lots of federal spending to reboot the economy, investments in education, help for the cities and states that are foundering. I remember a friend mentioning just last week during this exact same conversation that it’s time to bring back the spirit of F.D.R. and the New Deal.

Bret: That friend of yours is not to be trusted, Gail.

For a long time, I thought all a Democratic nominee needed to beat Trump was run on the slogan, “Make America Sane Again.” Maybe the new slogan needs to be “Make America Make Again,” or “MAMA.” The economic collapse we are witnessing now is absolutely terrifying. It’s going to hit nearly every family in the country, hard. And it’s a natural for a blue-collar candidate like Biden to make his own.

Gail: The most ***working-class*** part of Trump’s bio was the time his father made him go around and collect the rent.

Bret: I don’t expect the Biden team to listen to my advice, and I’m not even sure I’d endorse every bit of this in a fantasy Stephens presidency. But the chief parts of the MAMA agenda would include an unprecedented infrastructure plan, worth at least a couple of trillion dollars. A “Made Here”-approach to the supply chain through some combination of insourcing requirements and tax breaks.

Gail: So far we are in accord.

Bret: Steady levels of defense spending, not only to deter foreign adventurism and keep our troops in uniform, but to maintain an important part of our industrial base.

Gail: Never bought into the idea that the best way to help our economy was by juicing up the international arms race.

Bret: A Recovery Authority that makes it quick and simple for businesses to get access to capital, restructure their debts and cut through red tape that is often time-consuming, complex and expensive, especially for small businesses. A National Service option to give younger people locked out of the job market a way to keep busy, make a basic income and contribute to society. Comprehensive immigration reform to give undocumented people a path to citizenship and bring them into the regular economy.

Gail: Looking forward to those things happening so we can argue about the details. But in general I’m with you.

Bret: I know you’re going to say “public option” for health insurance. In normal times I would never endorse it. But if we end up with [*Depression-era levels of unemployment*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg), even I may warm to some version of the idea.

Gail: Great. Have to tip my hat — if I had one — to Bernie Sanders, who so terrified Republicans with Medicare for All that they went fleeing to the public option, which is basically Health Care For All But You Can Keep Your Employer-Sponsored Insurance.

One thing we don’t hear about much — and I’m only bringing it up so we can disagree — is labor unions. Biden is a lifetime advocate and they need support.

Bret: Biden will have to stress his ties to labor unions. It’s as much a part of his political brand as community activism was to Barack Obama’s. Fine by me so long as it doesn’t get in the way of his concern for job creation. Unions are great when they’re defending the rights of all workers. They’re not so great when they’re protecting their perks or corrupt practices at the expense of other workers or of the unemployed, or against the interests of innovation and efficiency.

Gail: True, but that “innovation and efficiency” part is often used to cover a multitude of employer sins.

Bret: One thing I’ve noticed, Gail, is the conversation — our own and the country’s — is getting to be less about Covid and more about the world into which we’re moving. It seems so awfully bleak. Other than Trump’s troubles, what’s making you hopeful?

Gail: Part of it goes back to that mask-wearing. Every time I walk outside I see my neighbors working together, accepting some discomfort for the common good. And almost everyone I talk with — or Zoom with — is thinking about great things to do as soon as we turn a corner.

Bret: Agreed. I hope people are going to find opportunities for self-reinvention, not just in terms of their working life but in the things they value in themselves and others, and in the values they hold dear. For instance, I’m sure many of our readers might gladly envision me stocking shelves at a big-box store, or [*shrimp fishing like Forrest Gump*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg).

Gail: I guess anything could happen, but I’m betting that we join hands, build a better future and quickly confine a Certain Person to the ash heap of history. Then you and I will have the leisure to really argue again.

Bret: From your masked mouth to God’s ear.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg).

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PHOTO: President Trump on Monday at a coronavirus press briefing, where he was one of the few people not wearing a mask.  (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Josh Hawley Is ‘Not Going Anywhere.’ How Did He Get Here?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:625B-JDD1-DXY4-X0RW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The senator’s objection to the election results surprised some supporters. But interviews with dozens of people close to him show his growing comfort with doing what it takes to hold on to power.

**Body**

Most Republicans who spoke at the recent Conservative Political Action Conference in Orlando, Fla., avoided acknowledging the events of Jan. 6. But less than 30 seconds into his speech, Senator Josh Hawley confronted them head on.

That day, Mr. Hawley said, had underscored the “great crisis moment” in which Americans currently found themselves. That day, he explained, the mob had come for him.

The “woke mob,” that is. In the weeks since, they had “tried to cancel me, censor me, expel me, shut me down.” To “stop me,” Mr. Hawley said, “from representing you.”

“And guess what?” he went on, his tempo building, the audience applauding: “I’m here today, I’m not going anywhere, and I’m not backing down.”

The appeal from Missouri’s junior senator reflected what has become standard fare in a Republican Party still in thrall to Donald J. Trump. As Mr. Hawley’s audience seemed to agree, his amplification of the former president’s false claims of a stolen election was not incitement for the mob of rioters who stormed the Capitol on Jan 6; it was a principled stand against the “radical left.”

Yet to some of the senator’s earliest supporters, it was precisely for its ordinariness that the speech stood out, the latest reminder of the distance between the Josh Hawley they thought they had voted for and the Josh Hawley who now appeared regularly on Fox News.

Against the backdrop of Mr. Trump’s G.O.P., the idea had been that Mr. Hawley was different. Sworn in at 39 years old, he ascended to the Senate in part by selling himself as an intellectual in a movement that increasingly seemed to shun intellect. Whereas Mr. Trump fired off brash tweets littered with random capitalizations and adverbs like “bigly,” Mr. Hawley published essays on subjects like [*medieval theology*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html).

Throughout his life, whether as a student at Stanford or a law professor in Missouri, Mr. Hawley had impressed people as “thoughtful” and “sophisticated,” a person of “depth.” And as a growing number of conservatives saw it, he also had the proper ideas. From the time he was a teenager, he had criticized the free-market allegiance at the center of Republican orthodoxy; when he arrived in Washington, he immediately launched into a crusade against Big Tech. The conservative think-tank class embraced him as someone who had the right vocabulary, the right suits and the right worldview to translate Mr. Trump’s vague populist instincts into a fresh blueprint for his party’s future — someone elite enough, in other words, to be entrusted with the banner of anti-elitism.

Which is in part why, when Mr. Hawley became the first senator to announce that he would object to the certification of Joseph R. Biden Jr. as president, many of his allies underwent a public mourning of sorts. They’d expected as much from, say, Ted Cruz — as one senior Senate aide put it, the Texas Republican, who had filibustered Obamacare while its namesake was still in office, had always been transparent about his motivations. But Mr. Hawley?

To survey Mr. Hawley’s life is indeed to see a consistency in the broad strokes of his political cosmology. Yet interviews with more than 50 people close to Mr. Hawley cast light on what, in the haze of charm and first impressions, his admirers often seemed to miss: an attachment to the steady cadence of ascension, and a growing comfort with doing what might be necessary to maintain it.

Mr. Hawley’s Stanford adviser, the historian David Kennedy, struggled to reconcile his memories with the now-infamous image of the senator, fist raised in solidarity with pro-Trump demonstrators shortly before they descended on the Capitol. “The Josh I knew was not an angry young person,” he recalled. “But when I see him now on television, he just always seems angry — really angry.”

Dr. Kennedy acknowledged that Mr. Hawley was just one of many Republicans in the Trump era who had steeped their brand in “anger and resentment and grievance.” But for many of those once close to Mr. Hawley, that was the point: How did a man who seemed so special turn out to be just like everyone else?

And what, they wondered, did Josh Hawley have to be so angry about?

An un-misspent youth

In the late 1990s, the Jesuit high school Mr. Hawley attended in Kansas City, Mo., turned to him for damage control.

“There was a group of seniors in our class who had a party that got out of hand, and it became a news story,” recalled Ben Capoccia, a classmate. “They had Josh and I go on the news to make it look like we were not all these bad kids.” He added, “I know what he said was much more eloquent than what I said.”

Mr. Hawley was an academic star, champion debater and National Merit finalist who won Rockhurst High’s Kloster award, given to “a young man who consistently puts the welfare of his fellow students above his own interests.”

But in recent weeks, some of Mr. Hawley’s old classmates and teachers have [*been aghast*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) at his role in undermining confidence in America’s elections.

“I’ve been very disappointed to see who he has become,” said Kristen Ruehter-Thompson, a close friend growing up who was once Mr. Hawley’s prom date.

Even his middle school principal, Barbara Weibling, has weighed in. “I’m not surprised he’s a politician and that he’s shooting for the presidency,” said Ms. Weibling, a vocal supporter of Democrats. “The only thing is, I think he had a strict moral upbringing, and I was really disappointed he would suck the country into the lies that Trump told about the election. I just think that’s wrong.”

There was never any question that Mr. Hawley was going places. Born on the last day of the 1970s, he was raised with an eye toward the future and a destiny aimed beyond Lexington, a small town about an hour east of Kansas City, where a Civil War cannonball remains embedded in a column at the courthouse. His views and trajectory were shaped by his parents, Ron and Virginia, who met at Fort Hays State University in Kansas. She was Kansas Junior Miss in 1973 and graduated summa cum laude, majoring in English. Ron was a football player who worked as a probation officer after college, before becoming a prosperous banker.

Theirs was a traditional, patriarchal and churchgoing household. After pursuing a career as a teacher, Mrs. Hawley “became a speaker and leader of Christian spiritual renewal conferences and retreats in Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas,” according to an account in a Kansas paper. She also ran prayer groups at the family’s Methodist church.

Ms. Ruehter-Thompson said Mr. Hawley’s “dad was more of the influence,” adding, “There were always discussions of Rush Limbaugh.”

From early on, Mr. Hawley harbored a deep fascination with politics. At 12, he wrote about the 1992 presidential election for his school paper, breaking down how many moderators there would be at the debates; three years later, in writings [*recently unearthed by The Kansas City Star*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html), he expressed sympathy for militia movements in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing. (“Many of the people populating these movements are not radical, right-wing, pro-assault weapons freaks as they were originally stereotyped,” he wrote.)

Later in middle school, he dragged friends to movies like “Nixon.” He also signed their eighth grade yearbooks with variations of “Josh Hawley 2024,” according to Ms. Ruehter-Thompson and another classmate, Andrea Randle, as well as Tim Crosson, the vocal music teacher at the school. (“Sounds like revisionist history,” a Hawley spokeswoman said. “How about they produce a hard copy.”)

Mr. Crosson said he and Mr. Hawley would spar about politics. “He would come into my room and announce the number of days left in Bill Clinton’s term, and I would fire back, ‘Four more years,’” Mr. Crosson recalled.

Ms. Randle, a Black classmate, was frustrated that Mr. Hawley didn’t do enough to respond to the police killing of George Floyd last May. After initially expressing sympathy, he later accused an alliance of Democrats and [*the “woke mob*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html)” of dividing the country.

“We played around after school, and I remember him pulling my hair after history class, that’s what I remember, so it’s so bizarre,” she said. “Me and my friends have talked about it, even over Christmas. Was he always like this and we didn’t know?”

At Rockhurst, an all-boys school, a populist ideology began to evolve that didn’t align neatly with either political party. Mr. Hawley seemed most disturbed by the veneration of individual liberty and pluralism in American society. In a [*“Young Voices” column*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) for The Springfield News-Leader, he called the “rights of the individual vs. the rights of the community” a “fierce debate that so dominates our age.” “The philosophy of radical individualism,” he wrote, was both “cause and symptom of the continuing decline of America’s shared civic life.”

The world according to Hawley

College is often one’s first exposure to knotty questions of identity, politics and faith, but Mr. Hawley moved through Stanford University with unusual conviction. Writing for The News-Leader the summer after his freshman year, in 1999, he invoked a recent speech by his school’s provost, Condoleezza Rice, to argue for a “fresh discussion of first principles and a fundamental rethinking of the role of government and the aims of freedom.” He was 19.

On campus, Mr. Hawley wrote columns for the conservative Stanford Review and was active in student ministry groups. He described his worldview in gauzy phrases like “a proper sense of shared citizenship,” but drew a clearer line on at least one issue. Above his bed he hung [*a sepia-toned poster*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) of a shirtless male model cradling a newborn; when asked by classmates, he said it reflected his fervent stance against abortion. (The Hawley spokeswoman said the poster is “not something he remembers. But he’s proudly pro-life.”)

Political aspirations seemed likely. Classmates recall his careful attention to his image, how he wouldn’t sit for a photo until a stray red Solo cup had been disposed of. Still, he was not viewed as a firebrand; he seemed more animated by the pursuit of an intellectual identity than a partisan affiliation. His first principles were guided by his Christianity.

Mr. Hawley sharpened his thinking in conversations with his adviser, Dr. Kennedy. Americans, Mr. Hawley argued, were suffering a crisis of “loneliness,” prisoners of a culture of individualism unmoored from any shared sense of purpose. Hastening this plight, in his view, was the American right’s devotion to the free market.

Dr. Kennedy was somewhat surprised to learn years later that his advisee was evangelical; for him, Mr. Hawley’s ideological instincts had called to mind “Rerum Novarum,” the encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 condemning unfettered capitalism and endorsing measures like trade unionism as means of reinforcing the dignity of the ***working class***.

“I do think there was something reflexively present in Josh from early on that was aligned with that kind of thinking,” Dr. Kennedy said.

After graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 2002 and spending a year as a teaching intern at an all-boys school in London, Mr. Hawley went on to Yale Law School. He seemed torn between politics or a life in the ivory tower he would ultimately spend so much time castigating. Both Dr. Kennedy and a Yale classmate remember him on the “knife’s edge,” as the former put it, of pursuing a doctorate in history.

In other words, his first imperative was not — did not appear to be — power.

“My impression of Josh back then was he was kind of what we need in our democracy,” recalled Ian Bassin, a Yale classmate [*turned harsh critic*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html). “I always found him to be curious to hear why I came to conclusions I did, and vice versa. And I always felt what brought him to his conclusions were very honest, very genuine, very principled views.”

Several classmates, however, observed a change in Mr. Hawley toward the end of his time at Yale. On a campus where success is often measured in Supreme Court clerkships, ambition is a given. But it was nonetheless striking when Mr. Hawley suddenly seemed more interested in winning prestigious posts than in doing the work once he won them.

A former classmate recalled Mr. Hawley’s excitement when both were named editors at the Yale Law Journal. Eventually, however, their friendship frayed. Mr. Hawley was very engaged, this person said, when his role meant collecting the business cards of Federalist Society members as he asked them to contribute articles. But when it came to finalizing footnotes the night before deadline, fellow editors often found that he forgot to check his email.

Irina Manta recalls a similar experience. She and Mr. Hawley were rivals at the campus Federalist Society chapter and served together as vice presidents of events. “I tried really hard to work with him,” Ms. Manta said. But as the year went on, she found herself organizing events and debates alone. “When I would send emails, I just wouldn’t hear back from him,” she said. “He wasn’t exactly into working hard if he could help it.” (Ms. Manta [*wrote an article*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) about her time at Yale with Mr. Hawley for USA Today on Jan. 5.)

In joining the Federalist Society, Mr. Hawley had moved into the orbit of an ascendant legal community that, for a conservative on campus, offered the clearest avenue to power. Eventually he defeated Ms. Manta for the Yale chapter’s presidency, a title he embraced proudly. (The Hawley spokeswoman said that Ms. Manta was “bitter” about losing the election, and that Mr. Hawley had an “outstanding record in law school” that “speaks for itself.”)

The members he was looking to impress were not necessarily his own chapter’s. In August 2005, when John Roberts was asked during his Supreme Court confirmation hearings about his ties to the Federalist Society, Mr. Hawley had his back. In an op-ed in The Hartford Courant, he chided Democrats for attempting to portray the group as a “secret society of scary people.” “Far from subverting the country’s legal order,” he argued, “Federalists seek to strengthen it.”

In 2007, a year after finishing law school, Mr. Hawley moved to Washington to clerk for Chief Justice Roberts.

One of his fellow clerks was Erin Morrow. She had been just one year ahead of Mr. Hawley at Yale, but it wasn’t until the two shared an office that they became close.

Mr. Hawley would later occasionally adopt the folksy affect of a farm child, but Ms. Morrow was the real thing. She had grown up on a cattle farm in New Mexico and, as a student at Texas A&amp;M, had been a member of the All-American Livestock Judging Team. (One of her professors [*would recall her*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) as among his most impressive students “in her understanding of what is really important in beef-cattle breeding.”) Yale classmates remembered her as brilliant and unpretentious. She and Mr. Hawley wed in 2010.

When Thomas Lambert, who was on the appointments committee at the University of Missouri School of Law, learned that the Hawleys were open to moving to Columbia, he jumped at the chance to hire them. “It’s really quite a feather in your cap to hire law clerks from the Supreme Court,” he said. “And here was an opportunity to get two.” The couple began teaching in the fall of 2011.

Much of their first years in Missouri centered on their faith. They led a Bible study at an Evangelical Presbyterian church and mentored Christian law students. Mr. Hawley wrote about faith and politics, arguing in a 2015 Notre Dame Law Review [*essay*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) for a “return to political theology.” Contending that religion had been “quarantined” and “roped off” from politics and law, he railed against the postwar liberal order and called for putting “the state’s sovereignty in its proper and subordinate place.”

Not long after returning to Missouri, Mr. Hawley had begun asking Republican consultants to coffee. One of them suggested a state legislative bid. The consultant recalled Mr. Hawley laughing. He wanted to run for attorney general.

In Missouri, 30 counties account for most of the primary vote. The consultant advised Mr. Hawley to contact the local Republican Party chairs and ask to speak at their events. He had a winning pitch. In 2014, he helped represent Hobby Lobby in its successful Supreme Court challenge to the Affordable Care Act’s contraception mandate. Conservatives enjoyed hearing him talk about the case.

The consultant recalled Mr. Hawley contacting him after traversing the state. “OK,” he asked, “now what?”

Becoming a politician

As successful as these tours were, Mr. Hawley’s growing coterie of advisers realized quickly that their candidate disdained, as one termed it, the “people part” of campaigning — the unannounced visits to local diners, the niche roundtable conversations with voters.

Yet when it came to selling himself to kingmakers, he thrived.

In a campaign season that coincided with Mr. Trump’s political ascent, Mr. Hawley found an eager audience among Missouri’s donor class and Republican elders. He dazzled them by seeming to be everything Mr. Trump was not: tempered, thoughtful, a reservoir of adjectives like “Burkean.” When asked about their first meetings with Mr. Hawley, powerful people in Missouri recalled being enchanted not so much by his vision for office, but by the fact that he sounded smart.

“He can get up and talk about issues and look you straight in the eye the whole time,” said Daniel Mehan, president of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce. He added, “He impresses you as someone who knows what he’s talking about.”

Among Mr. Hawley’s first — and most important — enthusiasts was John Danforth, the former senator and elder statesman of Missouri Republicans. His blessing was crucial for an ambitious young man looking to scale the state’s political ranks.

The two had met years before, when Mr. Danforth visited Yale for a dinner. They stayed in touch. “He referred me to a couple of books: One was by a British politician and political philosopher named Danny Kruger, and the other by Yuval Levin,” Mr. Danforth recalled. “And I thought, well, this is interesting.” He saw in Mr. Hawley “a real intellectual,” a conservative version of his old friend Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Yet when asked, Mr. Danforth couldn’t recall what it was he thought Mr. Hawley wanted to accomplish, as attorney general or as a senator. “I don’t know that I had an impression of that,” he said after a pause.

Mr. Danforth helped Mr. Hawley gain the support of the state’s major Republican contributors. Chief among them was David Humphreys, Mr. Hawley’s [*largest donor*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html), who has given millions of dollars to his campaigns and political action committee.

People close to Mr. Hawley recalled his skill in convincing donors that he saw the world as they did; as one early booster put it, it was as if he held up a mirror as he spoke to them. His rejection of Republican economic orthodoxy was well documented, but he convinced libertarian-minded conservatives like Mr. Humphreys and David McIntosh, president of the Club for Growth, of his devotion to the free market.

The [*most memorable commercial*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) of the campaign featured the candidate surrounded by ladders being climbed by men in suits. In the ad, he castigated “career politicians just climbing the ladder, using one office to get another.” Yet shortly after he was sworn in as attorney general in January 2017, Republicans including Mr. Danforth and the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, began urging him to challenge Missouri’s vulnerable Democratic senator, Claire McCaskill. Mr. Hawley obliged.

His actual job appeared to take a back seat.

“I don’t think he had much interest in that office, really,” said J. Andrew Hirth, who served as deputy general counsel under Mr. Hawley’s predecessor, Chris Koster, a Democrat. “From the moment he got there, he was looking toward the Senate.”

He was increasingly [*absent from the office*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html). Sometimes he was meeting with potential backers for his Senate campaign; one local paper reported that he was leaving work midday to [*exercise at a gym*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) about a half-hour away. A photograph of a casually clothed Mr. Hawley [*buying wine*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) on a workday afternoon circulated on social media.

The attorney general’s office was quickly hollowed out of talent as Mr. Hawley appointed key officials with stronger religious than managerial credentials. The most notable was Michael Quinlan, who was a “mediator and conflict coach” at a Christian marriage counseling group when he was recruited to oversee civil litigation.

He was hired despite having been frequently quoted defending a local bishop who was found guilty of a misdemeanor after shielding a priest who took pornographic pictures of girls. Mr. Hawley’s aides said they hadn’t been aware of those comments. Mr. Quinlan later departed after a female employee complained about receiving an unwelcome lecture from him about her sex life; he denied accusations of acting improperly.

Experienced lawyers who defended state agencies against lawsuits headed for the exits. Only one litigator who had worked under Mr. Hawley’s predecessor stayed on in the main office, in Jefferson City. As morale continued to sag, eight of Mr. Hawley’s own hires quit too.

Amid the turmoil, outside public relations consultants took an unusually prominent role. In 2017, before a raid on massage parlors in Springfield, the consultants told the attorney general’s staff that they were angling for an appearance with the CNN anchor Jake Tapper. They instructed aides that Mr. Hawley, “should be wearing some kind of law enforcement garb — like a police jacket and hat,” according to internal emails.

During the raids, Mr. Hawley gathered reporters in a strip-mall parking lot, his expression grim and a large badge hanging around his neck.

“Josh was the chief law enforcement officer of the state,” the Hawley spokeswoman said. “He wore a badge.”

A ‘champion in the Senate’

When Mr. Hawley arrived in Washington in January 2019 as Missouri’s junior senator, he positioned himself as the intellectual heir of Trumpism — the politician who could integrate the president’s populist instincts into a comprehensive ideology for the G.O.P. In his maiden speech, he summoned the lamentation of cultural erosion he’d been refining since high school, arguing that the “great American middle” had been overlooked by a “new, arrogant aristocracy.”

For conservatives who felt Mr. Trump had identified uncomfortable truths about the party despite ultimately governing like a typical Republican, Mr. Hawley’s arrival was timely. That July, conservative writers and policy experts gathered at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington for the inaugural National Conservatism Conference, meant to map a departure from the corporate-class policies that for decades had defined conservatism. Mr. Hawley, who in his keynote speech decried the “cosmopolitan consensus,” was introduced as the fledgling movement’s “champion in the Senate.”

He did not discourage whispers about 2024, and some younger Trump campaign aides, who saw him as the “refined” version of their boss, mused privately about working for him should he run. It wasn’t long before Donald Trump Jr. was inviting him to lunch at his father’s Washington hotel.

Even so, he baffled his party’s leadership as he tried to derail the confirmation of some of Mr. Trump’s conservative judicial nominees, deeming their records on social issues like abortion and same-sex marriage insufficiently pure.

But it was Mr. Trump’s refusal to accept the election results that offered the first real stress test for the brand Mr. Hawley had labored to cultivate — whether it was possible to be both the darling of the conservative intelligentsia and the “fighter” the party’s base craved.

He had reason to believe it was. He was comfortable paying “the price of admission,” as one Republican official put it, to a place in Mr. Trump’s G.O.P., in part because nothing in his short political career had suggested there would ever be a cost. Early on, few had blinked when he embraced the president during a visit to Missouri. He had courted far-right figures during his campaign, yet still received plum speaking slots at high-minded conferences.

And so on Dec. 30, Josh Hawley became the first Senate Republican to announce his intent to challenge Mr. Biden’s congressional certification.

Mr. Hawley’s team was adamant that he had not been motivated by a potential presidential bid in 2024, but among other things had been moved by a December video conference with 30 constituents who said they felt “disenfranchised” by Mr. Biden’s victory.

“He knows the state well after two campaigns, and I think he knew that Missourians supported the president,” said James Harris, a longtime political adviser to Mr. Hawley.

He tried to thread the needle as he always had, wrapping his objection not in fevered “STOP THE STEAL” tweets but in questions about the constitutionality of mail-in voting in Pennsylvania.

And, had there been no violence, perhaps his gambit would have worked. But when Mr. Hawley and others lent their voices to Mr. Trump’s lie of rampant voter fraud, people listened.

Mr. Hawley spent much of Jan. 6 hiding with his colleagues in a Senate committee room as Trump supporters stormed the Capitol. He sat hunched against the wall, eyes fixed on his phone, as Republicans and Democrats alike blamed him for the madness. Later that evening, when senators safely reconvened to finish certifying the election, Mr. Hawley forged ahead with his objection.

The reckoning was swift. [*Simon &amp; Schuster dropped plans*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) to publish his book, “The Tyranny of Big Tech.” Major donors severed ties. Mr. Danforth called supporting Mr. Hawley “the biggest mistake of my life.” His wife, Erin, was collateral damage: Kirkland &amp; Ellis, the law firm where she had briefly practiced, purged an old biography from its website. She was scheduled to teach a course in constitutional litigation at the University of Missouri, but “after the events of Jan. 6, people were not so happy about that,” said Professor Lambert, who brought the couple to the school; in response, he had stressed that “you cannot hold her responsible for her husband’s views.”

Yet something else happened, too. Mr. Hawley saw a surge in small-dollar donations to his campaign, making January his best fund-raising month since 2018. [*As Axios first reported*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html), the $969,000 he amassed easily offset defections from corporate political action committees. Added to that was the applause of the Senate Conservatives Fund, which has since bundled more than $300,000 for Mr. Hawley.

Mr. Hawley had a choice. He could commit to his burgeoning fighter persona. “My No. 1 piece of advice was: You can’t go back on this now. You go back on this now, and you make absolutely everyone angry,” recalled his adviser Gregg Keller.

Or he could try to reclaim the scholarly identity that had long propelled him. Oren Cass, the founder of American Compass, a think tank that aims to advance a more ***working-class***-friendly conservatism, had frequently praised Mr. Hawley for defying Republican dogma. But he called the senator’s objections to the election [*“obnoxious” and “self-serving.”*](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/age-of-pelagius-joshua-hawley.html) He urged him to acknowledge his “failure of judgment.”

As his advisers saw it, the lessons of the Trump era — that success in today’s G.O.P. means never having to say you’re sorry — were clear. And Josh Hawley was nothing if not a star student.

In the weeks since, Mr. Hawley has vowed to sue the “woke mob” at Simon &amp; Schuster for dropping his book. He’s written for The New York Post about “the muzzling of America.” He has appeared on Fox News to discuss said muzzling. And while he said shortly after the riot that he would not run for president in 2024, his advisers have continued to hype him as “one of the favorites” of a potential Republican primary field, as Mr. Keller put it.

Mr. Hawley tested his new cri de coeur on a live audience on Feb. 26, at the gathering of the conservative faithful in Orlando. “You know, on Jan. 6, I objected to the Electoral College certification,” he began. “Maybe you heard about it.”

The room erupted. “I did,” he went on, “I stood up —” His words were drowned out by cheers.

It had not been the mood of his speech. But as he paused to take in the standing ovation, Mr. Hawley seemed happy.

Sheelagh McNeill and Alain Delaquérière contributed research.

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PHOTOS: Those who know Senator Josh Hawley hear a change in tone. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); A 1998 high school year- book photo of Josh Hawley at an awards ceremony. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROCKHURST HIGH SCHOOL) (A16); Mr. Hawley at the joint session of Congress on Jan. 6 to confirm the Electoral College results. He was one of the leaders of the Republican faction that objected. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS) (A16-A17); Mr. Hawley, then Missouri’s attorney general and a Senate candidate, at a rally with the president in 2018, top. A cam- paign stop at G.O.P. headquarters in Jefferson City, above. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM BRENNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; RYAN CHRISTOPHER JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

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[***Voices From Hawley's History Wonder, Why So Angry Now?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:625C-SCV1-DXY4-X0X7-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Elaina Plott and Danny Hakim

**Body**

Most Republicans who spoke at the recent Conservative Political Action Conference in Orlando, Fla., avoided acknowledging the events of Jan. 6. But less than 30 seconds into his speech, Senator Josh Hawley confronted them head on.

That day, Mr. Hawley said, had underscored the ''great crisis moment'' in which Americans currently found themselves. That day, he explained, the mob had come for him.

The ''woke mob,'' that is. In the weeks since, they had ''tried to cancel me, censor me, expel me, shut me down.'' To ''stop me,'' Mr. Hawley said, ''from representing you.''

''And guess what?'' he went on, his tempo building, the audience applauding: ''I'm here today, I'm not going anywhere, and I'm not backing down.''

The appeal from Missouri's junior senator reflected what has become standard fare in a Republican Party still in thrall to Donald J. Trump. As Mr. Hawley's audience seemed to agree, his amplification of the former president's false claims of a stolen election was not incitement for the mob of rioters who stormed the Capitol on Jan 6; it was a principled stand against the ''radical left.''

Yet to some of the senator's earliest supporters, it was precisely for its ordinariness that the speech stood out, the latest reminder of the distance between the Josh Hawley they thought they had voted for and the Josh Hawley who now appeared regularly on Fox News.

Against the backdrop of Mr. Trump's G.O.P., the idea had been that Mr. Hawley was different. Sworn in at 39 years old, he ascended to the Senate in part by selling himself as an intellectual in a movement that increasingly seemed to shun intellect. Whereas Mr. Trump fired off brash tweets littered with random capitalizations and adverbs like ''bigly,'' Mr. Hawley published essays on subjects like medieval theology.

Throughout his life, whether as a student at Stanford or a law professor in Missouri, Mr. Hawley had impressed people as ''thoughtful'' and ''sophisticated,'' a person of ''depth.'' And as a growing number of conservatives saw it, he also had the proper ideas. From the time he was a teenager, he had criticized the free-market allegiance at the center of Republican orthodoxy; when he arrived in Washington, he immediately launched into a crusade against Big Tech. The conservative think-tank class embraced him as someone who had the right vocabulary, the right suits and the right worldview to translate Mr. Trump's vague populist instincts into a fresh blueprint for his party's future -- someone elite enough, in other words, to be entrusted with the banner of anti-elitism.

Which is in part why, when Mr. Hawley became the first senator to announce that he would object to the certification of Joseph R. Biden Jr. as president, many of his allies underwent a public mourning of sorts. They'd expected as much from, say, Ted Cruz -- as one senior Senate aide put it, the Texas Republican, who had filibustered Obamacare while its namesake was still in office, had always been transparent about his motivations. But Mr. Hawley?

To survey Mr. Hawley's life is indeed to see a consistency in the broad strokes of his political cosmology. Yet interviews with more than 50 people close to Mr. Hawley cast light on what, in the haze of charm and first impressions, his admirers often seemed to miss: an attachment to the steady cadence of ascension, and a growing comfort with doing what might be necessary to maintain it.

Mr. Hawley's Stanford adviser, the historian David Kennedy, struggled to reconcile his memories with the now-infamous image of the senator, fist raised in solidarity with pro-Trump demonstrators shortly before they descended on the Capitol. ''The Josh I knew was not an angry young person,'' he recalled. ''But when I see him now on television, he just always seems angry -- really angry.''

Dr. Kennedy acknowledged that Mr. Hawley was just one of many Republicans in the Trump era who had steeped their brand in ''anger and resentment and grievance.'' But for many of those once close to Mr. Hawley, that was the point: How did a man who seemed so special turn out to be just like everyone else?

And what, they wondered, did Josh Hawley have to be so angry about?

An un-misspent youth

In the late 1990s, the Jesuit high school Mr. Hawley attended in Kansas City, Mo., turned to him for damage control.

''There was a group of seniors in our class who had a party that got out of hand, and it became a news story,'' recalled Ben Capoccia, a classmate. ''They had Josh and I go on the news to make it look like we were not all these bad kids.'' He added, ''I know what he said was much more eloquent than what I said.''

Mr. Hawley was an academic star, champion debater and National Merit finalist who won Rockhurst High's Kloster award, given to ''a young man who consistently puts the welfare of his fellow students above his own interests.''

But in recent weeks, some of Mr. Hawley's old classmates and teachers have been aghast at his role in undermining confidence in America's elections.

''I've been very disappointed to see who he has become,'' said Kristen Ruehter-Thompson, a close friend growing up who was once Mr. Hawley's prom date.

Even his middle school principal, Barbara Weibling, has weighed in. ''I'm not surprised he's a politician and that he's shooting for the presidency,'' said Ms. Weibling, a vocal supporter of Democrats. ''The only thing is, I think he had a strict moral upbringing, and I was really disappointed he would suck the country into the lies that Trump told about the election. I just think that's wrong.''

There was never any question that Mr. Hawley was going places. Born on the last day of the 1970s, he was raised with an eye toward the future and a destiny aimed beyond Lexington, a small town about an hour east of Kansas City, where a Civil War cannonball remains embedded in a column at the courthouse. His views and trajectory were shaped by his parents, Ron and Virginia, who met at Fort Hays State University in Kansas. She was Kansas Junior Miss in 1973 and graduated summa cum laude, majoring in English. Ron was a football player who worked as a probation officer after college, before becoming a prosperous banker.

Theirs was a traditional, patriarchal and churchgoing household. After pursuing a career as a teacher, Mrs. Hawley ''became a speaker and leader of Christian spiritual renewal conferences and retreats in Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas,'' according to an account in a Kansas paper. She also ran prayer groups at the family's Methodist church.

Ms. Ruehter-Thompson said Mr. Hawley's ''dad was more of the influence,'' adding, ''There were always discussions of Rush Limbaugh.''

From early on, Mr. Hawley harbored a deep fascination with politics. At 12, he wrote about the 1992 presidential election for his school paper, breaking down how many moderators there would be at the debates; three years later, in writings recently unearthed by The Kansas City Star, he expressed sympathy for militia movements in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing. (''Many of the people populating these movements are not radical, right-wing, pro-assault weapons freaks as they were originally stereotyped,'' he wrote.)

Later in middle school, he dragged friends to movies like ''Nixon.'' He also signed their eighth grade yearbooks with variations of ''Josh Hawley 2024,'' according to Ms. Ruehter-Thompson and another classmate, Andrea Randle, as well as Tim Crosson, the vocal music teacher at the school. (''Sounds like revisionist history,'' a Hawley spokeswoman said. ''How about they produce a hard copy.'')

Mr. Crosson said he and Mr. Hawley would spar about politics. ''He would come into my room and announce the number of days left in Bill Clinton's term, and I would fire back, 'Four more years,''' Mr. Crosson recalled.

Ms. Randle, a Black classmate, was frustrated that Mr. Hawley didn't do enough to respond to the police killing of George Floyd last May. After initially expressing sympathy, he later accused an alliance of Democrats and the ''woke mob'' of dividing the country.

''We played around after school, and I remember him pulling my hair after history class, that's what I remember, so it's so bizarre,'' she said. ''Me and my friends have talked about it, even over Christmas. Was he always like this and we didn't know?''

At Rockhurst, an all-boys school, a populist ideology began to evolve that didn't align neatly with either political party. Mr. Hawley seemed most disturbed by the veneration of individual liberty and pluralism in American society. In a ''Young Voices'' column for The Springfield News-Leader, he called the ''rights of the individual vs. the rights of the community'' a ''fierce debate that so dominates our age.'' ''The philosophy of radical individualism,'' he wrote, was both ''cause and symptom of the continuing decline of America's shared civic life.''

The world according to Hawley

College is often one's first exposure to knotty questions of identity, politics and faith, but Mr. Hawley moved through Stanford University with unusual conviction. Writing for The News-Leader the summer after his freshman year, in 1999, he invoked a recent speech by his school's provost, Condoleezza Rice, to argue for a ''fresh discussion of first principles and a fundamental rethinking of the role of government and the aims of freedom.'' He was 19.

On campus, Mr. Hawley wrote columns for the conservative Stanford Review and was active in student ministry groups. He described his worldview in gauzy phrases like ''a proper sense of shared citizenship,'' but drew a clearer line on at least one issue. Above his bed he hung a sepia-toned poster of a shirtless male model cradling a newborn; when asked by classmates, he said it reflected his fervent stance against abortion. (The Hawley spokeswoman said the poster is ''not something he remembers. But he's proudly pro-life.'')

Political aspirations seemed likely. Classmates recall his careful attention to his image, how he wouldn't sit for a photo until a stray red Solo cup had been disposed of. Still, he was not viewed as a firebrand; he seemed more animated by the pursuit of an intellectual identity than a partisan affiliation. His first principles were guided by his Christianity.

Mr. Hawley sharpened his thinking in conversations with his adviser, Dr. Kennedy. Americans, Mr. Hawley argued, were suffering a crisis of ''loneliness,'' prisoners of a culture of individualism unmoored from any shared sense of purpose. Hastening this plight, in his view, was the American right's devotion to the free market.

Dr. Kennedy was somewhat surprised to learn years later that his advisee was evangelical; for him, Mr. Hawley's ideological instincts had called to mind ''Rerum Novarum,'' the encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 condemning unfettered capitalism and endorsing measures like trade unionism as means of reinforcing the dignity of the ***working class***.

''I do think there was something reflexively present in Josh from early on that was aligned with that kind of thinking,'' Dr. Kennedy said.

After graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 2002 and spending a year as a teaching intern at an all-boys school in London, Mr. Hawley went on to Yale Law School. He seemed torn between politics or a life in the ivory tower he would ultimately spend so much time castigating. Both Dr. Kennedy and a Yale classmate remember him on the ''knife's edge,'' as the former put it, of pursuing a doctorate in history.

In other words, his first imperative was not -- did not appear to be -- power.

''My impression of Josh back then was he was kind of what we need in our democracy,'' recalled Ian Bassin, a Yale classmate turned harsh critic. ''I always found him to be curious to hear why I came to conclusions I did, and vice versa. And I always felt what brought him to his conclusions were very honest, very genuine, very principled views.''

Several classmates, however, observed a change in Mr. Hawley toward the end of his time at Yale. On a campus where success is often measured in Supreme Court clerkships, ambition is a given. But it was nonetheless striking when Mr. Hawley suddenly seemed more interested in winning prestigious posts than in doing the work once he won them.

A former classmate recalled Mr. Hawley's excitement when both were named editors at the Yale Law Journal. Eventually, however, their friendship frayed. Mr. Hawley was very engaged, this person said, when his role meant collecting the business cards of Federalist Society members as he asked them to contribute articles. But when it came to finalizing footnotes the night before deadline, fellow editors often found that he forgot to check his email.

Irina Manta recalls a similar experience. She and Mr. Hawley were rivals at the campus Federalist Society chapter and served together as vice presidents of events. ''I tried really hard to work with him,'' Ms. Manta said. But as the year went on, she found herself organizing events and debates alone. ''When I would send emails, I just wouldn't hear back from him,'' she said. ''He wasn't exactly into working hard if he could help it.'' (Ms. Manta wrote an article about her time at Yale with Mr. Hawley for USA Today on Jan. 5.)

In joining the Federalist Society, Mr. Hawley had moved into the orbit of an ascendant legal community that, for a conservative on campus, offered the clearest avenue to power. Eventually he defeated Ms. Manta for the Yale chapter's presidency, a title he embraced proudly. (The Hawley spokeswoman said that Ms. Manta was ''bitter'' about losing the election, and that Mr. Hawley had an ''outstanding record in law school'' that ''speaks for itself.'')

The members he was looking to impress were not necessarily his own chapter's. In August 2005, when John Roberts was asked during his Supreme Court confirmation hearings about his ties to the Federalist Society, Mr. Hawley had his back. In an op-ed in The Hartford Courant, he chided Democrats for attempting to portray the group as a ''secret society of scary people.'' ''Far from subverting the country's legal order,'' he argued, ''Federalists seek to strengthen it.''

In 2007, a year after finishing law school, Mr. Hawley moved to Washington to clerk for Chief Justice Roberts.

One of his fellow clerks was Erin Morrow. She had been just one year ahead of Mr. Hawley at Yale, but it wasn't until the two shared an office that they became close.

Mr. Hawley would later occasionally adopt the folksy affect of a farm child, but Ms. Morrow was the real thing. She had grown up on a cattle farm in New Mexico and, as a student at Texas A&M, had been a member of the All-American Livestock Judging Team. (One of her professors would recall her as among his most impressive students ''in her understanding of what is really important in beef-cattle breeding.'') Yale classmates remembered her as brilliant and unpretentious. She and Mr. Hawley wed in 2010.

When Thomas Lambert, who was on the appointments committee at the University of Missouri School of Law, learned that the Hawleys were open to moving to Columbia, he jumped at the chance to hire them. ''It's really quite a feather in your cap to hire law clerks from the Supreme Court,'' he said. ''And here was an opportunity to get two.'' The couple began teaching in the fall of 2011.

Much of their first years in Missouri centered on their faith. They led a Bible study at an Evangelical Presbyterian church and mentored Christian law students. Mr. Hawley wrote about faith and politics, arguing in a 2015 Notre Dame Law Review essay for a ''return to political theology.'' Contending that religion had been ''quarantined'' and ''roped off'' from politics and law, he railed against the postwar liberal order and called for putting ''the state's sovereignty in its proper and subordinate place.''

Not long after returning to Missouri, Mr. Hawley had begun asking Republican consultants to coffee. One of them suggested a state legislative bid. The consultant recalled Mr. Hawley laughing. He wanted to run for attorney general.

In Missouri, 30 counties account for most of the primary vote. The consultant advised Mr. Hawley to contact the local Republican Party chairs and ask to speak at their events. He had a winning pitch. In 2014, he helped represent Hobby Lobby in its successful Supreme Court challenge to the Affordable Care Act's contraception mandate. Conservatives enjoyed hearing him talk about the case.

The consultant recalled Mr. Hawley contacting him after traversing the state. ''OK,'' he asked, ''now what?''

Becoming a politician

As successful as these tours were, Mr. Hawley's growing coterie of advisers realized quickly that their candidate disdained, as one termed it, the ''people part'' of campaigning -- the unannounced visits to local diners, the niche roundtable conversations with voters.

Yet when it came to selling himself to kingmakers, he thrived.

In a campaign season that coincided with Mr. Trump's political ascent, Mr. Hawley found an eager audience among Missouri's donor class and Republican elders. He dazzled them by seeming to be everything Mr. Trump was not: tempered, thoughtful, a reservoir of adjectives like ''Burkean.'' When asked about their first meetings with Mr. Hawley, powerful people in Missouri recalled being enchanted not so much by his vision for office, but by the fact that he sounded smart.

''He can get up and talk about issues and look you straight in the eye the whole time,'' said Daniel Mehan, president of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce. He added, ''He impresses you as someone who knows what he's talking about.''

Among Mr. Hawley's first -- and most important -- enthusiasts was John Danforth, the former senator and elder statesman of Missouri Republicans. His blessing was crucial for an ambitious young man looking to scale the state's political ranks.

The two had met years before, when Mr. Danforth visited Yale for a dinner. They stayed in touch. ''He referred me to a couple of books: One was by a British politician and political philosopher named Danny Kruger, and the other by Yuval Levin,'' Mr. Danforth recalled. ''And I thought, well, this is interesting.'' He saw in Mr. Hawley ''a real intellectual,'' a conservative version of his old friend Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Yet when asked, Mr. Danforth couldn't recall what it was he thought Mr. Hawley wanted to accomplish, as attorney general or as a senator. ''I don't know that I had an impression of that,'' he said after a pause.

Mr. Danforth helped Mr. Hawley gain the support of the state's major Republican contributors. Chief among them was David Humphreys, Mr. Hawley's largest donor, who has given millions of dollars to his campaigns and political action committee.

People close to Mr. Hawley recalled his skill in convincing donors that he saw the world as they did; as one early booster put it, it was as if he held up a mirror as he spoke to them. His rejection of Republican economic orthodoxy was well documented, but he convinced libertarian-minded conservatives like Mr. Humphreys and David McIntosh, president of the Club for Growth, of his devotion to the free market.

The most memorable commercial of the campaign featured the candidate surrounded by ladders being climbed by men in suits. In the ad, he castigated ''career politicians just climbing the ladder, using one office to get another.'' Yet shortly after he was sworn in as attorney general in January 2017, Republicans including Mr. Danforth and the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, began urging him to challenge Missouri's vulnerable Democratic senator, Claire McCaskill. Mr. Hawley obliged.

His actual job appeared to take a back seat.

''I don't think he had much interest in that office, really,'' said J. Andrew Hirth, who served as deputy general counsel under Mr. Hawley's predecessor, Chris Koster, a Democrat. ''From the moment he got there, he was looking toward the Senate.''

He was increasingly absent from the office. Sometimes he was meeting with potential backers for his Senate campaign; one local paper reported that he was leaving work midday to exercise at a gym about a half-hour away. A photograph of a casually clothed Mr. Hawley buying wine on a workday afternoon circulated on social media.

The attorney general's office was quickly hollowed out of talent as Mr. Hawley appointed key officials with stronger religious than managerial credentials. The most notable was Michael Quinlan, who was a ''mediator and conflict coach'' at a Christian marriage counseling group when he was recruited to oversee civil litigation.

He was hired despite having been frequently quoted defending a local bishop who was found guilty of a misdemeanor after shielding a priest who took pornographic pictures of girls. Mr. Hawley's aides said they hadn't been aware of those comments. Mr. Quinlan later departed after a female employee complained about receiving an unwelcome lecture from him about her sex life; he denied accusations of acting improperly.

Experienced lawyers who defended state agencies against lawsuits headed for the exits. Only one litigator who had worked under Mr. Hawley's predecessor stayed on in the main office, in Jefferson City. As morale continued to sag, eight of Mr. Hawley's own hires quit too.

Amid the turmoil, outside public relations consultants took an unusually prominent role. In 2017, before a raid on massage parlors in Springfield, the consultants told the attorney general's staff that they were angling for an appearance with the CNN anchor Jake Tapper. They instructed aides that Mr. Hawley, ''should be wearing some kind of law enforcement garb -- like a police jacket and hat,'' according to internal emails.

During the raids, Mr. Hawley gathered reporters in a strip-mall parking lot, his expression grim and a large badge hanging around his neck.

''Josh was the chief law enforcement officer of the state,'' the Hawley spokeswoman said. ''He wore a badge.''

A 'champion in the Senate'

When Mr. Hawley arrived in Washington in January 2019 as Missouri's junior senator, he positioned himself as the intellectual heir of Trumpism -- the politician who could integrate the president's populist instincts into a comprehensive ideology for the G.O.P. In his maiden speech, he summoned the lamentation of cultural erosion he'd been refining since high school, arguing that the ''great American middle'' had been overlooked by a ''new, arrogant aristocracy.''

For conservatives who felt Mr. Trump had identified uncomfortable truths about the party despite ultimately governing like a typical Republican, Mr. Hawley's arrival was timely. That July, conservative writers and policy experts gathered at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington for the inaugural National Conservatism Conference, meant to map a departure from the corporate-class policies that for decades had defined conservatism. Mr. Hawley, who in his keynote speech decried the ''cosmopolitan consensus,'' was introduced as the fledgling movement's ''champion in the Senate.''

He did not discourage whispers about 2024, and some younger Trump campaign aides, who saw him as the ''refined'' version of their boss, mused privately about working for him should he run. It wasn't long before Donald Trump Jr. was inviting him to lunch at his father's Washington hotel.

Even so, he baffled his party's leadership as he tried to derail the confirmation of some of Mr. Trump's conservative judicial nominees, deeming their records on social issues like abortion and same-sex marriage insufficiently pure.

But it was Mr. Trump's refusal to accept the election results that offered the first real stress test for the brand Mr. Hawley had labored to cultivate -- whether it was possible to be both the darling of the conservative intelligentsia and the ''fighter'' the party's base craved.

He had reason to believe it was. He was comfortable paying ''the price of admission,'' as one Republican official put it, to a place in Mr. Trump's G.O.P., in part because nothing in his short political career had suggested there would ever be a cost. Early on, few had blinked when he embraced the president during a visit to Missouri. He had courted far-right figures during his campaign, yet still received plum speaking slots at high-minded conferences.

And so on Dec. 30, Josh Hawley became the first Senate Republican to announce his intent to challenge Mr. Biden's congressional certification.

Mr. Hawley's team was adamant that he had not been motivated by a potential presidential bid in 2024, but among other things had been moved by a December video conference with 30 constituents who said they felt ''disenfranchised'' by Mr. Biden's victory.

''He knows the state well after two campaigns, and I think he knew that Missourians supported the president,'' said James Harris, a longtime political adviser to Mr. Hawley.

He tried to thread the needle as he always had, wrapping his objection not in fevered ''STOP THE STEAL'' tweets but in questions about the constitutionality of mail-in voting in Pennsylvania.

And, had there been no violence, perhaps his gambit would have worked. But when Mr. Hawley and others lent their voices to Mr. Trump's lie of rampant voter fraud, people listened.

Mr. Hawley spent much of Jan. 6 hiding with his colleagues in a Senate committee room as Trump supporters stormed the Capitol. He sat hunched against the wall, eyes fixed on his phone, as Republicans and Democrats alike blamed him for the madness. Later that evening, when senators safely reconvened to finish certifying the election, Mr. Hawley forged ahead with his objection.

The reckoning was swift. Simon & Schuster dropped plans to publish his book, ''The Tyranny of Big Tech.'' Major donors severed ties. Mr. Danforth called supporting Mr. Hawley ''the biggest mistake of my life.'' His wife, Erin, was collateral damage: Kirkland & Ellis, the law firm where she had briefly practiced, purged an old biography from its website. She was scheduled to teach a course in constitutional litigation at the University of Missouri, but ''after the events of Jan. 6, people were not so happy about that,'' said Professor Lambert, who brought the couple to the school; in response, he had stressed that ''you cannot hold her responsible for her husband's views.''

Yet something else happened, too. Mr. Hawley saw a surge in small-dollar donations to his campaign, making January his best fund-raising month since 2018. As Axios first reported, the $969,000 he amassed easily offset defections from corporate political action committees. Added to that was the applause of the Senate Conservatives Fund, which has since bundled more than $300,000 for Mr. Hawley.

Mr. Hawley had a choice. He could commit to his burgeoning fighter persona. ''My No. 1 piece of advice was: You can't go back on this now. You go back on this now, and you make absolutely everyone angry,'' recalled his adviser Gregg Keller.

Or he could try to reclaim the scholarly identity that had long propelled him. Oren Cass, the founder of American Compass, a think tank that aims to advance a more ***working-class***-friendly conservatism, had frequently praised Mr. Hawley for defying Republican dogma. But he called the senator's objections to the election ''obnoxious'' and ''self-serving.'' He urged him to acknowledge his ''failure of judgment.''

As his advisers saw it, the lessons of the Trump era -- that success in today's G.O.P. means never having to say you're sorry -- were clear. And Josh Hawley was nothing if not a star student.

In the weeks since, Mr. Hawley has vowed to sue the ''woke mob'' at Simon & Schuster for dropping his book. He's written for The New York Post about ''the muzzling of America.'' He has appeared on Fox News to discuss said muzzling. And while he said shortly after the riot that he would not run for president in 2024, his advisers have continued to hype him as ''one of the favorites'' of a potential Republican primary field, as Mr. Keller put it.

Mr. Hawley tested his new cri de coeur on a live audience on Feb. 26, at the gathering of the conservative faithful in Orlando. ''You know, on Jan. 6, I objected to the Electoral College certification,'' he began. ''Maybe you heard about it.''

The room erupted. ''I did,'' he went on, ''I stood up --'' His words were drowned out by cheers.

It had not been the mood of his speech. But as he paused to take in the standing ovation, Mr. Hawley seemed happy.

Sheelagh McNeill and Alain Delaquérière contributed research.Sheelagh McNeill and Alain Delaquérière contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/07/us/politics/josh-hawley.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/07/us/politics/josh-hawley.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Those who know Senator Josh Hawley hear a change in tone. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

A 1998 high school year- book photo of Josh Hawley at an awards ceremony. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROCKHURST HIGH SCHOOL) (A16)

Mr. Hawley at the joint session of Congress on Jan. 6 to confirm the Electoral College results. He was one of the leaders of the Republican faction that objected. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS) (A16-A17)

Mr. Hawley, then Missouri's attorney general and a Senate candidate, at a rally with the president in 2018, top. A cam- paign stop at G.O.P. headquarters in Jefferson City, above. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM BRENNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

RYAN CHRISTOPHER JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

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[***America’s Other Front Line***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61V8-BMX1-DXY4-X0KD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2104 words

**Byline:** Kristin Lin

**Highlight:** As the Biden administration proposes additional pandemic relief, nonprofit workers see a country facing a growing crisis.

**Body**

As the Biden administration proposes additional pandemic relief, nonprofit workers see a country facing a growing crisis.

Kerri Lopez-Howell has spent the past year pivoting. Before the pandemic, her nonprofit, the Sunnyside Foundation, distributed education grants for the Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson, Ariz. In March, it refocused its efforts to distribute relief funds to over 2,000 low-income families in the area, a coronavirus hot spot in the state. And in the weeks since the $900 billion stimulus package was signed into law, she’s turned her attention to the families that will still struggle to get federal relief.

Ms. Lopez-Howell is part of America’s other pandemic front line — of direct service providers who have extended critical relief to communities during the eight months that a Republican-led Senate failed to pass an additional stimulus bill, and now as President Biden proposes a $1.9 trillion emergency relief package.

The difficult choices they’ve witnessed individuals and families make — between medicine and food, internet and electricity — are a microcosm of the pandemic’s continued and overlapping burdens on people across the country. We surveyed social workers, food pantry employees, legal services providers and other nonprofit staff members about how the pandemic has affected the communities they serve.

Their responses, edited for clarity and length, reflect a mounting crisis for the millions of Americans who face long-term unemployment, hunger, cascading bills and threats of eviction — as well as how federal support would affect those struggling to survive right now.

‘Families are at deeper risk of becoming unstable and losing their housing.’

In the San Francisco Bay Area, unemployment and lost wages are causing family homelessness at rates we have never seen before. Families are at deeper risk of becoming unstable and losing their housing. We’ve had to extend rental assistance to prevent them from falling into homelessness again.

In 2019, we served 895 families, with 315 of those families exiting homelessness, but in 2020, only 102 families have been able to do so. Reduced capacity at our shelter program and an uptick in domestic violence among families sheltering in place have resulted in more families facing the grim reality of homelessness without any support. — Kyriell M. Noon, chief executive, Hamilton Families, San Francisco

My organization supports young women who are facing homelessness and hardship on the streets. Many now face greater challenges because of the pandemic. Some are staying in abusive or dangerous situations just to keep a roof over their heads. For pregnant women who are staying in shelters, the stress of their due date is only compounded by the stress of trying to stay safe in the most adverse circumstances.

With job loss, some women are resorting to sex work out of desperation, despite the exposure risks. I worry about a current and future uptick in human trafficking based on these trends. So many women are already survivors of trauma, but there is no telling the traumas that will come out of this pandemic, especially without meaningful coronavirus relief. — Brianna Weck, community engagement manager, HER Resiliency Center, Washington and Baltimore

As a case manager for a nonprofit that serves older adults, veterans and adults with disabilities in Texas, I’ve seen social services move online as a way to more efficiently get assistance to people without exposing them to the virus. And yet, this only exacerbates the digital divide. Many of my clients don’t even have a phone. And yet, in the few communities where rental assistance or Covid vaccines are available, the application process is online. As a result, many of my clients feel invisible and unimportant. The decisions our representatives make today will have impacts a decade from now. I hope they choose not to give up on the people who need them the most. — Kendra Hessel, financial and housing stability case manager, Family Eldercare, Austin, Texas

Despite the eviction moratorium, homelessness and its catalyst, housing instability, have been on the rise in Southern California. Our agency is receiving over 200 direct solicitations for rental assistance per month, more than double the rate at this time last year. At the same time that we have been asked to stay at home and shelter in place, traditional shelter and housing resources for persons experiencing homelessness have receded. Mass shelter settings are simply too great a risk for many of the clients we serve, including those who are elderly or immuno-compromised. — John Paul Bryan, grants and data manager, Mercy House Living Centers, Orange County, Calif.

‘So many families have had hours cut at work or lost jobs and need just a little hand up.’

Since March 2020, we have distributed over 15.1 million pounds of food to nearly a quarter of a million people, and those numbers continue to rise. I recently spoke with Sherrie, who picked up a box of food at a distribution. She and her family — her husband and two children — have had bad luck since the pandemic. Sherrie, her son and daughter are all laid off from work, and her husband, who requires dialysis three times per week, also needs insulin.

“We’ve had to take out high-interest loans just for groceries and gas,” Sherrie said. “This box of food means we won’t be spending so much on groceries this month. I can buy my husband’s insulin and he won’t have to miss doses.” Sherrie’s story is unfortunately not unique. So many families have had hours cut at work or lost jobs and need just a little hand up. — Jaime Thomas, director of communications and marketing, Feeding America, Kentucky’s Heartland, Elizabethtown, Ky.

Since the coronavirus crisis began, our six organizations have seen the need for emergency food relief climb to unprecedented levels. From August through November last year, we served over 10.5 million meals to New Yorkers in need — more than double what we served during the same period in 2019, and far more than we served during the first four months of the crisis. As we look ahead to the vaccine rollout, we know it will still be many months before New York City’s economy has any hope of full recovery — especially for those who work in the service sector, where we have seen profound levels of need and precarity. — Stephen Grimaldi, executive director, New York Common Pantry, and Greg Silverman, executive director, West Side Campaign Against Hunger, on behalf of the New York City Frontline Food Collaborative, New York

In some rural areas, the need for food support continues to increase. Mobile pantries we’ve recently hosted in Evart, Mich. (population 1,793), have served nearly 100 more families than the ones we hosted a few months ago. Pandemic-related closures, like at a [*glass factory*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cadillacnews.com%2Fnews%2Fvitro-glass-plant-set-to-close-by-end-of-june%2Farticle_575ef2f9-b41c-5b9f-89cc-fc18458f09ff.html&amp;data=04%7C01%7C%7Cea028397948541c0f07b08d8bcb8719f%7Cb1f9e34f11214c708f88aff49a1ef321%7C1%7C0%7C637466847687386390%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&amp;sdata=z7DBBudVSp5TNlfFVIXBlLYoJm6G9Lab9gHqq7vwI2k%3D&amp;reserved=0) that employed over 100 people, have intensified the need for food in areas that already have few employers. A woman recently called one of our partners near Evart and said she and her husband couldn’t afford food because they had to purchase new glasses. She’s among many who have never before faced hunger but are now seeking food assistance. — Molly Kooi, communication manager, Feeding America West Michigan, Comstock Park, Mich.

‘As each day passes, bills are piling up.’

Every day, our frontline social workers support families who are already below or near the poverty line. As each day passes, bills are piling up. Many are displaced workers who would use relief funding to pay their rent, feed their families and keep their utility payments from spiraling out of control. For many, the economic anxiety has translated into emotional anxiety and depression. Fear of illness, social isolation, economic insecurity, disruption of routine and loss of loved ones have become chronic mental health issues, especially among young adults. — Celeste Matheson, director of development and marketing, Center for Youth and Family Solutions, Peoria, Ill.

I grew up in a ***working-class*** household. Before the pandemic, my mother worked at a recreation center and as a gig worker, joining the growing ranks of[*Black workers patching together part-time jobs and side hustles*](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cadillacnews.com%2Fnews%2Fvitro-glass-plant-set-to-close-by-end-of-june%2Farticle_575ef2f9-b41c-5b9f-89cc-fc18458f09ff.html&amp;data=04%7C01%7C%7Cea028397948541c0f07b08d8bcb8719f%7Cb1f9e34f11214c708f88aff49a1ef321%7C1%7C0%7C637466847687386390%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&amp;sdata=z7DBBudVSp5TNlfFVIXBlLYoJm6G9Lab9gHqq7vwI2k%3D&amp;reserved=0). After that income disappeared, my mom has been relying on unemployment benefits, and particularly the $600 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation supplement, to make ends meet. With a genetic heart condition and lupus, searching for work with lots of public contact is too risky for her. While there is tons of promise in President Biden’s $1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief package, real relief will require expanding programs to provide much-needed funds to families until the pandemic is over and making unemployment insurance more inclusive by covering immigrant workers and addressing the racist design of a 50-state system where the maximum weekly benefit is $235 in Mississippi but $855 in Massachusetts. — Branden Snyder, executive director, Detroit Action, Detroit

The child care sector has been affected significantly by the Covid-19 pandemic. Since reopening in July, nearly half of One Hope United centers have had to close classrooms (for a total of 135 days) or close an entire center (for a total of 57 days). We recently decided to close two centers permanently. Federal dollars are needed to provide relief to organizations as we work to prevent staff reduction and center closures, and to continue to provide quality child care. — Charles A. Montorio-Archer, president and chief executive, One Hope United, Chicago

‘Relief needs to ensure that mass eviction and utility shut-offs don’t happen in concentrated ZIP codes.’

Sunnyside Foundation’s Emergency Relief Fund and Immigrant Relief Fund have served 2,059 individuals with rent, mortgages and utility payments, and around 1,725 families with grocery and food needs. I’m seeing $1,700 to $1,900 electricity bills because of late fees and backlogs. My phone calls to landlords have increased in the past month.

Relief needs to ensure that mass eviction and utility shut-offs don’t happen in concentrated ZIP codes. Mass displacement is not going to be a “nationwide” issue. It is going to affect some ZIP codes, neighborhoods and even school districts more than others. Communities need equitable relief. One example: Following the lead of grass-roots organizers, Sunnyside Foundation has strategically distributed money to families making less than $20,000 before the pandemic. — Kerri Lopez-Howell, executive director, Sunnyside Foundation, Tucson, Ariz.

The National Congress of American Indians represents and serves over 500 sovereign tribal governments. Every year, the federal government neglects funding billions of dollars of legal obligations and treaty responsibilities to tribal nations, resulting in far worse access to health care, education and financial resources. Covid-19 has shown the deadly consequences of this systemic underfunding. According to the C.D.C., compared with white communities, Native Americans are 3.5 times more likely to contract Covid. Younger Native Americans under the age of 40 are over 10 times more likely to die from it. We cannot go into the next national crisis — whether it be a pandemic, or a climate change catastrophe, or a major depression — without resolving this deadly inequity. — Fawn Sharp, president, National Congress of American Indians, Quinault Indian Nation

The Covid-19 crisis has intensified the struggles our clients — many of whom are poor, Black and brown, and other minorities, women, children and immigrants — face in order to merely survive. They have lost their jobs or are having to work in unsafe conditions. They cannot afford housing and will soon face homelessness. Their children do not have access to remote learning and are falling behind. They are incurring crushing debt. They cannot get health care. They are going hungry because they cannot pay for food. What they need is security, stability and compassion, through long-term housing subsidies, increased unemployment insurance benefits and a proper living wage, and access to health care and education. — Adriene Holder, attorney in charge of civil practice, The Legal Aid Society, New York

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PHOTO: Cars waiting in a line in Los Angeles last month for free groceries. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Robyn Beck/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**Body**

A marriage of art and activism, the artist's searing photographs reveal the human toll of economic injustice.

WHEN GENERAL MOTORS announced plans to slash its domestic work force in 2018, company stock soared 5 percent. LaToya Ruby Frazier, a Chicago-based artist whose photographs and videos champion unsung members of the ***working class***, was furious. She decided to embark upon a new series devoted to the autoworkers who were contending with the possible loss of their plant in Lordstown, Ohio; they would be the subject of an upcoming exhibition and a published photo essay. But before any of that could happen, the workers had to agree to let her into their lives. Frazier traveled to their union hall and sat in the foyer as the members filed in for a big meeting that would begin with a vote on her.

She was both astonished by their diversity -- they were young and old, Black and white, male and female -- and aware that she wasn't necessarily welcome. ''As a Black woman, I know what it feels like when someone's eyes rest on me in a hostile way,'' she said. ''And I think they have a right to do that. ... You're being told awful news that is going to destroy your livelihood, your income, your family, your community. These people were not in a good mood when I got there.'' The doors closed and Frazier waited, heart pounding, while Local 1112 of the United Auto Workers union decided whether to grant her unprecedented access.

The vote was a unanimous yes. The doors opened and Frazier strode inside with four cameras slung across her chest and shoulders. She immediately dropped to the floor and began crawling around the perimeter of the hall, capturing the expressions of anguish, confusion and disbelief written on the faces of people whose lives were falling apart.

Frazier's radical empathy has brought her to places whose occupants have every reason to distrust outsiders. She photographs communities gutted by unemployment, poverty, racism and environmental degradation, seeking out subjects dehumanized or ignored by the mainstream media. At 39, she sees her life's work as an archive of humanity, one that particularly documents the courage and diversity of blue-collar workers and the consequences of the policies that condemn them to struggle. For her, this is what it means to be a patriot. ''I am showing these dark things about America because I love my country and countrymen,'' she said. ''When you love somebody, you tell them the truth. Even if it hurts.''

Socially conscious artistic practices may be in vogue these days, but Frazier goes beyond hollow claims of ''raising awareness'' with an essay in a magazine or a show at an art museum. She is the rare photographer who approaches relationships with her subjects as lifelong commitments, and who tries to make substantial, material differences in their lives. Frazier's conviction in art that involves -- and transforms -- entire communities aligns her with Rick Lowe, an artist who, with his collaborators, famously converted an underserved swath of Houston into a nexus for housing, art programming and neighborhood development activities. She also carries on the legacy of the German artist Joseph Beuys, who believed that participatory art could heal society. Frazier, though, pursues these conceptual ideals while still producing formally elegant images using traditional techniques. Working mainly with a medium-format camera and black-and-white film, her intimate domestic portraits and expressive landscapes are classically beautiful, even when they depict harrowing realities. Making photographs as poetic as they are political is, for Frazier, a way of honoring her subjects. ''She doesn't pop in and pop out,'' said the artist Carrie Mae Weems, Frazier's friend and early mentor. ''These are long-term projects that deeply matter, not only to her but to the community and, ultimately, I think, to the nation.''

This fall, Frazier will publish ''Flint Is Family in Three Acts,'' a record of her five-year collaboration with people affected by the ongoing contaminated-water crisis in Flint, Mich. ''The Last Cruze,'' a formidable and moving volume of portraits and interviews with the autoworkers, was released in December. ''If you take the work seriously, it changes how you see people,'' said the artist Doug DuBois, another friend and mentor, who taught Frazier at Syracuse University. Her work has the power to propel viewers ''from empathy to activism,'' he said. ''If you get it, you're going to get angry.''

Frazier herself is fierce, prone to eloquent, impromptu diatribes on oppression in its many forms, from Reaganomics to redlining. She wears gold-rimmed glasses and her hair in an Afro, a look she describes as ''militant nerd.'' And she's funny -- quick to find the dark humor in bleak situations. A few years ago, when a doctor told her that lupus, an incurable autoimmune disease, had rendered her skin photosensitive to the point where she can't safely go outside on sunny days or even sit under fluorescent lights, she couldn't help but laugh. ''So I've become one with my medium?'' she asked, her raspy voice incredulous. ''I'm cracking up. He doesn't think it's funny, but it's like, how ironic.''

IF FRAZIER IS drawn to families, it's because she knows that the ways in which they form -- and fracture -- often reveal larger histories. The story of her own family is a chronicle of the rise and fall of American industry. Her ancestors moved to Braddock, Pa., in the early 1900s, joining the first Great Migration that brought more than a million Black workers from Southern towns to Northern cities in search of better economic opportunities and to escape Jim Crow. Braddock is home to the Edgar Thomson Steel Works, Andrew Carnegie's first mill. Frazier's grandmother knew it as a bustling Pittsburgh suburb with department stores, theaters and restaurants. But by the time Frazier was born in 1982, the industry had collapsed. Businesses folded, basic amenities had become scarce and the streets were lined with the wreckage of empty homes. Most of the white population fled, and the people who remained lived in exile from the lives they had planned on leading. Frazier spent her infancy with her mother, a nurse's aide and bartender, her father, an artist and interior designer, and her two siblings in a public housing project wedged between the Monongahela River and the factory that had once been the lifeblood of the town.

Frazier's earliest memories are of the mill. The flames from the flare stacks would burn blue at night, and thick soot that could turn a white shirt gray by lunchtime billowed in the air, staining cars, streets and windows. ''If you're growing up in Braddock, Pa., in 1982, you're looking at some serious devastation,'' she said. The union-busting, erosion of social welfare programs and outsourcing of jobs plunged countless Americans -- especially women, people of color and blue-collar workers -- into poverty. Frazier grew up watching the crack epidemic infiltrate the community and, with it, the rise of war on drugs policies effectively designed to criminalize the poor. Her mother, Cynthia, abused crack cocaine at the time. From the age of 5, Frazier lived with her maternal grandmother and step-great-grandfather, whom she called Gramps.

Grandma Ruby, the artist's eponym, was a redoubtable guardian who kept her granddaughter safe by keeping her busy. Frazier played the guitar by 6 and viola by 9; participated in after-school science fairs, mock trials and debates; and competed on the basketball team. Frazier took her first photography class as a student at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania, where she enrolled in 1999, and where she found a mentor in the artist Kathe Kowalski, who introduced her to the portraits of the rural poor that the Farm Security Administration photographers had taken during the Great Depression. Studying the work of Dorothea Lange, Frazier was both inspired and frustrated. Lange, who had traveled the Dust Bowl as a government employee, building a record of human suffering and resilience to rally support for New Deal aid programs, had taken copious notes about the gaunt, dispossessed farmhands she photographed, but these were often not published with Lange's images. As a result, her subjects were reduced to types, their identities erased. Florence Owens Thompson, the woman in ''Migrant Mother,'' Lange's 1936 masterpiece, was not named for more than 40 years and was never compensated for her participation in what became the most iconic image of the Great Depression. How, Frazier wondered, could she change the skewed power dynamics that had long defined documentary photography?

She decided she would tell her own story, tracing the ways in which industrial decline, poverty and the war on drugs had shaped and changed her family. Over the course of the next decade and a half, Frazier would reveal -- in 108 searing portraits, tender still lifes and stark, unsentimental landscapes -- the human cost of abstract economic policies in a series she later titled ''The Notion of Family'' (2001-14). Shooting in black and white and relying mostly on available light, Frazier nodded to her idols Gordon Parks and Lewis Hine, photographers who used their cameras to demand social justice, but managed ''to reinvent the tradition and history of documentary photography and make it her own,'' said the artist Gregory Crewdson, the director of graduate studies in photography at the Yale School of Art, where Frazier has served as a guest critic. ''Historically the tradition of documentary photography has been of the photographer going into a location and documenting it as an objective observer from the outside looking in, but her pictures show a much more complicated blur between her and her subjects that perhaps shows more complexity, more depth, more intimacy, more of a personal investment.''

Some of the earliest images in the series depict Gramps's cracked and swollen feet and Grandma Ruby wiping him clean. He had been a mill worker, and his physical deterioration became a symbol for Frazier of the dissolution of upward mobility. The photographs of Grandma Ruby demonstrate the fortitude of a woman who quietly persevered through segregation, a widow who raised six children alone. In ''Grandma Ruby Smoking Pall Malls,'' from 2002, she stands in her darkened living room, illuminated from one side like the saints and angels in paintings by Frazier's favorite Italian masters, Caravaggio and Bernini.

But it's the work that Frazier made in volatile collaboration with her mother that forms the most compelling through line in the series. Photography became their primary means of confronting the frayed ends and live wires of their relationship. ''Mom and Me on Her Couch,'' a picture from 2010, shows Frazier and Cynthia dressed identically in jeans and white tank tops, leaning away from one another at opposite ends of a sofa. Frazier looks drained; her mother, grimly preoccupied. The emotional rift between them finds expression in the chasm between the cushions, a vertical boundary line that extends upward in the form of a window bar.

''We both have so much angst and anger with one another, and most of that is due to the fact that my grandmother had to play the role of mother to me, which made us more or less rival siblings,'' Frazier told The Morning News in 2009, when she was still at work on the series. ''Because we're really strong-willed women, often we butted heads.'' One summer day, Frazier's mother -- angry about something Frazier had done or didn't do -- ripped all of her portfolio prints in half and threw them in the street. But they returned to the work. ''I've always seen the beauty in my mother's imperfections,'' said Frazier. ''I've always loved her unconditionally.'' They posed and styled one another; imitating and riffing off each other's body language in a visual call and response. Frazier's mother was often the one pressing the shutter and controlling the image. The process, said Frazier, allowed them to drop their guard and laugh about the qualities they couldn't help but share. In ''Momme,'' from 2008, Frazier looks straight ahead at her mother, who sits in profile between her and the viewer, half obscuring Frazier. The contours of their lips align in the illusion of a kiss; their features seem to form a single face.

The power of the series lies not only in Frazier's willingness to lay bare the complexities of these relationships but in her drive to expose the ruin that industrial pollution inflicted on their bodies. Frazier likely grew up drinking carcinogenic tap water and breathing in metals, asbestos and various chemicals known to cause respiratory disorders and autoimmune diseases. She was often seriously ill as an adolescent but wasn't diagnosed with lupus until college. The disease, which causes the immune system to attack the body's own organs and tissues, became another subject within the series -- Frazier didn't flinch from capturing herself enduring agonizing onslaughts of pain. Her mother was often in surgery, and Grandma Ruby died of pancreatic cancer in 2009. Frazier photographed them battling their own illnesses, as well as the protests that erupted when, in 2010, the medical group that owned Braddock's only hospital shut it down and later razed the building. Frazier's intimate knowledge of suffering and keen awareness of her own mortality suffuse the series with a somber poetry, but ''The Notion of Family'' is not elegiac. In its passionate call for justice, its focus is the unwritten future as much as the past.

Today, the series has been canonized by critics and curators, but when Frazier showed the images she made with her mother -- both as an undergrad and then as an M.F.A. candidate at Syracuse -- her classmates balked. DuBois remembers the first time Frazier pinned her prints to the wall for a critique in one of his graduate seminars. ''Oh, man, I had to shut it down,'' he said. The ''very white neoliberal knee-jerk response'' from the other students was that Frazier was exploiting her mother by creating images of her drinking and using drugs. ''It got very intense,'' said DuBois, ''and I actually turned to the students, all of whom were white, and said, 'You have no idea what you're talking about.''' Black professors were also critical of the work. '' 'The world doesn't need to see another image of a person, poor or of color, having a substance abuse problem,''' Frazier remembered them saying. ''But the method in which me and my mother were making them was transcending all of that.''

After receiving her M.F.A. in 2007, Frazier taught photography at Rutgers University and became a curator at the school's art gallery. She entered the theory-intensive Whitney Independent Study program in 2010, around the time that works from ''The Notion of Family'' began appearing in prominent group exhibitions in New York, including the Whitney Biennial in 2012. Publishers took note (Frazier released ''The Notion of Family'' as a book with Aperture in 2014) and so did the MacArthur Foundation, which awarded her one of its fellowships the year after; by then she was teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The series didn't spare Frazier from the trauma, but, she said, ''it certainly allowed me to live another day.''

FRAZIER OFTEN describes her camera as a compass that leads her into dark valleys and allows her to find the light. In 2016, she traveled to Flint, Mich., a once-prosperous General Motors manufacturing hub that has been struggling since the 1970s. By the time officials switched the local water supply from Detroit to the Flint River as a cost-cutting measure in 2014, about 40 percent of the remaining residents, most of whom were Black, were living below the poverty line. The tap water turned brown; people broke out in rashes and their hair fell out in clumps. The river had been contaminated by sewage and industrial pollutants over the past two centuries, and tests revealed that people were drinking, bathing in and cooking with water that periodically contained E. coli and, in some cases, concentrations of lead 26 times higher than the federal limit. (In January, nine state and local officials were indicted for their alleged roles in the crisis, including the ex-Michigan governor Rick Snyder, who was charged with two counts of willful neglect of duty; all have pleaded not guilty.)

Frazier had been following the story when Elle magazine invited her to create a photo essay about the crisis. She agreed, provided that she could focus on a family of three generations of women. The editors found Amber Hasan, a writer and hip-hop artist, who declined but put Frazier in touch with her best friend, Shea Cobb, an artist and writer. Both women were wary. Press coverage of Flint had tended to skew toward the lurid or maudlin ('' 'Oh, poor Flint, it's so impoverished, it's basically a hellhole,''' said Hasan).

But Frazier won their trust by sharing stories of her own upbringing, and explaining that the works would be a collaboration. She then spent the next five months in Flint capturing the fullness of Cobb's life -- documenting her recording music, laughing with Hasan and spending time at home with her 9-year-old daughter, Zion, and mother, Ms. Renée. What emerged were not the harrowing photographs of a broken community one might expect. Instead, Frazier captures moments of joy -- Cobb and Zion smiling at each other, nose to nose, in a booth at Zion's favorite restaurant, and at a cousin's wedding. ''LaToya depicts Flint as just people,'' said Hasan. ''These are your grandparents, these are your co-workers, these are your relatives, these are regular people. Yes, circumstances are horrible, but even in that, people have real lives, they have real experiences.'' The crisis is subtly present in some images -- a gallon jug of clean water looms beside the bed where Zion is doing homework in one photograph, but the confidence with which the young girl, pencil in hand, returns our gaze suggests that she will be the author of her own fate.

Frazier is not a photojournalist. Even when she shoots on assignment, she never claims to be objective, nor does she subscribe to the ethical code that bars members of the press from compensating subjects and sources -- when she photographs someone in economic peril, she often positions herself as a surrogate family member. Every photograph she takes is a rebuke to the media's representations of Braddock that she experienced as a little girl. ''I'm angry about being told that I was nothing, that I was less than human, that my life wasn't worth saving,'' she said. ''I'm definitely crusading against that in every single image and portrait that I make.''

The photo essay came out in Elle in August 2016, but Frazier kept shooting. The second part of the 170-work series portrays Cobb and Zion in a markedly different setting -- tending horses in Mississippi, where they moved to temporarily escape the crisis. When they returned to Flint in 2017, the water was still undrinkable, so Frazier mounted a campaign, designing flags stating the number of days Flint residents had been living with lead exposure that flew atop art organizations from Nebraska to North Carolina, and helped fund Cobb and Hasan's artist collective, the Sister Tour, helping them travel, perform and speak about the crisis across the country -- creating a platform in each of those cities for other women artists to share their work as well.

By then, Hasan had come up with her own creative solution to the problem. While doing relief work in Puerto Rico, she had met the developer of an atmospheric water generator, a machine that pulls moisture from the air. She pitched the idea of bringing it to Flint to city officials, but says they showed little interest. She called Frazier. In just a month, the generator arrived -- Frazier donated all of her proceeds from her first solo show at a commercial gallery in New York and secured a matching grant from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. The machine is still there, operated by the community, producing up to 2,000 gallons of free water every day when temperatures are above 40 degrees. The third act of Frazier's forthcoming book on Flint opens with a vivid color photograph of Cobb, Hasan and their children running through streams of water from a hose hooked up to the generator. What would have been be a typical summertime scene anywhere else signaled a new era in Flint.

JUST AFTER THANKSGIVING in 2018, General Motors executives visited the company's plant in Lordstown, Ohio, and told the union leadership that they were done making the Chevrolet Cruze. ''They didn't really explain it,'' said Timothy O'Hara, the former vice president of Local 1112. ''They just got up and went out and told the entire membership who had gathered in that part of the plant.'' It was a moment he doubts he will ever forget. ''You know, the looks on their faces -- some of them actually became physically sick. There was a lot of crying.''

A few months later, Frazier was hurtling above the G.M. complex in a helicopter, scanning a sea of identical cars for the very last one to come off the line. Down on the ground, the person pointing out the right car was Mindy Miller, an 11-year veteran of the Auto Warehousing Company whose job was to inspect and park the thousands of Cruzes that came out of the plant. She worked in the blazing summer heat, when plastic seat liners that had been cooking in the sun for days gave her blisters through her clothes, and in subzero cold snaps. That day in March, Miller used her lunch break to make cardboard and paper signs memorializing the last Cruze, and she and her crew held them up as Frazier flew overhead.

Miller would get to know Frazier fairly well -- the artist had been traveling to Lordstown every week since that first meeting at the union hall, and she kept coming even after production stopped, visiting workers in their homes. The series marked a dramatic leap in scale for the artist. After focusing on her own family and then embedding herself with Cobb's, she was suddenly photographing dozens of people at a time. Workers told her about the spouses, partners, elderly parents and children they had to leave behind to keep their jobs. Transfers were based on seniority and the needs of another -- in some cases, distant -- plant, and initially some married couples were reassigned to separate locations. One man forced to accept a position at a remote plant had never been away from his wife for more than three days and was dreading not being able to see his children at night. ''And they did everything right,'' said Frazier, visibly upset. ''They did what the contract said, they kept their word. They worked overtime, they worked so hard and they still had everything ripped from underneath them and had their family destroyed.''

Frazier spoke to men and women of all ages, queer employees and people of color who counter ''what people think an autoworker looks like,'' she said. The series represents a conscious attempt to unravel the widespread opinion that these plants are filled with ''racist, blue-collar white men.'' She hopes the series, which includes 67 photographs, will also put an end to another pervasive notion -- that she is an artist only concerned with race. Frazier's work, like that of many young African-American artists, is often narrowly construed in terms of correcting the absence of Black representation in the Western canon. ''I'm really sensitive about people saying that I'm a Black artist making work about being Black,'' she said. ''No, I'm not. I'm an American artist making work about America and the crisis in this country.'' The true extent of Frazier's vision is what makes her book about the Chevy plant's demise, which has been more than two years in the making, such a landmark contribution. It deftly telescopes between her intimate portraits and interviews with the workers and an assiduously researched historical timeline of organized labor bolstered by wide-ranging conversations with diverse thinkers -- a playwright, a documentary filmmaker and a political economist among them. Her project is among the most lucid, shrewdly compelling arguments for national solidarity in recent memory.

WHEN SHE'S NOT traveling for work, Frazier lives alone in the South Loop neighborhood of Chicago. She seldom dates, texts or uses social media. ''I just think life is so short,'' she said. ''Why spend it on distractions when you could ... make this place better than it was when you arrived? I don't see any other reason to get up every morning.'' Romantic companionship seems fundamentally incompatible with her ability to work. To be in a relationship is to ''intentionally occupy yourself and distract yourself with other people's stuff,'' and that makes it impossible to realize your true purpose, she said. Hers is to serve others through her art. ''I can't really do that if I'm living, you know, in a very status quo kind of way.''

She finds peace in forging relationships with the people she photographs. They ''all kind of fill in these wounds, these gaps for me,'' she said. Still, when Frazier came home after spending time with dozens of couples and families in Ohio -- people who live for their spouses, partners and children -- she found herself wondering what was wrong with her. ''I started getting down on myself, like, 'What is your problem? Why can't you get married and have children?' You know, there are times where it gets to me,'' she said. Frazier lives her life as a cause -- but that doesn't mean she doesn't get lonely or depressed.

In those moments, she turns to James Baldwin, who reminds her why she does what she does at the expense of almost everything else: ''Societies never know it, but the war of an artist with his society is a lover's war,'' he writes in ''The Creative Process,'' an essay from 1962. ''And he does at his best what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to himself and with that revelation to make freedom real.'' To that end, Frazier said that she wants to establish a ''museum of workers' thoughts,'' an institution aimed at fostering solidarity among ***working-class*** people around the world, where she would teach and maintain her archives. The museum would be the nucleus of Frazier's ultimate vision -- a new school of thought ''that can actually maybe transcend race, class, gender, citizenship, sexuality and religion. Maybe I could see it happening before I die,'' she said. ''Maybe I could help plant that seed.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/01/t-magazine/latoya-ruby-frazier-photography.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/01/t-magazine/latoya-ruby-frazier-photography.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: LaToya Ruby Frazier in her Chicago studio, photographed on Dec. 28, 2020.

Below: ''Momme'' (2008). Right: ''Christina Defelice, UAW Local 1112, (Transition Center Customer Service Representative, 11 years in at GM Lordstown Complex Trim Shop), with a photograph of her father Jerry L. Canter and fellow scheduled clerks Frank Powers, Charles Steiner, Charles Walters, Al Basco, Jim Nichols, Mike Dobransky, and Rendal Stout, inside UAW Local 1112 Reuther Scandy Alli union hall, Lordstown, OH, 2019'' (2019). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LATOYA RUBY FRAZIER, ''CHRISTINA DEFELICE, UAW LOCAL 1112, (TRANSITION CENTER CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE, 11 YEARS IN AT GM LORDSTOWN COMPLEX TRIM SHOP), WITH A PHOTOGRAPH OF HER FATHER JERRY L. CANTER AND FELLOW SCHEDULED CLERKS FRANK POWERS, CHARLES STEINER, CHARLES WALTERS, AL BASCO, JIM NICHOLS, MIKE DOBRANSKY, AND RENDAL STOUT, INSIDE UAW LOCAL 1112 REUTHER SCANDY ALLI UNION HALL, LORDSTOWN, OH, 2019,'' 2019, GELATIN SILVER PRINT, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GLADSTONE GALLERY, NEW YORK AND BRUSSELS)

''Zion, Her Mother Shea, and Her Grandfather Mr. Doug Smiley Riding on Their Tennessee Walking Horses, Mares, PT (PT's Miss One of a Kind), Dolly (Secretly) and Blue (Blues Royal Threat), Newton, Mississippi, from the series Flint is Family, Part II'' (2017). (PHOTOGRAPH BY ''ZION, HER MOTHER SHEA, AND HER GRANDFATHER MR. DOUG SMILEY RIDING ON THEIR TENNESSEE WALKING HORSES, MARES, PT (PT'S MISS ONE OF A KIND), DOLLY (SECRETLY) AND BLUE (BLUES ROYAL THREAT), NEWTON, MISSISSIPPI, FROM THE SERIES FLINT IS FAMILY, PART II,'' 2017, GELATIN SILVER PRINT, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GLADSTONE GALLERY, NEW YORK AND BRUSSELS) Left: ''Mindy Miller, Iron Workers Union Local 851, (11 years in at Auto Warehousing Company (AWC)), standing in her grandmother's living room with her mother and grandmother, Lezlie and Marlene Miller, Niles, OH, 2019'' (2019). Above: ''Zion doing her math homework from the International Academy of Flint college preparatory Charter School (est. 1999)'' (2016-17). from top: latoya Ruby Frazier, ''Zion doing her math homework from the International Academy of Flint college preparatory Charter School (est. 1999),'' 2016-17, Gelatin silver print, Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels

latoya Ruby Frazier, ''Mindy Miller, Iron Workers Union Local 851, (11 years in at Auto Warehousing Company (AWC)), standing in her grandmother's living room with her mother and grandmother, Lezlie and Marlene Miller, Niles, OH, 2019,'' 2019, Gelatin silver print, Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels Portrait by Naima Green

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2021

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[***The One Pollster in America Who Is Sure Trump Is Going to Win***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616P-G9S1-DXY4-X0GB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Robert Cahaly’s polls have Arizona, Michigan and Florida in the president’s column. It’s hard to find another pollster who agrees with him. But they didn’t believe him in 2016 either.

**Body**

Robert Cahaly’s polls have Arizona, Michigan and Florida in the president’s column. It’s hard to find another pollster who agrees with him. But they didn’t believe him in 2016 either.

If President Trump pieces together an [*Electoral College*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) win on Tuesday, at least one pollster — and perhaps only one — will be able to say, “I told you so.”

That person is Robert Cahaly, whose Trafalgar Group this year has released a consistent stream of battleground-state [*polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) showing the president highly competitive against [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results), and often out ahead, in states where most other pollsters have shown a steady Biden lead.

Trafalgar does not disclose its methods, and is considered far too shadowy by other pollsters to be taken seriously. Mostly, they dismiss it as an outlier. But for Mr. Cahaly, “I told you so” is already a calling card.

In 2016, its first time publicly releasing polls, Trafalgar was the firm whose state surveys most effectively presaged [*Mr. Trump’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) upset win. A veteran Republican strategist, Mr. Cahaly even called the exact number of Electoral College votes that Mr. Trump and Hillary Clinton would receive — 306 to 227 — although his prediction of which states would get them there was just slightly off.

So with liberal anxieties flaring over whether to trust the polls, the gregarious, goatee-and-bowtie-wearing Mr. Cahaly has been in demand on cable news lately. In addition to frequent appearances on Fox News, Mr. Cahaly was [*on CNN*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) last week, explaining to Michael Smerconish why he thought the president would walk away with an easy victory — and defending himself against a battery of critiques that Mr. Smerconish called up, one by one, from Mr. Cahaly’s peers.

Amid a crush of pre-election media coverage seeking his theory of the case — it drove more than 1.5 million clicks to Trafalgar’s site on Monday, he said — the big question seems to be: Is it possible to believe a guy whose polls consistently give Mr. Trump just enough support for a narrow lead in most swing states, and who refuses to reveal much of anything about how he gets his data?

In his last few polls of this election season, Mr. Cahaly has found Mr. Trump with [*two-to-three-point advantages*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) in North Carolina, [*Arizona*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results), [*Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) and [*Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results), and wider leads elsewhere. That puts him far out of line with almost all major pollsters, whose surveys in those states are generally showing Mr. Biden with the edge. [*As different as things are*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) this year, it’s hard to miss the echo of 2016, when Trafalgar occupied a similarly lonely position on the eve of Nov. 8.

Above all, Mr. Cahaly’s approach centers on the belief that everyone lies, but especially conservatives. This has largely been disproved by social science, but that hasn’t softened his conviction. To hear him explain it, traditional pollsters (he calls them “dinosaurs”) are crippled by “social desirability bias”: the tendency for respondents to say what they think an interviewer wants to hear, not what they actually believe. In Mr. Trump’s America, he says, that problem has grown worse.

“I just think people are not what they say they are, ever,” Mr. Cahaly said in a recent phone interview from Atlanta, where he lives. “We cannot eliminate the social desirability bias, we can only minimize it.”

Four years ago, he addressed this by asking people both whom they would support for president and whom they thought their neighbors would support. This year, he said, he is using other means to achieve the same result.

But he’s not saying what they are. Mr. Cahaly releases almost no real explanation of his polling methodology; [*the methods page*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) on Trafalgar’s website contains what reads like a vague advertisement of its services and explains that its polls actively confront social desirability bias, without giving specifics as to how. He says that he uses a mixture of text messages, emails and phone calls — some automated, and some by live callers — to reach an accurate representation of the electorate.

Conventional pollsters, who abide by long-tested and broadly effective methods to glean a representative sample, aren’t buying it. Besides, if there was ever such a thing as a “shy Trump supporter” — someone reluctant to admit that he or she plans to vote for the president — that species has been made virtually extinct during the raucous, rally-holding Trump presidency, said Daniel Cox, a polling and public opinion expert at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute.

“People do not seem embarrassed to support Mr. Trump,” Mr. Cox said. In the past four years, studies seeking to quantify a so-called “shy Trump” effect in surveys have generally found [*little evidence to support it*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results).

Late last month, Nate Silver of FiveThirtyEight got his hands on the cross tabs of a Trafalgar poll of Michigan that was still in progress. It found that more than a quarter of Democrats and Republicans expected to vote for the other party’s nominee, so far out of line with almost all other polls that Mr. Silver called the numbers “just crazy.”

Mr. Cahaly, of course, has no use for the skepticism of experts. He doesn’t seem to care whether he’s abiding by the best practices of the [*American Association of Public Opinion Research*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results), the standard-bearing trade organization, any more than Mr. Trump says he cares whether the United States’ NATO allies respect him.

Among his polling colleagues, the main sticking point is Mr. Cahaly’s lack of transparency about his methods.

Josh Pasek, a professor of communications, data and political science at the University of Michigan, said that without a sense of the methods the firm uses to reach survey respondents, it’s not possible to rely on the numbers.

“It is wildly inappropriate not to tell me, not only what modes you use to draw your sample, but how specifically you did it,” he said. His general rule: “If somebody’s not transparent you can generally assume they’re crap.”

There is something undeniably enticing about the story of a swashbuckling, norm-busting Southern pollster who rode into 2016 with a fresh approach and proved all the bigger shops wrong. Born in [*Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results) and raised in upstate South Carolina by a banker and a teacher, Mr. Cahaly developed a politics obsession as a child and majored in it at the University of South Carolina. He soon came under the wing of the pollster Rod Shealy, an acolyte of the Republican strategist [*Lee Atwater*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/election-results), and eventually started his own firm.

Named after a battle in the Napoleonic Wars when the British navy turned back French and Spanish ships on the high seas, Trafalgar, which he runs alone, has been doing surveys on behalf of clients since 2006.

Most of Trafalgar’s polling is done for conservative and Republican clients, although — in another snub of traditional standards — it has not reliably revealed when surveys are paid for by partisan interests.

In 2010, Mr. Cahaly was arrested and taken to court for violating a law against using automatic calling machines — known as robocalling — to conduct polls. The charges against him were eventually dropped, and he later successfully sued a state law enforcement agency, causing South Carolina’s prohibition on robocalls to be declared unconstitutional.

Mr. Cahaly said he was doing legitimate polling, aimed at truly understanding voters’ opinions — and getting what he called “dead-on” results. During the 2016 Republican primaries, he was early to spot a surge of enthusiasm from many ***working-class*** voters who had long felt alienated from politics and helped power Mr. Trump’s ascent.

“I kept getting these stories about people who showed up to vote and didn’t know how to use the voting machines, they hadn’t voted in so long,” Mr. Cahaly said. So he began to look into who those people might be, and used data available online to create a list of roughly 50 lifestyle characteristics — including, for instance, whether they owned a fishing license — to identify the sorts of low-engagement voters who were turning out in droves. He used that data to make sure he was reaching the right kinds of respondents as he polled off the voter file in advance of the general election.

In 2018, Mr. Cahaly again amassed a successful track record polling Senate and governors’ races, including surveys that correctly presaged Ron DeSantis’s and Rick Scott’s wins in Florida.

This year, he has continued to see strong Trump support among these voters, and he believes other pollsters are again underestimating their importance. Among Mr. Cahaly’s theories is that it takes five times as many calls to get a conservative voter to complete a poll than to get a liberal one. Others in the field say they find no evidence to support this in their own work.

But Mr. Cahaly insists it is presumptuous for pollsters to assume that they are drawing a representative sample of voters just because they are adhering to the scientific method. He returns to the country’s political divide, and how unwilling Americans are nowadays to communicate with each other from across the breach of suspicion. In a sense, he has positioned himself as a bard of Trumpism, giving voice to a silent majority — or at least, a majority in the Electoral College — that knows the elites consider its views deplorable, and therefore won’t express them freely to just anyone.

“Lee Atwater drilled into everyone around me that you have to get out of the head of politicos and into the head of Joe Six-Pack,” Mr. Cahaly said. “What do the average people think? And to do that I like to talk to average people. I like to follow up polling calls and chat with people for 30 minutes.”

Mr. Cahaly feels no need to reveal his techniques, despite the near-universal doubt about his work from his peers. “I’ve given away enough; I’m not giving away any more,” he said, arguing that it had been a mistake to even tell the public about his “neighbor question,” which some other firms have since adopted in their own surveys.

“I think we’ve developed something that’s very different from what other people do, and I really am not interested in telling people how we do it,” he said. “Just judge us by whether we get it right.”

PHOTO: The pollster Robert Cahaly on a set in Atlanta on Monday. His forecast of the 2016 Electoral College vote was exactly borne out. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***A Reporter on Race and Andrew Yang***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y7H-HDR1-DXY4-X3F0-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1268 words

**Byline:** By Adeel Hassan

**Body**

He ran on saving workers from automation, but also leaned into issues of race and representation.

Andrew Yang, the Taiwanese-American businessman whose campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination exceeded expectations for a political newcomer, dropped out of the race this week after an eighth-place finish in the New Hampshire primary.

Mr. Yang pitched himself as an entrepreneurial problem solver on a quest to save America from automation. But as an Asian-American candidate, issues of race and representation became factors in his candidacy, especially as rivals like Julián Castro, Kamala Harris and Cory Booker dropped out and the field winnowed to a handful of white front-runners.

I asked my colleague Matt Stevens, who covered Mr. Yang's campaign, about those dynamics, and he said that Mr. Yang had told him that leading with race and identity was not ''necessarily the most helpful way to move any community forward.''

I was also interested in what it was like for Matt, as a Korean-American, to report on a candidate who drew support from Asian-Americans but at times leaned into stereotypes on the campaign trail. Here's our conversation:

What did Andrew Yang's entry into the race mean for Asian-Americans? And how they are viewing his exit?

At first, I think, not much. Mr. Yang filed his paperwork to enter the race in the fall of 2017, but he didn't generate any buzz until our colleague Kevin Roose wrote about his campaign months later. And even then, it took an appearance on Joe Rogan's podcast in 2019 for people to really start to learn his name.

Because, in the beginning, he was talking so much about the automation of jobs held by the white ***working class*** (truckers, for example), and because the audience for podcasts like Mr. Rogan's is mostly white men, white men formed the base of his support.

But as college students and other young voters started taking notice, Asian-Americans began showing up at his events in significant numbers. They were not shy about telling me that they were drawn to him in part because of his race. And in general, I think his supporters -- Asian-American and otherwise -- are sad he dropped out, but confident that this isn't the last they'll hear from him.

Do you think race was a reason he lasted longer than other candidates? Was the #YangGang diverse?

The Yang Gang certainly became diverse, both racially and ideologically. He attracted Trump voters and Bernie Sanders supporters and everyone in between.

Research from AAPI Data has shown that as Mr. Yang's campaign grew, so did financial support from Asian-Americans. And money keeps a campaign viable. But I think he hung on so long, mostly because it was impossible to leave a town hall of his and not feel like he was genuinely normal, very likable and extremely concerned about the future. For many voters sick of politics as usual, that was more than enough.

He took some heat for saying ''I am Asian, so I know a lot of doctors.'' What did Mr. Yang tell you about his use of Asian-American stereotypes?

There was probably no topic I talked more about with Mr. Yang than his handling of his Asian-American identity; and although I am sure some in his campaign found it frustrating, to their credit, Mr. Yang was always made available for an interview on the topic.

I'd boil his response down to a few prongs: He said repeatedly that he was proud of his background and was well aware that he was being seen as a representative of the community. He saw the jokes as a way he could differentiate himself in a crowded field.

There was one thing he told me in an interview for a story about his previous jobs that I think does a nice job of summing up his perspective: ''I'm not sure if leading with'' race and identity, he said, ''is necessarily the most helpful way to move any community forward.''

You wrote a deep dive into his career before his campaign that included a lot of perspectives from people who used to work with him, some of them critical. What was the response to that story? In general, did you find that people expected you, as an Asian-American, to be more sympathetic toward him in your coverage?

In some cases, yes, people did seem to have certain expectations of my coverage -- or at least folks said as much on Twitter. Some asserted that my editors had made me write the tough story on Mr. Yang because I was Asian-American -- the idea being, I think, that my byline would somehow inoculate The New York Times from criticism.

And speaking of my byline, I'm a Korean-American adoptee. And I also recall some Twitter users highlighting that fact that my name is Matt Stevens, which I took to mean they thought I could not possibly have borne in mind an Asian-American point of view, given my name.

I did not respond to anyone on Twitter. In my experience, it's usually best not to. But I will say the piece found a wide readership, and I don't think everyone who spent time with the article came to the same conclusions.

Was this assignment a surprise for you?

People sometimes ask if I was put on the Andrew Yang beat because I am Asian-American. The answer is no. And I think the story of how I came to cover him offers another lesson about why it is so important to have a diversity of voices and perspectives in the newsroom.

In short, I was assigned in the spring of 2019 to go listen to the Democratic candidates speak at a conference down the street from our office. It was the first time I saw Mr. Yang give his stump speech, and he used his now well-worn tagline: ''The opposite of Donald Trump is an Asian man who likes math.''

The joke did not land. And as an Asian-American, I found it a little unusual coming from a presidential candidate. So, in one of my better moments, I suggested that we write a story on the ways Mr. Yang was leaning into his Asian-American identity on the trail. I developed a few sources on the campaign, Mr. Yang persisted in the race, and then, when the ways he was talking about being Asian-American became news again, I was well positioned to tackle race-related stories with what I think and hope was complexity and nuance.

I came to believe that this was a necessary contribution.

Read ''The Andrew Yang Exit Interview'' here.

The Push to Get Asian-Americans to Complete the Census

''Asian-Americans have been relegated as the subminority -- that we're not black, we're not Hispanic. For a large part, we're an afterthought.''

-- Gene Wu, a Democratic state representative from Houston who is Chinese-American

Our national race correspondent, John Eligon, wrote this week about how Asian-Americans reported that they were less likely to fill out their census forms than any other demographic group. They are also the least familiar with the census, on average, and the most worried that their information will be used against them, according to a Census Bureau report.

Activists told John that Asian-Americans remained largely misunderstood and that they were determined to use this year's census to showcase the group's multiplicity, secure better resources and funding, and harness untapped political power.

You can read more about the efforts to encourage Asian-American participation in the census in his report.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/15/us/how-andrew-yang-handled-his-asian-american-identity-on-the-campaign-trail.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/15/us/how-andrew-yang-handled-his-asian-american-identity-on-the-campaign-trail.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Issues about Andrew Yang's background and how he handled them were part of his candidacy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2020

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[***Biden Polling Ahead in 4 Battlegrounds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616H-RBC1-DXY4-X0WB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 2, 2020 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1740 words

**Byline:** By Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin

**Body**

Joseph R. Biden Jr. leads President Trump in Pennsylvania, Florida, Arizona and, by a wide margin, in Wisconsin, according to a Times/Siena College poll.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. holds a clear advantage over President Trump across four of the most important presidential swing states, a new poll shows, bolstered by the support of voters who did not participate in the 2016 election and who now appear to be turning out in large numbers to cast their ballots, mainly for the Democrat.

Mr. Biden, the former vice president, is ahead of Mr. Trump in the Northern battlegrounds of Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, as well as in the Sun Belt states of Florida and Arizona, according to a poll of likely voters conducted by The New York Times and Siena College. His strength is most pronounced in Wisconsin, where he has an outright majority of the vote and leads Mr. Trump by 11 points, 52 percent to 41 percent.

Mr. Biden's performance across the electoral map appears to put him in a stronger position heading into Election Day than any presidential candidate since at least 2008, when in the midst of a global economic crisis Barack Obama captured the White House with 365 Electoral College votes and Mr. Biden at his side.

Mr. Trump's apparent weakness in many of the country's largest electoral prizes leaves him with a narrow path to the 270 Electoral College votes required to claim victory, short of a major upset or a systemic error in opinion polling surpassing even the missteps preceding the 2016 election. Should Mr. Biden's lead hold in three of the four states tested in the survey, it would almost certainly be enough to win, and if he were to carry Florida, he would most likely need to flip just one more large state that Mr. Trump won in 2016 to clinch the presidency.

In the closing days of the campaign, Mr. Biden has a modest advantage in Florida, where he is ahead of Mr. Trump by three points, 47 percent to 44 percent, a lead that is within the margin of error. He leads by six points in both Arizona and Pennsylvania. In no state did Mr. Trump's support climb higher than 44 percent.

The margin of error is 3.2 percentage points in Wisconsin and Florida; 3 points in Arizona and 2.4 points in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Biden has consistently held the upper hand over Mr. Trump across the electoral map in polling conducted by The Times since late last spring. While that advantage has varied over time, and has differed from state to state, he has at no point slipped behind Mr. Trump in any of the swing states that are likeliest to decide the election.

Mr. Biden's lead is armored against last-minute developments in the race because of the scale of early and mail-in balloting that has already taken place as the country copes with a resurgence of the coronavirus. More than 90 million Americans had already cast their ballots as of midday Saturday, according to the United States Election Project. In three of the four states The Times surveyed, a majority of respondents said they had already voted, with Pennsylvania the exception.

The president, who narrowly carried all four states against Hillary Clinton, is now running behind his 2016 vote shares in all of them, a grave position for a sitting president just days before the election. He has also trailed consistently in public polls of Michigan, another large state he captured in 2016, which along with Wisconsin and Pennsylvania was part of the so-called Blue Wall along the Great Lakes that Democrats had relied on for decades.

Amid that bleak outlook, the president has continued to baselessly cast doubt on the integrity of the election. On Saturday in Pennsylvania, he told supporters that the nation could be waiting for weeks to learn of a winner and that ''very bad things'' could happen as ballots are counted in the days after the election.

Mr. Trump has continued to hold onto most of the coalition that elected him in the first place, made up chiefly of rural conservatives and white voters who did not attend college. In Florida, the president appears to have improved his position somewhat with Hispanic voters over the last four years, but he has slipped significantly with college-educated whites there.

More broadly, Mr. Trump is facing an avalanche of opposition nationally from women, people of color, voters in the cities and the suburbs, young people, seniors and, notably, new voters. In all four states, voters who did not participate in 2016, but who have already voted this time or plan to do so, said they support Mr. Biden by wide margins. That group includes both infrequent voters and young people who were not yet eligible to vote four years ago.

In Wisconsin, voters who did not cast a ballot in 2016 favor Mr. Biden by 19 points. They have a similarly lopsided preference in Florida, where Mr. Biden leads by 17 points. His advantage with people who did not vote in 2016 is 12 points in Pennsylvania and 7 points in Arizona.

Many of the those who said they did not vote in 2016 said they had already voted this year. In Florida and Arizona, more than two thirds of nonvoters in 2016 who were identified as likely voters this year said that they had already cast a ballot. That figure was 56 percent in Wisconsin and 36 percent in Pennsylvania.

Melissa Dibble, 47, of Boynton Beach, Fla., is one of those newly active voters. A registered independent, Ms. Dibble said she did not vote in 2016 because she did not believe Mrs. Clinton was ''the right president for our country'' and found Mr. Trump ''laughable.'' She said on Friday that she planned to vote for Mr. Biden that afternoon.

''I know how important it is to vote, but I couldn't wrap my head around the options at that point,'' Ms. Dibble said of the 2016 election. She said she was voting for Mr. Biden because ''I really want change. I can't believe that we have a president who is, at night, in bed tweeting nonsense and just talks poorly about people.''

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''I have to go in there and vote against him,'' Mr. Kowalewski said.

But Mr. Kowalewski said he also appreciated Mr. Biden's health care policies, including the Affordable Care Act, which he credited with helping his daughter receive lifesaving cancer treatment.

The numbers on new voters represent a setback for the president, whose advisers have long contended he would outperform his polling numbers because of the support he would receive from infrequent or inconsistent voters. Republicans continue to hope that the Trump campaign's voter-registration and turnout machinery might give him a crucial edge over Mr. Biden in a few key battlegrounds, or at least lift the party's down-ballot candidates enough to maintain control of the Senate.

Based on the poll, however, it seems that Mr. Biden rather than Mr. Trump could be the beneficiary of record-busting turnout.

Still, the enthusiasm Mr. Trump stirs in his supporters remains a factor in the election. Linda Shoop, of Halifax, Pa., said she did not vote in 2016 but not for lack of a preference: A Trump supporter, Ms. Shoop has arthritis and struggles to get around. But with absentee voting more widely accessible this year, she said she would vote by mail for the president.

''He has common sense,'' Ms. Shoop said, describing him as more forthright than a longtime politician like Mr. Biden. The president, she said, ''doesn't lie to you. If he says he's going to do something, he goes and he does it.''

If the president is defeated, the most obvious explanation may be his weakness with women. Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump by double digits among female voters in each of the four states, and in some states the advantage was so significant that it offset Mr. Trump's strength among men.

In Arizona, for example, the president had an eight-point advantage with men but Mr. Biden was the overwhelming favorite of women, winning 56 percent of them compared with Mr. Trump's 38 percent.

The other group that is propelling Mr. Biden is college-educated white voters, a traditionally Republican bloc that has fled the Trump-era party. The former vice president is leading by double digits among white voters with college degrees in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Arizona and beating him, 48 percent to 45 percent, with that constituency in Florida.

In Maricopa County, Ariz., home to Phoenix and its suburbs, Mr. Biden is winning 48 percent of the vote compared with 42 percent for Mr. Trump, according to the survey. In 2016, Mr. Trump won the county by three points.Mr. Biden is also poised to become the first Democrat in 20 years to carry older adults, the voters who are most at risk with the coronavirus. In Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, the former vice president is leading by double digits with older voters. And in Florida and Arizona, retiree havens with wealthier and more tax-phobic seniors, Mr. Trump is effectively tied with Mr. Biden among older voters despite having won with them convincingly in both states in 2016.The president remains in contention in Florida on the strength of his support from ***working-class*** whites and his gains among Hispanic voters. He's running more competitively with Florida Latinos than he did in 2016, and 9 percent of them remain undecided.

Hispanic men in Florida, in particular, are more willing to support Mr. Trump. The poll found the two candidates splitting this group almost evenly, with Mr. Biden ahead by just one point. But the president is facing an even larger gender gap in the Hispanic community than he is over all: Latinas favor Mr. Biden by 39 points.

Farah Robles Figueroa, of West Palm Beach, said she had already cast her vote for Mr. Biden in the largest of the traditional swing states. Ms. Robles, 32, is a registered Democrat but said she had sat out the 2016 election because she believed Mrs. Clinton was certain to win. She said she admired Mr. Biden's personal character and approved of his recommendations for fighting the coronavirus, like mandating the use of masks.

But Ms. Robles also said she believed there was a larger issue at stake in the vote.

''I don't want to be dramatic,'' she said, ''but I'm voting this year because it feels like democracy is at stake.''

Nate Cohn, Matt Stevens and Isabella Grullón Paz contributed reporting.

Here are the crosstabs for the poll.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/us/politics/biden-trump-poll-florida-pennsylvania-wisconsin.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/us/politics/biden-trump-poll-florida-pennsylvania-wisconsin.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A Trump supporter's hat at a rally in Dubuque, Iowa, on Sunday, left. A Souls to the Polls drive-in event for the Biden campaign, in Philadelphia on Sunday, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18)

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2020

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[***Election at Hand, Biden Leads Trump in Four Key States, Poll Shows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616B-JMN1-DXY4-X30M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 1, 2020 Sunday 11:01 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1780 words

**Byline:** Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin

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[[*Joe Biden has won the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Read our story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html)]

Joseph R. [*Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) Jr. holds a clear advantage over [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) across four of the most important [*presidential swing states*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html), a new poll shows, bolstered by the support of voters who did not participate in the 2016 [*election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) and who now appear to be turning out in large numbers to cast their ballots, mainly for the Democrat.

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Mr. Biden’s performance across the [*electoral map*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) appears to put him in a stronger position heading into Election Day than any presidential candidate since at least 2008, when in the midst of a global economic crisis Barack Obama captured the White House with 365 Electoral College votes and Mr. Biden at his side.

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Amid that bleak outlook, the president has continued to baselessly cast doubt on the integrity of the election. On Saturday in Pennsylvania, he told supporters that the nation could be waiting for weeks to learn of a winner and that “very bad things” could happen as ballots are counted in the days after the election.

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Here are the [*crosstabs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) for the poll.

PHOTOS: A Trump supporter’s hat at a rally in Dubuque, Iowa, on Sunday, left. A Souls to the Polls drive-in event for the Biden campaign, in Philadelphia on Sunday, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES; ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2020

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[***The Best Movies and TV Shows New to Netflix, Amazon and Stan in Australia in November***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616G-MMH1-JBG3-609K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1854 words

**Byline:** Noel Murray

**Highlight:** Our streaming picks for November, including ‘The Crown,’ ‘Hillbilly Elegy’ and ‘Small Axe.’

**Body**

Our streaming picks for November, including ‘The Crown,’ ‘Hillbilly Elegy’ and ‘Small Axe.’

Every month, streaming services in Australia add a new batch of movies and TV shows to its library. Here are our picks for November.

[*New to Netflix*](https://www.netflix.com/au/)

‘Wrong Kind of Black’

The four-part series “Wrong Kind of Black” is based on the experiences of Boori Monty Pryor as a young adult, in the years before he became renowned for using spoken-word performances and children’s books to explain Australian Aboriginal culture to kids. In the 1960s and ’70s, Pryor worked to make his name as a DJ, spinning R&amp;B and disco to audiences who loved the music of Black Americans, but who nevertheless discriminated against Black Australians. Clarence Ryan plays Pryor — and Aaron McGrath his brother Paul — in this lighthearted but pointed social dramedy, set partly in the rowdy urban club scene of 50 years ago.

‘Dawson’s Creek’ Seasons 1-6

Many movie and TV buffs first got to know the actors James Van Der Beek, Michelle Williams, Joshua Jackson and Katie Holmes during the six seasons they spent on “Dawson’s Creek” between 1998 and 2003, playing four friends managing the growing pains of high school and college. Created by Kevin Williamson — a writer unusually attuned to the uncomfortably adult feelings and problems of teenagers — the show balanced the usual young adult romantic melodrama with rich character development, making each of these kids’ dreams and disappointments feel vividly real.

‘Dash &amp; Lily’ Season 1

When two precocious and nerdy New York teenagers are left at home by their families over Christmas break, they become acquainted at a distance by hiding notes, leaving clues and challenging each other to a series of dares and games around the city. That’s the premise of “Dash &amp; Lily,” a TV series based on a young adult novel by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan. The episodes alternate between the two lead characters, showing that the cynical Dash (Austin Abrams) and the sunnier Lily (Midori Francis) may have similar tastes in literature and music, but remain far apart when it comes to the wonders of the holiday season.

‘Aunty Donna’s Big Ol’ House of Fun’

On their popular YouTube channel — and podcast, and live shows, and multiple web series — the Australian comedy troupe Aunty Donna have put their own twist on Monty Python-style absurdism. A typical sketch has the teams’s core performing trio (Mark Samual Bonanno, Broden Kelly and Zachary Ruane) sharing an ordinary encounter like a meal or a bit of casual chit-chat, which quickly warps into something dark and strange— or sometimes just gleefully silly. The group will be working on a somewhat larger scale for their six-part Netflix series “Aunty Donna’s Big Ol’ House of Fun,” so it’ll be exciting to see what they come up with when they have more money to spend.

‘Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey’

One of the more high-profile holiday offerings from Netflix this year, the fantastical musical “Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey” features songs by John Legend, who’s also one of the project’s producers. Written and directed by David E. Talbert, the movie stars Forest Whitaker and Keegan-Michael Key as rival toymakers: one a genius who struggles to make ends meet, and the other rich and unscrupulous. It’s a traditional underdog story, but filled with magical Christmas gadgetry and some warm Yuletide tunes.

‘The Crown’ Season 4

Two long-awaited major characters enter Queen Elizabeth II’s orbit for the fourth season of the historical drama “The Crown”: Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Gillian Anderson) and Lady Diana Spencer (Emma Corrin). This time the show will dramatize the late ’70s and early ’80s, a time when Queen Elizabeth (Olivia Colman) dealt with another round of family scandals just as her country suffered from an economic downturn and widespread social unrest. The creator Peter Morgan has been telling these stories in two-season arcs, so these will be the last episodes with Colman as the queen. (May God save her.)

‘Dolly Parton’s Christmas on the Square’

Here’s another big new Netflix Christmas musical with a pop powerhouse in the credits. Dolly Parton wrote the songs for “Christmas on the Square” and also plays an angel who tries to persuade a sourpuss landlord (played by the delightful Christine Baranski) not to drive the residents of a quaint, snowy small town out of their homes. Treat Williams and Jenifer Lewis play two of the villain’s oldest friends who also try to get her into the holiday spirit, amidst many colorful song-and-dance numbers.

‘Hillbilly Elegy’

The author and activist J.D. Vance survived a tough childhood in a ***working class*** Ohio town, where he was surrounded by poverty and addiction. He later wrote about the experience in the best-selling memoir “Hillbilly Elegy,” which has now been adapted into a movie by the Oscar-winning director Ron Howard and the screenwriter Vanessa Taylor. Gabriel Basso plays Vance, Glenn Close plays the hard-nosed grandmother who taught him the value of work, and Amy Adams plays the mother who was a destabilizing presence in his life.

Also arriving: “Felix Lobrecht: Hype” (November 3), “Love &amp; Anarchy” (November 4), “Carmel: Who Killed Maria Marta?” (November 5), “Paranormal” Season 1 (November 5), “The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run” (November 5), “Justice League Dark: Apokolips War” (November 6), “Wrong Kind of Black” Season 1 (November 6), “Satellite Boy” (November 7), “Sweet Country” (November 7), “Toomelah” (November 7), “Goldstone” (November 8), “Undercover” Season 2 (November 9), “What We Wanted” (November 11), “The Life Ahead” (November 13), “The Minions of Midas” (November 13), “We Are the Champions” (November 17), “The Gulf” Season 1 (November 18), “The Princess Switch: Switched Again” (November 19), “If Anything Happens I Love You” (November 20), “Shawn Mendes: I Wonder” (November 23), “The Christmas Chronicles: Part 2” (November 25), “Great Pretender” Season 2 (November 25), “How I Met Your Mother” Seasons 1-10 (November 25), “Mosul” (November 26), “The Call” (November 27), “A Go! Go! Cory Carson Christmas” (November 27), “Sugar Rush Christmas” Season 2 (November 27), “Virgin River” Season 2 (November 27).

[*New to Stan*](https://www.netflix.com/au/)

‘Gangs of London’

Organized crime these days is an international operation that involves the cooperation of crooks, mercenaries and politicians from all over the world. So despite its name, the mob drama “Gangs of London” doesn’t just stay put in England. This sprawling and stylish series — cocreated by Matt Flannery and “The Raid” director Gareth Evans — is ostensibly about the internal power-struggle that ensues when an old-school syndicate boss gets assassinated. But there’s trouble outside the family too, as gunmen and schemers from across Europe, Asia and Africa jostle for position, in a story with a complex plot interspersed with dynamic and explosively violent action sequences.

‘Moonbase 8’

Science-fiction-inspired comedies have had a bit of a bad run in 2020, with the disappointing “Avenue 5” and the inert “Space Force” letting down fans of their talented creators and casts. But there’s still reason to hope for the best from “Moonbase 8,” a bone-dry sitcom about NASA washouts who’ve agreed to isolate in a desert training facility to prove they’re fit for space travel. The would-be astronauts are played by Fred Armisen, Tim Heidecker and John C. Reilly, who also co-wrote the series with Jonathan Krisel (a fellow master of sublimely odd humor).

‘The Reagans’

Ronald Reagan has had a lasting impact on the U.S.A., where politicians still ape his folksy charisma and his nostalgic appeals to the ideals of American individualism. Yet the realities of the Reagan administration — both good and bad — sometimes get lost in the rush to turn him into a symbol. The director Matt Tyrnauer’s four-part docu-series “The Reagans” is intended as a corrective. With the help of insider interviews, Tyrnauer aims to explore the behind-the-scenes debates and personality clashes behind some of the President’s best and worst policy decisions.

‘Saved By the Bell’

A lot of nostalgic TV revivals try to replicate not just the premise but also the look and the feel of the originals. The new version of the ’90s teen sitcom “Saved By the Bell” brings back a lot of the original cast, now playing the parents to the latest batch of students at California’s Bayside High. But judging by the early trailers, it has a very different visual style. (Plus, the characters now make self-referential jokes, more in line with a show overseen by “30 Rock” and “Great News” writer Tracey Wigfield.) The series’ goals don’t seem that far off-model though. This “Saved By the Bell” will still use light comedy and soapy drama to tell stories with social relevance.

‘Rectify’ Seasons 1-4

One of the more underrated American TV dramas of the 2010s, the low-key “Rectify,” is about Daniel Holden (Aden Young), a man released from prison after spending nearly 20 years behind bars for a rape and murder he was accused of committing as a teenager. Upon returning to his tiny hometown in the state of Georgia, Daniel tries to win back his neighbors’ trust, while proving that he’s not the villain they presume. Created by the great character actor Ray McKinnon, “Rectify” is a sensitively rendered character sketch about a man struggling to be his best self, in a world he barely recognizes.

Also arriving: “Vanity Fair” Season 1 (November 5), “In the Dark” Season 1 (November 6), “The Mighty Ones” (November 10), “Dark Heart” Season 1 (November 12), “The Moodys Christmas” (November 13), “Gordon, Gino &amp; Fred’s Road Trip” Season 1 (November 15), “Trauma” Season 1 (November 17), “Chicken Run” (November 20).

[*New to Amazon*](https://www.netflix.com/au/)

‘The Pack’

Part travelogue, part reality competition and part adorable animal show, “The Pack” features a dozen dogs and their humans, who team up to complete various physical and mental challenges around the world. The U.S. Olympic ski champion Lindsey Vonn hosts and sets the tone with her intro, which emphasizes both the thrill of a grand outdoor adventure and the deep bond between pets and their masters. What results is something a little like “The Amazing Race,” but with cute pooches in tow.

‘Small Axe’

The filmmaker Steve McQueen (best-known for the Oscar-winning “12 Years a Slave”) grew up in London at a time when immigrants with West Indian roots were at the center of a raging national debate over England’s growing multiculturalism. McQueen’s anthology series “Small Axe” (co-written with Alastair Siddons and Courttia Newland) tells five different stories, set between the late 1960s and the early ’80s. Each covers aspects of life in the city’s West Indian communities, documenting everything from the vibrant house parties to the persistent clashes with the local constabulary. Each chapter stands alone, but collectively they paint a bigger picture about a moment in time when a country had to reckon with its rapid demographic changes.

Also arriving: “Ferro” (November 6), “James May: Oh Cook!” (November 13).

PHOTO: ‘The Crown’ season 4 (PHOTOGRAPH BY Netflix FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**Body**

'Funny Girl' and 'A Strange Loop' on Broadway, Ashwini Ramaswamy's dances, Olivia Rodrigo's pop takeover: what our critics and writers are looking forward to this season.

Broadway

'TAKE ME OUT' Peanuts and crackerjacks may not be available at Second Stage's Hayes Theater, but anyone who thinks that live theater is the ultimate spectator sport should root for the Broadway revival of Richard Greenberg's comedy. Set in the locker room of a professional baseball team, the play stars Jesse Williams (''Grey's Anatomy'') as a big-shot player who wants to come out as gay. Openly queer athletes are somewhat more common than when Greenberg wrote the play, which debuted at the Public Theater in 2002 and later won three Tony Awards. But they remain a rarity in team sports. So the play's conversations around excellence, sexuality and the boundaries between public and private lives, should still make it around the bases. Scott Ellis directs, and Jesse Tyler Ferguson (''Modern Family'') and Patrick Adams (''Suits'') co-star. ALEXIS SOLOSKIPreviews begin March 10; opens April 4 at the Hayes Theater, Manhattan.

'FUNNY GIRL' It's hard to think of another Golden Age megahit that hasn't had a Broadway revival. Surely it's not the fault of the terrific songs, by Jule Styne and Bob Merrill, including ''Don't Rain on My Parade'' and ''People.'' And though the original book isn't top-notch, it gets the job done, telling the story of the comedian Fanny Brice from teenage years to stardom by way of romantic catastrophe. No, the reason is simple: Barbra Streisand. Nearly 60 years after creating the role, she essentially still owns it. So let's just say for now that the delightful Beanie Feldstein, who heads this revival, is borrowing it. Whether she can make the production, directed by Michael Mayer and with a revised book by Harvey Fierstein, as memorable as the first -- well, check back in 60 years. JESSE GREENPreviews begin March 26; opens April 24 at the August Wilson Theater, Manhattan.

'MACBETH' Is it ever not ''Macbeth'' time? ''The Scottish Play,'' as superstitious theater folk call it, has had nearly 50 Broadway productions since 1768, each age no doubt finding in it an echo of its own. In ours, the toxic brew of ambition and credulousness seems to resound most clearly. Will the director Sam Gold, whose takes on ''King Lear'' and ''The Glass Menagerie'' were so divisive, draw the modern parallels? All I can say for sure is that with Daniel Craig (a memorably blasé Iago in Gold's downtown ''Othello'' in 2016) and Ruth Negga (a riveting Hamlet in 2020) as the suggestible Macbeth and his suggestive Lady, this revival should be a deep dive into cold water. JESSE GREENPreviews begin March 29; opens April 28 at the Longacre Theater, Manhattan.

'FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE/WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF' The year before her death in 2018, the playwright Ntozake Shange went to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington to see a program by the choreographer Camille A. Brown. It was the first time they met, but they soon saw each other again -- and Brown found herself in the startling position of hearing Shange, the revered author of the landmark choreopoem ''For Colored Girls,'' ask to interview her about her work, because she so enjoyed Brown's movement language. Dance is elemental to ''For Colored Girls,'' which first opened on Broadway in 1976 and ran for nearly two years, with Shange herself as the Lady in Orange, one of the rainbow of women of color who tell their stories in the play. Revived at the Public Theater in 2019 with Brown (''Once on This Island'') as choreographer, it comes to Broadway this spring with Brown both directing and choreographing. LAURA COLLINS-HUGHESPreviews begin April 1; opens April 20 at the Booth Theater, Manhattan.

'THE MINUTES' Tracy Letts kills with laughs. In his 2007 breakthrough, ''August: Osage County,'' the victim was the American family. In ''Linda Vista,'' which hit Broadway in 2019, men took the blade of his scythe. In those plays, and in many others, he gets you rooting for the worst people until you realize you are then complicit in their destructiveness. ''The Minutes,'' directed by Letts's frequent collaborator Anna D. Shapiro, is a 90-minute comedy satirizing the workings of a self-satisfied bureaucracy in a fictional Midwestern city called Big Cherry. It features a cast of Letts experts, including Ian Barford, Blair Brown, K. Todd Freeman, Sally Murphy and, as Mayor Superba, Letts himself. But if it looks like he's wielding his usual weapons, the target is even bigger than before: America's idea of its own goodness. JESSE GREENPreviews begin April 2; opens April 17 at Studio 54, Manhattan.

'A STRANGE LOOP' Since it premiered at Playwrights Horizons in 2019, Michael R. Jackson's searingly funny and heartbreakingly frank musical ''A Strange Loop,'' in which he reflected on his experience as a young, queer Black man, has gone on to earn critical raves and a slew of awards, including the Pulitzer Prize in 2020. Now, Page 73, Playwrights Horizons and Woolly Mammoth are bringing the acclaimed production to Broadway, with Jaquel Spivey in the central role of a musical theater writer working as an usher at ''The Lion King'' and whose thoughts come to blistering life as a sort of Greek chorus. Jackson dismantles orthodoxies with verve and bite, and reserves some of his most pointed barbs for such institutions as church and Tyler Perry. You may never think of that Atlanta mogul the same way again. ELISABETH VINCENTELLIPreviews begin April 6; opens April 26 at the Lyceum Theater, Manhattan.

'HANGMEN' After Martin McDonagh's slow-burn thriller was forced to close with the rest of Broadway in March 2020, its producers declared that it couldn't come back. But McDonagh (''The Pillowman,'' ''The Lieutenant of Inishmore'') has a way with a plot twist. So here is one more: This 1960s-set work of psychological suspense will return to the same theater, with a somewhat altered cast. Gone is Dan Stevens (''Downton Abbey'') as a magnetic London lowlife; in his place is Alfie Allen (''Game of Thrones''). Mark Addy, who played an executioner turned pub owner in the North of England, has also been replaced, by David Threlfall. What remains in this production, which originated at the Royal Court in London, are McDonagh's shocking gifts: for taut plotting, sharp dialogue and a theatrical style that balances each play on a knife's edge of comedy and terror. Matthew Dunster directs. ALEXIS SOLOSKIPreviews begin April 8; opens April 21 at the Golden Theater, Manhattan.

Off Broadway

'CONFEDERATES' Dominique Morisseau, one of the most exciting playwrights working today, is best known for her Detroit cycle, which feels like the magnificent progeny of August Wilson's American Century Cycle. She makes magic with language: Her characters are real, her metaphors are sharp, and her dialogue reads like poetry. Morisseau's work was on Broadway earlier this season with ''Skeleton Crew,'' and she follows that with the New York premiere of ''Confederates,'' which tackles institutional racism as it's experienced by two Black women who live over a century apart. Stori Ayers directs. MAYA PHILLIPSPreviews begin March 8; opens March 27 at the Signature Theater, Manhattan.

'SUFFS' There's a scene in Lin-Manuel Miranda's film adaptation of the Jonathan Larson musical ''Tick, Tick ... Boom!'' in which the camera pans a silent assembly of musical theater writers: essential composers and lyricists of the 21st-century New York stage. Blink and you miss her, but Shaina Taub is in there. So don't blink, and definitely don't miss her work. The subject of her latest musical, ''Suffs,'' is the fight, just over a century ago, for American women's right to vote. The topic might sound potentially dry as dust, or doctrinaire to a fatal degree. But Taub, a musical magpie with a wholly distinctive voice, has a genius for storytelling that's smart and political but also playful and funny; for proof, see her tuneful adaptations of ''Twelfth Night'' and ''As You Like It.'' And while she's lately teamed up with Elton John to write the Broadway-bound musical ''The Devil Wears Prada,'' ''Suffs'' is all hers. LAURA COLLINS-HUGHESPreviews begin March 10; opens April 6 at the Public Theater, Manhattan.

'BOOK OF MOUNTAINS & SEAS' The composer-librettist Huang Ruo and the director-designer Basil Twist are calling their new work choral theater, but it's also puppetry on an operatic scale -- bold, elegant, monumental. Adapted from Chinese myths and delayed from its American premiere when the Omicron variant shut down the Prototype Festival in January, ''Book of Mountains & Seas'' arrives for its brief run at St. Ann's Warehouse with 12 singers from the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, two percussionists and a half dozen nimble puppeteers. First performed last year in Copenhagen, it's a sensory immersion of sound, light and movement that feels sometimes as if elements of Twist's most famous puppet piece, ''Symphonie Fantastique,'' had escaped the water tank to soar majestically in the open air. LAURA COLLINS-HUGHESMarch 15-20 at St. Ann's Warehouse, Brooklyn.

'HARMONY' Back in 2019, The New York Times trumpeted that after taking off at the La Jolla Playhouse in 1997 and spending more than two decades circling the runway, Barry Manilow and Bruce Sussman's labor-of-love musical ''Harmony'' -- about the German vocal sextet the Comedian Harmonists, which was immensely popular between the two world wars -- was going to have its Off Broadway premiere. In the spring of 2020. Now, the show is finally arriving, with the choreographer-director Warren Carlyle overseeing a cast led by Chip Zien and Sierra Boggess. If nothing else, this is another sign that after its Yiddish version of ''Fiddler on the Roof'' and its recent collaboration with New York City Opera on ''The Garden of the Finzi-Continis,'' the producing National Yiddish Theater Folksbiene has become a force on the New York musical landscape. ELISABETH VINCENTELLIPreviews begin March 23; opens April 13 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, Manhattan.

'CYRANO DE BERGERAC' There is no shortage of variations on Edmond Rostand's 19th-century play ''Cyrano de Bergerac,'' in which the brilliant but big-nosed Cyrano writes beautiful love poems that his handsome but -- let's say, less brilliant -- comrade Christian passes off for his own to impress Roxane, a woman whom Cyrano himself loves. Next up is the Jamie Lloyd Company's ''Cyrano de Bergerac,'' adapted by Martin Crimp and directed by Lloyd, which will come to Brooklyn from a critically acclaimed run in London. It's a slick, modern version, with Cyrano using rap and spoken word as his means of seduction. Starring as Cyrano is James McAvoy, who often seems to alter his very foundations -- his voice and mannerisms, his energy, his whole physical presence -- for a role. MAYA PHILLIPSPreviews begin April 5; opens April 14 at the Harvey Theater, Brooklyn Academy of Music.

'A CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD' Samuel D. Hunter has built a rich oeuvre from fertile ground: the Idaho landscapes of his youth. His deceptively quiet plays (''Lewiston/ Clarkston,'' ''A Bright New Boise,'' ''Greater Clements'') explore faith, desire, sex and loss, in dialogue attuned to the rhythms of ordinary speech. The MacArthur Foundation acknowledged his ability to create ''dramas that explore the human capacity for empathy and confront the socially isolating aspects of contemporary life across the American landscape.'' This new play, directed by David Cromer, is again set in Idaho -- and is perhaps the most intimate he has written. It has just two characters, men working to understand what the world does and doesn't owe them. Though Hunter often prefers characters on what he calls ''the losing end of American life,'' he has promised that this new play is hopeful. ALEXIS SOLOSKIPreviews begin April 12; opens May 2 at Signature Theater, Manhattan.

'WISH YOU WERE HERE' The vagaries of postponements and rescheduling now give us two nearly simultaneous opportunities to discover the world of Sanaz Toossi, a young first-generation Iranian American playwright from Orange County, Calif. Hot on the heels of ''English'' (at the Atlantic Theater Company), which looks at a small group of Iranians preparing for the Test of English as a Foreign Language, ''Wish You Were Here'' follows five young women in Karaj, a suburb of Tehran. (The actress Marjan Neshat appears in both shows.) They are about 20 when the play begins, in 1978, and we stay with them until 1991 as they navigate not only their friendship, but also their sense of home and belonging. A revolution is unfolding, followed by war with Iraq; life-changing decisions must be made. Toossi reunites with Gaye Taylor Upchurch, who directed last year's audio version from the Williamsburg Theater Festival and Audible. ELISABETH VINCENTELLIPreviews begin April 13; opens May 2 at Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan.

'WEDDING BAND' Alice Childress was a force to be reckoned with in the theater, even if she didn't always get her due. After all, she would have been the first Black female playwright on Broadway if she hadn't refused to compromise on her work. That would-be first was her play ''Trouble in Mind,'' which finally premiered on Broadway last fall. How fortunate we are to get her follow-up to ''Trouble,'' ''Wedding Band,'' a rarely produced play about an illicit interracial relationship in the South during World War I. Awoye Timpo directs this, only the second New York production, with modern race politics -- including the Black Lives Matter movement -- as the trouble in mind. MAYA PHILLIPSPreviews begin April 23; opens May 1 at Polonsky Shakespeare Center, Theater for a New Audience, Brooklyn.

'THE BEDWETTER' Sorry, ''Urinetown,'' you're not the only musical about a certain bodily function anymore. Subtitled ''Stories of Redemption, Courage, and Pee'' Sarah Silverman's 2010 memoir is frank, vulnerable and, of course, brutally funny. Chances are good these qualities will be present in this musical adaptation, since Silverman herself wrote the book with the playwright Joshua Harmon (''Prayer for the French Republic''), as well as the lyrics, with the composer Adam Schlesinger. The show is bound to be bittersweet: Schlesinger, who is best known for his scores for Broadway's ''Cry-Baby'' and the TV series ''Crazy Ex-Girlfriend,'' died of coronavirus complications in April 2020, around the time ''The Bedwetter'' was originally scheduled to premiere. ELISABETH VINCENTELLIPreviews begin April 30; opens May 23 at the Linda Gross Theater, Atlantic Theater Company.

'WHO KILLED MY FATHER' At the intersection of memoir, sociological study and call to arms, the French writer Édouard Louis's books, which often dissect his ***working-class*** upbringing, have become an unlikely inspiration for successful plays. Two of them, ''The End of Eddy'' and ''History of Violence,'' even opened in New York the same week in 2019. Now, Louis is even more directly involved in the theatricalization of his own life: He is starring in a stage version of ''Who Killed My Father,'' in which he intermingled a look at the destructive impact of physical work on his father's body with a takedown of France's class structure. The production reunites Louis with the brilliant German director Thomas Ostermeier, who also staged ''History of Violence.'' ELISABETH VINCENTELLIPreviews begin May 18; opens May 22 at St. Ann's Warehouse, Brooklyn.

Pop

BURNA BOY Nigerian Afrobeats has gathered a worldwide audience through sleek understatement: an insinuating basic beat that's equal parts syncopation and silence, productions that conjure bassy depths and open spaces, singers who offer calm confidence rather than histrionics. The pandemic derailed international touring for Afrobeats stars, postponing their chances to claim their ever-expanding American audience. It's fitting that Burna Boy, the songwriter who won the 2021 Grammy Award for best global music album with ''Twice as Tall,'' will be the first Nigerian musician to headline Madison Square Garden, with a show billed as ''One Night in Space.'' With his amiable, husky baritone and the assistance of some of Africa's most innovative producers, Burna Boy has delivered a steady flow of international hits like ''Question,'' ''Kilometre'' and ''Want It All'' from 2021, and his catalog features cultural messages along with party tunes. He has already headlined arenas in Africa, Europe and England; the United States can soon catch up. JON PARELESApril 28 at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan.

ALABASTER DEPLUME Performing as Alabaster dePlume, the U.K.-based saxophonist, vocalist and activist Gus Fairbairn draws equally, and a bit cautiously, upon Indian raga, western New Age music, Hailu Mergia's late-70s recordings with the Dahlak Band and the psych-folk appropriations of the Incredible String Band. He knows that most of the ideas in his music -- musically, lyrically, critically -- originated somewhere else; they're a historical inheritance, and they're here through colonial encounter.

But just knowing doesn't count for much, and dePlume's real appeal (as an auteur, a philosopher, a saxophonist) comes from listening to him push through the anxieties of influence into sincerity. More and more, the music wears humane intentions on its sleeve: On ''Don't Forget You're Precious,'' from his latest album, ''Gold,'' due April 1, he admonishes a listener in a purring first-person: ''I remember my pin number/I remember my ex's email address/But I forget I'm precious.''

Those intentions come through strongly in performance, where dePlume encourages his side musicians to ''bring your whole self,'' as he said in an interview with The Quietus. He avoids playing consistently with the same group so that every show is guided by intuition. When he arrives in Brooklyn, he'll be joined by the violist Marta Sofia Honer and the electronic musician Jeremiah Chiu, in a band he pulled together with help from Jaimie Branch, a trumpeter and his International Anthem label mate. GIOVANNI RUSSONELLOMarch 19 at Public Records in Brooklyn.

DUA LIPA Released in the surreal and cursed March 2020, Dua Lipa's nimble, disco-sleek second record, ''Future Nostalgia,'' was one of the first blockbuster pop albums put out during the Covid-19 pandemic. That it has taken her nearly two years to tour it, though, does not mean its sound has become a distant, early lockdown memory: ''Future Nostalgia'' has had such a long tail in the usually mercurial pop world that you'd still be hard pressed to scan the radio dial and not come across one of its many smash hits. (Its fifth single, ''Levitating,'' has been on the Billboard Hot 100 for 66 weeks and counting.)

This also means that Lipa's star wattage has increased considerably since she last toured the United States, for her 2017 self-titled debut album. Consider that the last venue she headlined in New York was the 2,500-seat Hammerstein Ballroom; the Future Nostalgia Tour will come to two local arenas. If her effervescent, impressively calisthenic performance at last year's Grammys was any indication, Lipa will have no trouble commanding such a huge stage. And given the fact that Lipa's buoyant tunes were the soundtrack of so many people dancing on their own during those long, lonely months of lockdown, the prospect of grooving to them in a communal setting promises to be extra cathartic. LINDSAY ZOLADZMarch 1 at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan; March 4 at Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.

OLIVIA RODRIGO Most musicians -- even the ones who appear to be overnight sensations -- have to pay their dues on small stages first. Olivia Rodrigo's breakout year happened while the pandemic paused live music, so while she's a front-runner for a best new artist Grammy, she's still barely played in front of live audiences at all, save for a few performances on late night TV and at award shows. And so the sold-out Sour Tour will be a proving ground for Rodrigo, whose alternately punky and wrenching debut album, ''Sour,'' was one of the best and most talked about of last year. Rodrigo's recent eight-song appearance at ''Austin City Limits,'' taped for a crowd of giddy fans, was a better showcase for the quieter, more introspective side of her songwriting, like the world-stopping ballad ''Drivers License'' or the scorched post-breakup note ''Traitor.'' But her tour will likely provide an opportunity for pop-punk anthems like ''Good 4 U'' and ''Brutal'' to connect with a more kinetic audience -- plenty of people have been waiting far too long to scream along with Rodrigo's every word. ZOLADZApril 26-27 at Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan.

WILCO Vindication doesn't get much purer, or better deserved, than the fate of Wilco's 2002 album, ''Yankee Hotel Foxtrot.'' After making three albums of rootsy indie-rock, full of 1960s and 1970s echoes, Jeff Tweedy steered Wilco toward studio experimentation, incorporating unexpected instruments, random noises and surreal mixes. Its opening song, ''I Am Trying to Break Your Heart,'' was a frontal assault on naturalism, savoring loops, glitches and distortion. Wilco's label, Reprise, told Tweedy the album was horrible and ''career-ending,'' refused to release it and dropped the band. But Wilco then streamed the songs online to a hugely enthusiastic response. Nonesuch (part of the Warner Music Group along with Reprise) picked up ''Yankee Hotel Foxtrot''; it reached the Top 20 and sold more than half a million copies. Wilco has endured as a shape-shifting band, with songs that can be transformed onstage. It will mark the 20th anniversary of ''Yankee Hotel Foxtrot'' by performing the whole album for five nights in New York City and three in Chicago. The sonic palette may seem slightly less radical two decades later, but the songs remain sturdy, full of private yearnings and insights about America. PARELESApril 15-17 and April 19-20 at the United Palace Theater in Manhattan; April 22-24 at the Auditorium Theater in Chicago.

Classical

'LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR' There have been all kinds of updatings at the Metropolitan Opera in recent years. ''Rigoletto,'' set in the Renaissance, has been moved to Rat Pack-era Las Vegas, then Weimar Germany. ''Carmen,'' which the libretto places in the early 19th century, was pulled forward to the time of the Spanish Civil War.

But rarer -- particularly in a core repertory still dominated by Italian-language classics -- are Met productions set in a realistic present day. That can be a step too far for conservative opera aficionados who have grudgingly dealt with (and sometimes booed) the company's mildly modernized takes on some of their favorites.

The Met's new staging of Donizetti's ''Lucia di Lammermoor'' is therefore a likely flash point. The Australian director Simon Stone (''Yerma'' at the Park Avenue Armory and ''Medea'' at the Brooklyn Academy of Music) is setting the work not in its original 18th-century Scottish Highlands, but in a struggling Rust Belt town today.

For Stone, both of those milieus are ones in which society's denial of the power and prosperity that men had assumed was theirs translates to the abuse of women. Living in what he calls a ''wasteland of free-market capitalism,'' pockmarked by pawn shops, liquor stores and boarded-up houses, Stone's title character -- forced, with tragic results, into marrying against her will -- is an opioid addict who meets her secret lover at a motel.

The 2007 Mary Zimmerman staging being replaced by this one was also updated, to the Victorian era, but retained a sumptuousness that satisfied traditionalists. Abandoning that, Stone is under pressure to render his fresh vision through his cast, led by Nadine Sierra as Lucia, Javier Camarena as her beloved Edgardo, and Artur Rucinski as her cruel brother. Riccardo Frizza conducts what promises to be a very interesting premiere. Opens April 23. ZACHARY WOOLFE

JOHNNY GANDELSMAN The violinist Johnny Gandelsman doesn't take on projects lightly. In addition to his work with the quartet Brooklyn Rider, and with the Silkroad Ensemble, he maintains a robust solo career that has unfolded with one ambitious undertaking after another.

With feather-light and fiddling bow strokes, he recorded a novel account of Bach's six sonatas and partitas for solo violin, which he programmed as a breathless marathon instead of the usual assortment of selections. Then he transcribed Bach's six cello suites for his instrument, again presenting them all together, and justified what might have seemed like a gimmick with an illuminating re-evaluation of music that could hardly be better known.

His latest project, ''This Is America,'' is a swerve from the Baroque, but no less daunting and even more enterprising.

In the spirit of another restless violinist, Jennifer Koh, Gandelsman has gone on a commissioning spree, ordering more than 20 new pieces from a group of composers who collectively demonstrate the possibilities of truly diverse programming. What emerges, he hopes, is an argument for the impossibility of capturing the United States in any straightforward or reductive way, as well as for the benefit in aspiring instead to a prismatic portrait of place.

He has started rolling out the premieres in a tour whose stops include two evenings at Baryshnikov Arts Center. Both programs open with Bach cello suite transcriptions, but spread between them are also 10 ''This Is America'' works. On the roster are excellent known quantities, such as Tyshawn Sorey (''For Courtney Bryan''), Rhiannon Giddens (''New to the Session'') and Angélica Negrón (''A través del manto Luminoso''); as well as Olivia Davis, Nick Dunston, Christina Courtin, Marika Hughes, Adele Faizullina, and Rhea Fowler and Micaela Tobin. March 16 and 17. JOSHUA BARONE

CARNEGIE HALL Scan the schedule at Carnegie Hall, and it's painfully apparent that it's still impossible for major overseas orchestras to appear on these shores as they once could -- at least unless they are led by the conductor Valery Gergiev, who brings his Mariinsky Orchestra to town (May 3, May 4) after an initial visit with the Vienna Philharmonic at the end of February.

One of the few to cross the ocean is the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, whose concert with the immaculate pianist Mitsuko Uchida (March 25) would be a highlight of any season, let alone this necessarily sparse one. Together, they will play two Mozart concertos, the repertoire in which Uchida has for so long excelled: the genial, graceful No. 23 in A, and the No. 24 in C minor, one of the composer's darkest pieces.

But if the Mahler ensemble's appearance is the exception that proves the rule, Uchida's is something like the opposite: Pianists dominate at Carnegie this spring. Uchida herself will preface her Mozart by appearing with the tenor Mark Padmore, an ideally penetrating pairing for Schubert's troubled ''Schwanengesang'' (March 13).

Daniil Trifonov (March 3), Beatrice Rana (March 9), Gabriela Montero (March 18) and Andras Schiff (March 31) all arrive in March, with Montero offering an intriguing Carnegie debut putting Schumann, Shostakovich and Chick Corea suggestively together with her own pieces and improvisations. Yuja Wang (April 12), Emanuel Ax (April 28) and Evgeny Kissin (May 20) take their place on the piano bench later; if their programs look a little same-old, Yefim Bronfman (April 18) adds to his repertory with a sonata by the uncompromising Galina Ustvolskaya. And if that's not enough, Igor Levit returns after his January recital to perform Brahms with the New York Philharmonic (May 6). DAVID ALLEN

ANTHONY DAVIS The composer and pianist Anthony Davis's operas have been absurdly difficult to seek out this century. But that's about to change.

Portland Opera will present ''The Central Park Five'' -- which earned Davis the 2020 Pulitzer Prize -- in March. And Michigan Opera Theater in Detroit will bring Davis's first operatic triumph, ''X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X,'' from 1986, to its stage in May, in a new production by the Tony Award nominee Robert O'Hara.

New Yorkers may want to keep an eye on this ''X,'' which is bound for the Metropolitan Opera in the fall of 2023. A concert presentation will also be on offer from the Boston Modern Orchestra Project in June. In both Boston and Detroit, the title role will be sung by the bass-baritone Davóne Tines, whose fleet, complex characterizations have proved dazzling in New York -- including his lead appearance in Hans Werner Henze's ''El Cimarrón.'' (The baritone Will Liverman is scheduled to take the part at the Met.)

Even if the production weren't headed to New York, Davis's score would make ''X'' a destination opera. Just as in his orchestral music and compositions for smaller jazz ensembles, his approach in this opera merges modernism with a wide-angle appreciation of swing and the blues. Although ''X'' made a strong impression on a 1992 recording, now out of print, Davis is taking this opportunity to revise the score. This spring will be our first opportunity to hear his latest vision of it. SETH COLTER WALLS

Dance

MOVEMENT RESEARCH AT JUDSON CHURCH This weekly series, which dates to 1991, is an ever-shifting bill of experimental dance. Each program, free on Monday nights, is a stand-alone adventure -- the chance to see an imagination blossom on a bare-bones stage. Where is dance going? How is the art form developing in a new generation, and how have choreographers continued to work through the pandemic? Now, more than ever, Judson is critical to the ecosystem of downtown dance.

When Movement Research, dedicated to the investigation of dance and movement-based forms, resumed its Judson performances last fall, the idea was to celebrate the series' 30th anniversary, but cancellations were unavoidable; the same thing happened in early winter as yet another wave of the pandemic hit. When, finally, the show did go on one night in February, it felt like a beam of light.

This spring, Judson gets another shot at celebrating its anniversary beginning with Lai Yi Ohlsen and Brendan Drake on March 21 and continuing with Benjamin Akio Kimitch and the mesmerizing duo of Molly Lieber and Eleanor Smith the following week.

The season wrap-up is organized by Maria Hupfield, through Movement Research's Artists of Color Council, a group addressing issues of equity and cultural diversity. The lineup features Indigenous Kinship Collective NYC (KIN), Emily Johnson and Rosy Simas, dance artists very much in tune with the urgency of our time. Dance may have been put on hold, but it has a future. Movement Research proves it. GIA KOURLASThrough May 23 at Judson Church, Manhattan.

SARA MEARNS The ballet dancer is just one part of the dancer that is Sara Mearns. In this Joyce Theater production, she explores other sides of her artistry in a collection of collaborations, including a crucial one with the choreographer and dance artist Jodi Melnick. It is through Melnick that Mearns, a principal dancer at New York City Ballet, delved into a new way of moving, a new way of thinking about dance and about the intricacies of the body.

Together, their contrasts and similarities create, strange as it may sound, a minimalism of excess rooted in delicate, powerfully subtle, liquid dancing. They have spent hours in the studio together; it shows. A highlight will be Melnick's ''Opulence,'' a duet that was originally part of a program at Jacob's Pillow in 2019.

The program also includes a short film -- shot in Long Island City in March 2020, just before the pandemic shutdown -- directed and choreographed by Austin Goodwin for Mearns and Paul Zivkovich, as well as new duets by Vinson Fraley, a member of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company and Guillaume Côté, of National Ballet of Canada.

In other words, this isn't another ballerina-in-the-spotlight kind of situation. Not only will Mearns debut a solo by the esteemed choreographer Beth Gill -- so curious to see this! -- but she has also programmed a Cunningham MinEvent, staged by Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener, featuring live music by John King. Cunningham isn't new to Mearns; she performed in ''Night of 100 Solos: A Centennial Event,'' which celebrated that choreographer's legacy in 2019. She's assembled a stellar cast: She will be joined by Taylor Stanley, Jacquelin Harris, Chalvar Monteiro, Burr Johnson and Melnick. It's star power done right. KOURLASMarch 8-13 at the Joyce Theater, Manhattan.

STORYBOARD P Storyboard P is an incredible dancer in the most literal sense, the kind who makes it hard to believe your eyes. His name alludes to film, and many people (including him) have likened his style to stop-motion animation and special effects. Gliding and floating in liquid relation to music or flickering to register noise in the signal, he's a master of illusion whose sophistication and subtlety reward the closest attention. But even more astonishing than his skill is the freedom of his improvisatory imagination. It follows unpredictable twists into deep and strange channels, the territory of dreams.

In the Crown Heights neighborhood where he grew up and in the community that developed the street dance known as flex, he was recognized as exceptional at least by the mid-2000s, when he started winning competition after competition, even if he never quite fit in. Around 10 years ago, news began to spread more widely. Appearing in his own clips, in short films by Khalil Joseph and Arthur Jafa and in music videos for the likes of Jay-Z, he became a YouTube star. In profiles -- in The New Yorker, The Guardian and The Wire -- he talked about forging a new kind of career for a dancer, as ''a visual recording artist.''

Instead, apart from a cameo in another Jay-Z video (the Arthur Jafa-directed ''4:44''), he largely disappeared from the public eye. But he's resurfacing at Performance Space New York for two freestyle performances called ''No Diving 2.'' Who knows what might happen. BRIAN SEIBERTApril 7-8 at Performance Space New York, Manhattan.

ROBERT GARLAND AT DANCE THEATER OF HARLEM Dance Theater of Harlem was founded in 1969 with two braided missions: to create a place for Black dancers in ballet and to extend the tradition of George Balanchine and New York City Ballet, where Arthur Mitchell, Dance Theater's mastermind, got his start. These missions have been carried into the present in the work of the company's resident choreographer, Robert Garland.

In ''Return'' (1999), set to recordings by James Brown and Aretha Franklin, and ''New Bach'' (2002), Garland found a way to combine neoclassical ballet with Black vernacular dance and what he has called ''Harlem swag.'' His ''Gloria'' (2013), set to Poulenc and incorporating students, movingly encapsuled the troupe's phoenixlike rebirth after a nine-year hiatus. In their excellence, these pieces to old music showed how values from the past still had relevance.

In 2020, when the pandemic shut down theaters, Garland was about to debut ''Higher Ground,'' set to some of the more politically sharp tracks from Stevie Wonder's genius streak of the 1970s. The work finally gets its New York premiere in April, as part of the City Center Dance Festival. The music comes from Garland's youth but is freshly topical in the age of Black Lives Matter. Even more significant, the dance is an intensely affecting response to that music that could be done only by a ballet company -- this ballet company. It feels like the kind of work that Dance Theater of Harlem was made to do. SEIBERT.April 5, 8-10, at New York City Center, Manhattan.

ASHWINI RAMASWAMY Two years after its originally scheduled New York premiere, Ashwini Ramaswamy's ''Let the Crows Come'' finally lands at the Baryshnikov Arts Center. Ramaswamy, who lives in Minneapolis, grew up steeped in the tradition of the South Indian classical dance form Bharatanatyam, and her work often explores the in-betweenness of her cultural identity, the experience of being from both India and the United States.

In ''Let the Crows Come,'' she is joined by two other Minneapolis dancers with different areas of expertise: Alanna Morris, who has a background in contemporary and Afro-Caribbean forms, and Berit Ahlgren, a practitioner and teacher of Gaga, the movement language developed by the Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin. Each dancer offers an interpretation of the same Bharatanatyam solo, refracting its rhythmic footwork, sculptural postures and intricate gestures through her own lens. Ramaswamy likens the structure to ''a memory that's experienced differently from person to person.'' In the live music, along similar lines, the composers Jace Clayton (also known as DJ Rupture) and Brent Arnold take inspiration from an original Carnatic score by Prema Ramamurthy.

New York audiences might know Ramaswamy, a dancer of vibrant clarity and warmth, from the Ragamala Dance Company, the Bharatanatyam troupe led by her mother and sister, with whom she still trains and performs. In a phone interview, she said her work remains intimately tied to theirs.

''I wouldn't say I'm branching out on my own,'' she said, ''but figuring out my method and my voice within that aesthetic and that lineage.''

The title ''Let the Crows Come'' alludes to a flow between past and present, referring to a Hindu ritual of honoring ancestors through offerings of rice. When crows come to eat the rice, Ramaswamy said, ''it means your ancestors are telling you, 'I'm OK. Keep living your life, but I'm always there with you.''' SIOBHAN BURKEApril 13-15 at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, Manhattan.

OKINAWAN DANCE AND MUSIC It's not often that dance from Okinawa makes its way to New York; when it does, you want to clear your calendar. That's one lesson I learned from the Japan Society's exquisite presentation, back in 2015, of Okinawan dance and music. As part of a five-city American tour, a new program, ''Waves Across Time: Traditional Dance and Music of Okinawa,'' comes to the Japan Society in March. The tour -- also stopping at Furman University in Greenville, S.C.; the Kennedy Center in Washington; Lafayette College in Easton, Pa.; and the University of Chicago -- marks the 50th anniversary of the return of Okinawa to Japan, following the American occupation of the islands after World War II.

Assembled by Michihiko Kakazu, the artistic director of the National Theater Okinawa, the two-part evening includes court dances from the classical repertory of kumiodori, a kind of Noh-inspired theater, dating to Okinawa's era as an independent kingdom, Ryukyu, from the 15th to 19th centuries. Stately, slow and lavishly costumed, these contrast with the program's other half: more recent, upbeat popular and folk dances, zo-odori. A lecture on the histories of these forms precedes each performance, and interactive workshops invite a closer look at their rhythmic and physical structures. BURKEMarch 18-20 at the Japan Society, Manhattan.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/arts/spring-performances-new-york.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/arts/spring-performances-new-york.html)

**Graphic**

From left, Patrick J. Adams, Jesse Williams and Jesse Tyler Ferguson will star in ''Take Me Out'' at the Hayes Theater, with previews beginning March 10. CATHERINE WESSEL DEVIN OKTAR YALKIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES Ruth Negga and Daniel Craig will star in ''Macbeth'' at the Longacre Theater, with previews beginning on March 29. CHANTAL ANDERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES Jaquel Spivey, center, will play the central role of Usher in ''A Strange Loop,'' by Michael R. Jackson, in April. TERESA CASTRACANE Mitsuko Uchida will perform on March 13 and March 25 at Carnegie Hall. HIROYUKI ITO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES Dua Lipa's tour will include concerts at Madison Square Garden on March 1 and the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J., on March 4. JASON KOERNER/GETTY IMAGES FOR PERMANENT PRESS MEDIA Radio City Music Hall will welcome the breakout star Olivia Rodrigo on April 26-27. CHRIS PIZZELLO/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS Burna Boy will be the first Nigerian musician to headline a show at Madison Square Garden when he performs on April 28. He won the 2021 Grammy Award for best global music album with ''Twice as Tall.'' AMY HARRIS/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS Movement Research's dance series at Judson Church resumes in March. WHITNEY BROWNE Kouadio Davis, left, and Alexandra Hutchinson of Dance Theater of Harlem in Robert Garland's ''Higher Ground,'' which will be performed at New York City Center in April. THEIK SMITH Ashwini Ramaswamy's ''Let the Crows Come'' lands at the Baryshnikov Arts Center on April 13-15. JAKE ARMOUR

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[***How Andrew Yang Handled His Asian-American Identity on the Campaign Trail***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y6W-VDM1-JBG3-61BT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** He ran on saving workers from automation, but also leaned into issues of race and representation.

**Body**

He ran on saving workers from automation, but also leaned into issues of race and representation.

[*Andrew Yang*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html), the Taiwanese-American businessman whose campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination exceeded expectations for a political newcomer, [*dropped out of the race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) this week after an eighth-place finish in the New Hampshire primary.

Mr. Yang pitched himself as an entrepreneurial problem solver [*on a quest to save America from automation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html). But as an Asian-American candidate, issues of race and representation became factors in his candidacy, especially as rivals like Julián Castro, Kamala Harris and Cory Booker dropped out and the field winnowed to a handful of white front-runners.

I asked my colleague [*Matt Stevens*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html), who covered Mr. Yang’s campaign, about those dynamics, and he said that Mr. Yang had told him that leading with race and identity was not “necessarily the most helpful way to move any community forward.”

I was also interested in what it was like for Matt, as a Korean-American, to report on a candidate who drew support from Asian-Americans but at times leaned into stereotypes on the campaign trail. Here’s our conversation:

What did Andrew Yang’s entry into the race mean for Asian-Americans? And how they are viewing his exit?

At first, I think, not much. Mr. Yang filed his paperwork to enter the race in the fall of 2017, but he didn’t generate any buzz until our colleague Kevin Roose [*wrote about his campaign months later*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html). And even then, it took an appearance on Joe Rogan’s [*podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) in 2019 for people to really start to learn his name.

Because, in the beginning, he was talking so much about the automation of jobs held by the white ***working class*** (truckers, for example), and because the audience for podcasts like Mr. Rogan’s is mostly white men, white men formed the base of his support.

But as college students and other young voters started taking notice, Asian-Americans began showing up at his events in significant numbers. They were not shy about telling me that they were drawn to him in part because of his race. And in general, I think his supporters — Asian-American and otherwise — are sad he dropped out, but confident that this isn’t the last they’ll hear from him.

Do you think race was a reason he lasted longer than other candidates? Was the #YangGang diverse?

The Yang Gang certainly became diverse, both racially and ideologically. He attracted Trump voters and Bernie Sanders supporters and everyone in between.

Research from [*AAPI Data*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) has shown that as Mr. Yang’s campaign grew, so did financial support from Asian-Americans. And money keeps a campaign viable. But I think he hung on so long, mostly because it was impossible to leave a town hall of his and not feel like he was genuinely normal, very likable and extremely concerned about the future. For many voters sick of politics as usual, that was more than enough.

He took some heat for saying “I am Asian, so I know a lot of doctors.” What did Mr. Yang tell you about his use of [*Asian-American stereotypes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html)

There was probably no topic I talked more about with Mr. Yang than his handling of his Asian-American identity; and although I am sure some in his campaign found it frustrating, to their credit, Mr. Yang was always made available for an interview on the topic.

I’d boil his response down to a few prongs: He [*said repeatedly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) that he was proud of his background and was well aware that he was being seen as a representative of the community. He saw the jokes as a way he could differentiate himself in a crowded field.

There was one thing he told me in an interview for [*a story about his previous jobs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) that I think does a nice job of summing up his perspective: “I’m not sure if leading with” race and identity, he said, “is necessarily the most helpful way to move any community forward.”

You wrote a [*deep dive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) into his career before his campaign that included a lot of perspectives from people who used to work with him, some of them critical. What was the response to that story? In general, did you find that people expected you, as an Asian-American, to be more sympathetic toward him in your coverage?

In some cases, yes, people did seem to have certain expectations of my coverage — or at least folks said as much on Twitter. Some asserted that my editors had made me write the tough story on Mr. Yang because I was Asian-American — the idea being, I think, that my byline would somehow inoculate The New York Times from criticism.

And speaking of my byline, I’m a Korean-American adoptee. And I also recall some Twitter users highlighting that fact that my name is Matt Stevens, which I took to mean they thought I could not possibly have borne in mind an Asian-American point of view, given my name.

I did not respond to anyone on Twitter. In my experience, it’s usually best not to. But I will say the piece found a wide readership, and I don’t think everyone who spent time with the article came to the same conclusions.

Was this assignment a surprise for you?

People sometimes ask if I was put on the Andrew Yang beat because I am Asian-American. The answer is no. And I think the story of how I came to cover him offers another lesson about why it is so important to have a diversity of voices and perspectives in the newsroom.

In short, I was assigned in the spring of 2019 to go listen to the Democratic candidates speak at a conference down the street from our office. It was the first time I saw Mr. Yang give his stump speech, and he used his now well-worn tagline: “The opposite of Donald Trump is an Asian man who likes math.”

The joke did not land. And as an Asian-American, I found it a little unusual coming from a presidential candidate. So, in one of my better moments, I suggested that we [*write a story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) on the ways Mr. Yang was leaning into his Asian-American identity on the trail. I developed a few sources on the campaign, Mr. Yang persisted in the race, and then, when the ways he was talking about being Asian-American became news again, I was well positioned to tackle race-related stories with what I think and hope was complexity and nuance.

I came to believe that this was a necessary contribution.

Read “The Andrew Yang Exit Interview” [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html).

The Push to Get Asian-Americans to Complete the Census

“Asian-Americans have been relegated as the subminority — that we’re not black, we’re not Hispanic. For a large part, we’re an afterthought.”

— Gene Wu, a Democratic state representative from Houston who is Chinese-American

Our national race correspondent, John Eligon, wrote this week about how Asian-Americans [*reported that they were less likely*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html) to fill out their census forms than any other demographic group. They are also the least familiar with the census, on average, and the most worried that their information will be used against them, according to [*a Census Bureau report*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html).

Activists told John that Asian-Americans remained largely misunderstood and that they were determined to use this year’s census to showcase the group’s multiplicity, secure better resources and funding, and harness untapped political power.

You can read more about the efforts to encourage Asian-American participation in the census in [*his report*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html).

Want more Race/Related?

[*Follow us on Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html), where we continue the conversation about race through visuals.

Tell your friends.

Invite someone to subscribe to [*Race/Related*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html), a newsletter focused on race, identity and culture. Or email your thoughts and suggestions to [*racerelated@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/nyregion/andrew-yang-mayor-nyc.html). It is published on Saturdays at 7 a.m. and edited by Lauretta Charlton.

PHOTO: Issues about Andrew Yang’s background and how he handled them were part of his candidacy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Will You Want to Go Straight Back Into the Crowd?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YV5-WSD1-DXY4-X446-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Planners once dreamed of cities with vast empty plazas and quiet streets. Post-pandemic, might they do so again?

**Body**

Planners once dreamed of cities with vast empty plazas and quiet streets. Post-pandemic, might they do so again?

Of all the media images that the Covid-19 crisis has generated in recent weeks, it is the city devoid of crowds that has perhaps been the most affecting. It doesn’t matter whether it’s [*New York*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets), or   [*Rome*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets) or   [*London*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets) — it is the empty public space that most clearly signifies something is wrong. There ought to be crowds, and there aren’t. It is the classic horror movie trope. Closer to home, it is what most disturbs and compels us about contemporary Detroit — except we are all Detroiters now.

But the idea that cities ought to be crowded is really quite new. We’ve learned to like density in the Western world of late, but in cities like New York and London, the equation of the urban crowd with urban success has fluctuated, and its recent ascent is one of many oscillations. In New York, its recent history can be traced back to Jane Jacobs’s 1962 book, “[*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets),” which made the then-incendiary argument that cities were, in effect, their public lives: What happened on the street corner was the city, and, crudely put, the more of it the better. Ms. Jacobs was a lonely voice at the time against the postwar trends toward urban decentralization and suburbanization, and for the human life of the neighborhood and its streets.

Things really got going, however, in the Catalan metropolis Barcelona, via politician-planner Oriol Bohigas. Between 1981 and 1987, under his guidance at the Office of Urban Projects, the city built or remade some 160 public spaces and filled them with people. Few Western urban leaders were unimpressed by the spectacle, especially when they saw its mature form at the 1992 Olympics. How attractive urban crowds could be! And how much money could be made when you gave them the space in which to eat and drink!

Mr. Bohigas’s approach was driven by an impeccably liberal philosophy too, drawing on the philosopher Hannah Arendt’s humanist theories of public life, then all the rage in the architecture schools. In “The Human Condition” — published 1958, the same year Ms. Jacobs’s arguments stopped Robert Moses’s plan for a four-lane Lower Manhattan Expressway — Ms. Arendt wrote that the human world was the life lived in public, the “space of appearance” as she called it. In the hands of leftish advocates of public space, like the American sociologist [*Richard Sennett*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets), that meant the literal return to pre-modern public spaces, with people living their whole lives in them. (Needless to say, architects loved all this. What better rationale for public architecture?)

Following the Barcelona example, public space became a defining part of the global city and urban crowds filling public spaces began to seem like both an economic and a moral good. “[*The Great Inversion*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets),” the journalist Alan Ehrenhalt called it in 2013, a process whose architectural emblems were the spaces wherever a crowd might gather: the street corner, the public square, the park. What Mr. Ehrenhalt and others described was partly demographic, partly symbolic: People really were coming back to live in cities, but they also wanted to see and be seen in them.

But however much that process looks like common sense now, it was itself a reaction to the midcentury urban decline in the West. That process wasn’t all to do with Detroit-style industrial decay; it had just as much to do with a planned dispersal that was ultimately about the fear of urban disease in the 19th-century city. To understand that fear, there’s no better source than Friedrich Engels’s “The Condition of the ***Working Class*** in England,” published in German in 1845 and of extraordinary and durable influence worldwide. Its account of industrial Manchester was also an account of its sickness and, by proxy, its density. The city’s [*lightless, airless streets*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets) teeming with the poor became a figure of long-lasting architectural horror; so much of modernist planning was a reaction to places like it.

If density was disease for modernists, it followed that their cities were about keeping people apart. Look back at the utopian schemes for cities of the first half of the 20th century, and the same hygienic preoccupations come up again and again: There must be light and space and fresh air. The Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier wrote about these things in his book “Vers Une Architecture” (translated as “Towards a New Architecture”). Parts of the book read like comedy now — the author’s attempt to turn his own obsession with hygiene into an avant-garde manifesto. But it was serious when it was published in 1923, the Spanish flu pandemic having just run its course.

In his first venture into town planning, Le Corbusier designed the imaginary Ville Contemporaine, a city of vast empty spaces. My copy of his book “The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning,” published in 1929, has a perspective drawing of the Ville Contemporaine on the cover, showing in the foreground a sunlit cafe terrace looking out toward vast cruciform towers in parkland; it is all light and space and greenery, and apart from some tiny specks in the far background, entirely free of human beings. Its emptiness has been the source of endless critique; it has been cited as evidence of modernism’s moral bankruptcy in general, and Le Corbusier’s inhumanity in particular. But place it in its post-pandemic context, and it begins to look different.

The Ville Contemporaine inspired plenty of real-life experiments, and perhaps the most closely related is Brasília, the modernist capital of Brazil, which turned 60 in April. The French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir complained of its “[*elegant monotony,*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets)” its lack of streets and crowds and anything resembling a traditional urban life on a grumpy visit in 1960. Her view set the tone for most subsequent perceptions of the place by outsiders. She was mostly right about the crowds; more space than building, the city is the opposite of what we have learned to expect. But it’s an important reminder that there are different ways of making an urban environment. The residential wings sit in lush parkland, and the life in these parts is airy and relaxed.

The dense city might not turn out to be responsible for the virus when all is said and done — but as it did a century ago in relation to the Spanish flu, it might well start to feel like a cause. After months of social distancing, are we going to want to go straight back into the crowd? Even if we are allowed to, I doubt it.

So what kinds of images are we going to make of our cities now? If we’re no longer dreaming of Venice’s Piazza San Marco (so packed in 2019 you were no longer permitted to sit down), what are we going to want? Might our love of the urban crowd take a break? Might our public spaces necessarily become quieter, more introverted, less social? Might we not more readily accept gaps and voids in our cities, and perhaps even start to value them?

In a chastened, post-coronavirus world, images like the Ville Contemporaine or Brasília might really start to seem attractive again. That fantasy has started to look like it has something to it now, doesn’t it? You can be part of the metropolis, but you can avoid physical proximity. You can see and be seen, while avoiding the closeness that has lately become so problematic. Social distancing? No problem. You’ll be lucky if you can get anywhere near your neighbors. And with all that space, you can do as much jogging as you want. It is of course by contemporary Western standards antisocial, even misanthropic. But if we’re going to have cities and the coronavirus, maybe the future is 1922, not 2022.

Richard J. Williams is a professor of contemporary visual cultures at the University of Edinburgh and the author, most recently, of “[*Why Cities Look the Way They Do*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets).”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/video-dept/new-york-citys-empty-streets).

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PHOTO: The Praca dos Tres Poderes in Brasilia, Brazil, with Oscar Niemeyer’s Palacio Nereu Ramos, in the background in 1970. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Archive Photos, via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***On the Sideline The Last Time, But No Longer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6163-XFK1-JBG3-62JG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

In Pennsylvania and other battlegrounds, both parties are succeeding in coaxing infrequent voters off the sidelines. The all-important question is who does it better.

GREENSBURG, Pa. -- At 32, Ryan Walsh has never voted in a presidential election. He didn't identify with either party before this year. But in the spring, he registered as a Republican, and he plans to cast a ballot in person on Tuesday for President Trump.

''I'm petrified of Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi getting power and doing all this stuff that's going to totally destroy the economy,'' said Mr. Walsh, who works for a social services agency of state government.

He cited a string of proposals that trouble him -- broad tax increases, the Green New Deal, ''Medicare for all'' -- that Mr. Biden has said he opposes. Mr. Walsh does not believe him.

Voters who didn't show up in 2016 are Mr. Trump's ''secret weapon,'' said Mr. Walsh, who lives outside Pittsburgh and works in Westmoreland County, an exurb where the Trump campaign is indeed hoping to expand its margin compared with 2016. Mr. Walsh called polls showing the president trailing ''a joke,'' adding, ''He will do nothing but gain in the areas he won last time.''

With recent electoral history and current polls suggesting that Democrats are likely to make gains in the vote-rich suburbs nearly everywhere, Mr. Trump's path to re-election has always required expanding his support in rural and exurban counties in Pennsylvania, as well as in other industrial states where he squeezed out victories in 2016.

Now that early voting is underway, the question of whether he can increase that support is no longer academic. Mr. Trump is attracting tens of thousands of voters like Mr. Walsh who sat out 2016 in Pennsylvania. Around 24 percent of the 424,000 registered Republicans who have cast early mail-in votes in the state did not vote four years ago, according to TargetSmart, a Democratic elections data firm.

But before the Trump campaign takes a victory lap, the same data analysis shows that in Pennsylvania -- where at least 1.9 million voters had returned ballots as of Thursday -- Democrats are keeping pace. About one in four of the 1.3 million registered Democrats who have voted did not vote in 2016.

Both parties are succeeding in one of their chief goals this year: to motivate large numbers of infrequent voters or nonvoters to come off the sidelines for what supporters of both nominees call the most crucial election of a lifetime. It was a goal that eluded Senator Bernie Sanders during the Democratic primary, but with Democrats united, Mr. Biden is pulling it off. And Mr. Trump is answering critics who said his appeal was limited to those in his base who voted for him four years ago.

The trends playing out in Pennsylvania are seen across 14 battleground states, where more than 10 million people who didn't vote in 2016 have already cast ballots this year, making up 25 percent of the early vote in those states.

''The fact that one in four didn't vote in 2016 suggests there's a whole lot of these turnout targets who didn't come out before, who have been motivated to come out,'' said Tom Bonier, the chief executive of TargetSmart.

So far, the data shows that more Democratic-leaning voters who didn't cast ballots in 2016 are turning out than Republican-leaning voters. ''Nationally, Democrats have a modeled advantage of 14.5 percent with those non-2016 voters,'' Mr. Bonier said.

But that is partly because Mr. Trump has made mail-in ballots toxic to many of his supporters through his frequent (and unfounded) claims that mail voting is ripe for fraud. Trump supporters are expected to dominate in-person voting on Election Day in some battleground states. The current Democratic advantage with non-2016 voters could even out by Election Day.

Remarkably, the surge of voters who did not vote four years ago is not primarily driven by people who have turned 18 since 2016. Nationally, the number of early voters this year who are 50 and over and didn't turn out in 2016, which was 6.4 million as of Thursday, was greater than those under 30, about 4.9 million. All age groups are exhibiting an intense interest in voting.

Geraldine Folk, 82, of Fleetwood, Pa., recently sent in a mail ballot for Mr. Biden, her first presidential vote ever. ''I've never seen a president like this in all my life, and I went through a lot of presidents,'' she said of Mr. Trump.

''He was on with Stahl last night on '60 Minutes' and he was obnoxious and left -- he's not a decent person,'' Ms. Folk said of Mr. Trump's bolting from an interview with the CBS journalist Lesley Stahl. ''I hate the way he's running this country. It's just a disgrace.''

Ms. Folk worked as a sewing machine operator in a factory until she was injured in an auto accident. Her husband, who died a dozen years ago, was an electrician in a cement plant. Today she has a partial disability. ''If my legs were good, I'd be out there campaigning, and they wouldn't like what I had to say -- I'm a very outspoken woman,'' she said. ''I think he's a useless you-know-what.''

TargetSmart's data is different from a poll. The firm matches every early vote to the name of a person in state databases of registered voters. Although it is impossible to know how a person voted, the voter file unlocks a trove of information, including a voter's age, race, sex and history of past voting. In states without partisan registration, the firm models voters' likely party preference based on other information.

Mr. Trump's 44,000-vote victory in Pennsylvania four years ago, in which he won by less than one percentage point, hinged on places like Westmoreland County, once a blue-collar Democratic stronghold, which the president carried by 31 points, a wider margin than in any of the state's other populous counties.

The Trump campaign and its allies have pumped resources into expanding that margin. Route 30 into Greensburg, the county seat, features a pro-Trump billboard promising to ''Keep Nat Gas and Coal Jobs'' and another attacking Mr. Biden as ''a totally corrupt politician.''

Brittney Robinson, the Republican National Committee's state director in Pennsylvania, said the party had made a ''huge investment'' in data that it has used to ''find these people who are likely to support the president who may not have voted for him in 2016'' and try to turn them out.

The Biden campaign said that Mr. Trump's share of voters has not grown even if he is turning out new supporters.

It pointed to internal data that Democratic early voters who didn't participate in the last presidential election outnumber Republican voters who didn't turn out by two to one.

''Our strategy in Pennsylvania has always been to energize, mobilize and turn out our base in Democratic strongholds, expand on Democratic gains in the suburbs and collar counties, and win back voters who gave Trump a shot in 2016 or may have sat out that election,'' said Brendan McPhillips, the Biden campaign's state director.

Without the state's 20 electoral votes, Mr. Trump would have an extremely narrow path to re-election. Mr. Biden has wider options, based on current polling in battleground states.

Despite efforts by the president's campaign and outside groups to expand his support with the voters most likely to back him -- white blue-collar workers -- polling shows him trailing his 2016 benchmarks. In the latest New York Times/Siena College poll of Pennsylvania, the president led Mr. Biden among white voters without four-year college degrees by 13 points -- a considerable narrowing from his 32-point edge among these voters against Hillary Clinton in 2016, according to exit polls.

Four years ago, polls of congressional districts with large numbers of white ***working-class*** voters were a little-noticed alarm signaling Mrs. Clinton's vulnerability in the state. Now, public and private polls of those districts in Pennsylvania suggest trouble for Mr. Trump.

A Muhlenberg College survey in September of the Seventh Congressional District, in the Lehigh Valley, showed Mr. Biden with a seven-point lead over Mr. Trump. Pennsylvania's districts were redrawn two years ago; Mr. Trump lost the equivalent of the new Seventh District to Mrs. Clinton by one percentage point.

Representative Mike Kelly, a Republican representing the 16th District in northwest Pennsylvania, which includes the city of Erie, boasted to reporters last week of record-high enthusiasm for the president, citing farmers who ''take time to paint the sides of their barns'' with Mr. Trump's name, as well as the rising number of newly registered Republicans.

Mr. Kelly pointed to internal polls showing ''a lead of 9, 10 percent'' for the president in the district.

The problem for Mr. Trump, though, is that he carried the equivalent of the 16th District by twice that much, 20 points, in 2016, according to a New York Times analysis.

In Erie County, where Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden have both recently campaigned, Marie Zamiska, 65, cast a mail ballot this year for Mr. Biden, the former vice president. She did not vote four years ago.

''To be honest, in 2016 I didn't think either candidate would have made a good president, so I chose to abstain,'' said Ms. Zamiska, a retired health care consultant. ''The last four years have been very painful. He has certainly not brought any unity to the country,'' she said of Mr. Trump. ''He hasn't solved any problems other than his own that he feels he can make money on. I certainly don't want to live through another four years of Trump.''

On the other end of the state, in Allentown, Salena Sanchez is a 2016 nonvoter who is still on the fence about whether she will vote this year.

Registered as a Democrat, Ms. Sanchez, 37, who works the overnight shift in a warehouse, said she leaned Republican these days.

She was all set to vote for Mr. Trump -- until the first debate, with the president's constant interrupting and Mr. Biden's retort of ''Shut up, man.''

''About 20 minutes in, I shut it off,'' she said. ''I was really leaning toward Trump, but with the debate, that's what turned me away from wanting to vote.''

Ms. Sanchez had to work last week during the final debate, but she plans to catch up with a recording. Depending on what she sees, she said, she will make up her mind about whether to cast a ballot or not.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/30/us/politics/pennsylvania-trump-biden-early-voting.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/30/us/politics/pennsylvania-trump-biden-early-voting.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Joseph R. Biden Jr. at a campaign event on Friday at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

President Trump at a rally on Friday at the Oakland County airport in Waterford Township, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Geraldine Folk, 82, of Fleetwood, Pa., voted by mail for Joseph R. Biden Jr..

In Greensburg, the county seat of Westmoreland County, which once was a Democratic stronghold. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14)

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2020

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[***'We Have a Fight': Big Stakes But Little Investment in Texas***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615W-C991-DXY4-X3KG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1742 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Martin

**Body**

A victory by the Democrats would herald the arrival of a formidable multiracial coalition in the country's largest red state.

BROWNSVILLE, Texas -- When Senator Ted Cruz of Texas spoke with President Trump on the phone last week, he congratulated the president on his debate performance, nudged him to keep driving policy-oriented attacks against his opponent, Joseph R. Biden Jr., and relayed one more message.

''We have a fight'' in Texas, Mr. Cruz said he told Mr. Trump, warning him that the country's second-largest electoral prize was in play and that he should take it seriously. In an interview, Mr. Cruz said he expected the president to win here -- but that he also saw the same surging liberal energy in his state that had propelled Beto O'Rourke to a closer-than-expected defeat against him two years ago.

''There's no doubt that it's a real race,'' said the senator, echoing a similar case Mr. O'Rourke made to Mr. Biden earlier this month in their own phone conversation.

But it's not clear if Mr. Trump or Mr. Biden fully believe it.

They may be on opposite sides of the partisan divide, but Texas Republicans and Democrats alike believe the long-awaited moment has arrived: The state is a true presidential battleground, and either candidate could prevail next week.

Although a Democrat has not carried Texas since 1976, recent public and private polls suggest a highly competitive race, with some surveys showing Mr. Biden up narrowly and others showing Mr. Trump enjoying a small lead.

Yet even as leading figures in both parties urge their respective presidential nominees to take Texas seriously, the campaigns are still reluctant to spend precious remaining time and money there. Neither Mr. Trump nor Mr. Biden is expected to appear in the state before the election, the president has not spent a cent on television commercials, and until this week Mr. Biden had resisted advertising in Texas' two largest markets, Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth.

Though the state isn't essential to a Biden victory, Democrats have been more aggressive here. Mr. Biden is dispatching his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, to Texas on Friday, and Democrats have also planned a multicity bus tour across the state. A pair of Democratic billionaires, Dustin Moskovitz and Michael R. Bloomberg, have separately poured money into the state at the 11th hour.

Senator John Cornyn, a Republican facing his own difficult race against M.J. Hegar, said Wednesday that ''the thing that worries me the most'' is the Democrats' late spending, predicting that he would be ''outspent by more than 2-to-1.''

The stakes here are, well, Texas-sized.

A Biden win would doom Mr. Trump's chances for re-election. More significantly, it would herald the arrival of a formidable multiracial Democratic coalition in the country's largest red state. That would hand the Democrats an electoral upper hand nationwide and all but block Republicans from the White House until they improve their fortunes with college-educated white voters, younger people and minorities.

It's those demographics that are imperiling Mr. Trump in Texas.

Recent polls, soaring early vote participation in the state's most populous counties, and more than 50 interviews with Texans in three pivotal regions point to an increasingly competitive race because of a spike in turnout by an electorate that is diverse, loathes the president and makes a mockery of his pistols-and-petroleum stereotype of the state.

The pandemic has slowed the Texas economy, the top selling point for its politicians and the engine for the state's population growth, with unemployment rising from 6.8 percent in August to 8.3 percent in September. Covid-19 cases are rising; over the past week, there have been more than 6,300 new cases per day on average, an increase of 43 percent from the average two weeks earlier.

With two days left of early voting, turnout in Texas has nearly exceeded the total number of votes cast in the state in the 2016 election. Voters under 30 have showed up in historic numbers, with over 904,000 of them already casting ballots (only 1.1 million such young Texans voted in all of 2016). College-educated white voters and Asian-Americans have turned out in even larger numbers, with both groups casting more ballots than they did four years ago, according to the Democratic group TargetSmart.

While Democrats were infuriated with the decision by Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, to limit the number of drop boxes for absentee ballots to one per county, they believe his decision to extend early voting from two to three weeks and to push local elections from the spring to November's ballot has bolstered their turnout efforts.

Participation has been particularly high in the metropolitan areas -- and not just the biggest cities, but also in booming exurban counties, where a diverse new mix of voters is shattering turnout records in the bedroom communities of Dallas, Austin and Houston.

''It is a competitive state, meaning a Democrat can now win statewide,'' acknowledged Steve Munisteri, a former chairman of the Texas Republican Party, noting that about 10 million people had moved to the state in the last 20 years. ''We've had the equivalent of two medium-sized states move in.''

Yet while Texas Republicans are anxious about what they see as a tightening race -- and trying to persuade Mr. Trump to confront the threat -- Texas Democrats are frustrated by what they see as a lack of investment by the Biden campaign in a state they think would be even more promising had they spent more sooner.

Nowhere has that lack of spending proven more evident than in the heavily Hispanic, and heavily Democratic, Rio Grande Valley, where early vote turnout has lagged the metropolitan areas in part because there's little partisan competition for congressional or state legislative races.

''This is where the gap is because there are no contested elections down here,'' said Gilberto Hinojosa, the chair of the Texas Democratic Party, who has been lobbying Mr. Biden's campaign all year. ''You don't have the spending that you have in these other areas.''

Mr. Hinojosa said he had received only $15,000 for get-out-the-vote efforts. ''The party has had to jump in here,'' he said, alluding to Texas Democrats. After initially only planning to have Ms. Harris visit the state's two largest metropolitan areas, Mr. Biden's campaign announced Wednesday that she would also visit the Rio Grande Valley.

In border communities like Brownsville and McAllen, the question for Mr. Biden is not whether voters will support a Democrat -- they do so reliably -- but whether voters in this ***working-class*** region hit hard by the coronavirus will turn out at the same levels as the more affluent parts of the state.

Visits to a pair of precincts last week in the Rio Grande Valley revealed a noticeable number of first- or second-time voters, including many students. Many of them were Hispanic and they cast their ballots overwhelmingly for Mr. Biden -- or, as they put it, against Mr. Trump.

''It would be hypocritical if, being a woman, being a minority, we vote for a candidate like Trump,'' said Denice Salinas, a senior at a local state university, who came to the polls outside McAllen with her sisters and mother, each of whom voted for Mr. Biden.

In Houston's Harris County, a group of young officials in Texas' most populous county have gone to great lengths to expand voting, erecting polling places at the site of the old Astrodome, the Houston Rockets arena and the Rice football stadium. Some precincts will open at 7 a.m. on Thursday and stay open all night, not closing until the early vote period ends at 7 p.m. Friday.

''We have done everything we could possibly do to increase voting access,'' said Chris Hollins, the youngest and first Black clerk of Harris County, noting that they had tripled the number of early voting precincts from 2016.

1.27 million of the 2.48 million voters in Harris County had already voted by the end of the day Wednesday, nearly as many people as who voted overall four years ago there. If Mr. Biden can significantly expand beyond the 54 percent of the vote Hillary Clinton garnered there in 2016, the gain in raw votes in such a highly populated community could draw him close to Mr. Trump statewide.

The newly elected county executive, Lina Hidalgo, implored Mr. Biden to come to Texas with the lure of even higher turnout.

''We've got another million votes to deliver in Harris County,'' said Ms. Hidalgo.

Last week, Representative Lizzie Fletcher showed off the county's main voting hub near the Astrodome and its even larger successor, NRG Stadium, pointing to the rows of drop-off tents set up in its sprawling parking lot and explaining why turnout in the city was boding well for Mr. Biden.

''The divisive nature of the politics that we're seeing in the Trump era -- that's a hallmark of his style -- is not our style here,'' said Ms. Fletcher, a Democrat who in 2018 captured a long-held Republican seat representing some of Houston's toniest neighborhoods, precincts where Biden signs are far more common than Trump signs.

That was clear enough from the diverse array of voters who trickled back to their cars after casting votes in Houston, the vast majority of whom said they were backing Mr. Biden out of animus toward Mr. Trump.

''I'm tired of Trump,'' said Irene Duron, who cast her ballot still wearing her scrubs from her job in clinical technology. ''And I usually vote Republican.''

Even more striking were a few dozen interviews Saturday at an early voting site in what has been a more conservative community than Houston: Fort Worth's Tarrant County. Mr. Trump won there by about nine percentage points in 2016.

The voters were overwhelmingly young and people of color, many of them of Asian or Hispanic descent, and nearly all of them said they were supporting Mr. Biden.

''I think most of the young generation is for Biden,'' explained Brian Nguyen, a 20-year-old college student, after he voted.

Texas Republicans hope Mr. Biden's stumble at the final debate, in which he appeared to suggest he wanted to end the oil industry, will snuff out his hopes of scoring an upset in Texas.

But they know Mr. Trump's caricature of the state is wildly at odds with what could be made clear to the country next week.

''Texas is changing,'' said Mr. Cruz. ''We're not home to just oil and gas wildcatters.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/us/politics/texas-battleground-state.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/us/politics/texas-battleground-state.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Early voting in Austin, Texas. The last Democratic candidate to carry Texas in a presidential election was Jimmy Carter in 1976. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Houston in March, and President Trump in Orange, Texas, in August, with Gov. Greg Abbott and Senator Ted Cruz. Texans from both parties believe the state is a tossup. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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**Load-Date:** October 30, 2020

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[***Queens Museum, Home and Beyond***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615W-C991-DXY4-X3K4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2020 Friday

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 1; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1711 words

**Byline:** By Holland Cotter

**Body**

In three post-lockdown exhibitions, the museum stakes out its role in the life of its neighborhood's multiethnic citizens.

Over the years, the Queens Museum has helped me define my sense of what an art museum can be: a place as much about ideas as about objects, as much about politics as about aesthetics, and as much about local as about global.

All of these opposites-that-aren't-really-opposites figure in the museum's three new, post-lockdown exhibitions. One, a large group gathering, considers the economics and ethics that underlie, and can easily undermine, the concept of ''home.'' A second is a career survey of a great American photographer who has consciously anchored his art in rootlessness. And a third show looks widely at the world through a prism of small drawings made, over nearly a century, by children.

The museum, once called the Queens Center for Art and Culture, is housed in a building with a history of shifting uses and identities. It was designed as the New York City Pavilion for the 1939 World's Fair. After the fair, it became a borough recreation center, replete with two indoor skating rinks. And in 1946 it was loftily repurposed as headquarters for the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations.

For four years, international leaders converged there to vote on such momentous matters as the founding of the state of Israel. After the U.N. moved to a permanent Manhattan address, the building once again welcomed skaters, and in 1964 reprised its original function as a World's Fair pavilion, at which time the famed Panorama of the City of New York, still in place, was installed.

In 1972, the museum itself was inaugurated, and in 1994 a new interior was designed by Rafael Viñoly. With a central, soaring, skylight-covered atrium ringed by traditionally scaled galleries, it's one of the most dramatic -- and unwieldy -- exhibition spaces in the city, suitable both for intimate art viewing and mass assembly.

What has never changed, or not for long, is a civic connection to its multiethnic, immigrant-intensive namesake borough. During the past months of pandemic closings, the museum hosted a food pantry in cooperation with two Queens-based hunger-relief organizations, La Jornada and Together We Can Community Resource Center Inc. Even after it reopened, the museum continued distributing food to the borough's homeless population and households facing food scarcity during the pandemic.

Home, and the lack of one, are primary themes of ''After the Plaster Foundation, or, Where can we live?''' The title of this group show of 12 New York artists and artist groups refers to a SoHo loft rented in the 1960s by the underground artist Jack Smith. He called the space -- where he staged his performances, made his films, stored his archives, and lived -- ''The Plaster Foundation.'' He was evicted from it in 1972.

Being forced out was an embittering experience. Smith blamed unbridled capitalism and a predatory gentrification that it produces. Both have a long New York City history, which other artists in the show touch on.

In an elaborate installation of videos mounted on an industrial-scale backhoe, Sondra Perry considers the fate of Seneca Village, a Manhattan settlement of Black property owners that was leveled in the 1850s to create Central Park as a playground for a northward surging white population.

For the show, the artist Heather Hart has constructed a full-scale house, not so different from homes once owned by middle-class Black residents in nearby Queens. But in her installation, titled ''Oracle of the Twelve Tenses,'' we see only the rooftop: the house, empty and possibly abandoned, seems to have sunk into the ground.

Is it possible to protest dispossession directly? Artists try. Krzysztof Wodiczko, who witnessed the expulsion of homeless people from an East Village park in the late 1980s and early 1990s, responded with a mobile sculpture called ''Poliscar,'' a motorized vehicle equipped with loudspeakers and recording equipment to give the homeless a collective voice.

Over the past five years, the artist Peter Scott has been photo-documenting examples of graffiti scrawled across glossy architectural advertisements found at construction sites for luxury apartment buildings. And a 2020 installation called ''Resistance in Progress'' by the artist Betty Yu focuses squarely on Queens itself.

Set high up on the museum's mezzanine level, against windows facing toward the Flushing neighborhood, the archival display addresses, through real estate listings, political fliers, and video interviews with East Asian and Latin American residents, gentrification's toll, long-term and daily. And what role do cultural institutions, supposedly embodiments of humane values, play in this? A complicated one, that the show only alludes to.

In 2018, Laura Raicovich, then the Queens Museum's executive director, proposed making the premises available as a sanctuary space for the borough's many undocumented immigrants. The board of trustees rejected the proposal. (Ms. Raicovich resigned the same year.) A piece in the show, ''Pyre,'' by Shawn Maximo, centrally located in the atrium, in roughly the space where the U.N. General Assembly once sat, reads as a teasing reminder of the sanctuary idea.

Consisting of a kind of open ''fireplace'' surrounded by plastic chairs and constructed from flat screens playing videos of licking flames, the installation suggests, not a warm and welcoming hearth, but a Home Depot display, with everything for show and for sale.

Finally, how can artists survive in a world where space is priced out for all but a fraction of the population? The exhibition -- organized by Larissa Harris, a curator at the museum, with Sophia Marisa Lucas and Lindsey Berfond, both assistant curators -- offers a couple of very tentative answers.

The Polish-born American writer, translator, and art world fixture Warren Niesluchowski (1946-2019) finessed the problem by giving up the idea of home altogether. As recorded in a beautiful video by Simon Leung, he spent most of his adult life as a global nomad, staying on the move and relying on the hospitality of friends and strangers.

And the artist Caroline Woolard, while participating in the Queens Museum Studio program in 2014, cooked up a domicile-to-go. Called ''Studio/Home,'' it's a plain, small wooden cart on wheels, about the size of a walk-in closet with a built-in bed and rack-style walls suitable for hanging curtains, or clothes, or art.

Separate, but embedded within the group exhibition, is a second show, a one-gallery, one-man survey called ''Bruce Davidson: Outsider on the Inside.'' Organized by Benjamin Mendez, a former exhibition and archives fellow at the museum, it's a survey of more than 100 pictures taken by an important American photographer who has always been an artist on the move, documenter of many American cultures, permanent resident in none of them.

In 1958, Mr. Davidson was invited by Henri Cartier-Bresson to join the Magnum Photos group. He was 24. He spent the following year tagging along, camera in hand, with a band of rebellious New York City street kids. His first widely known photographic series ''Brooklyn Gang,'' was the result.

In 1962, he headed South and into the thick of the civil rights movement, producing some of its most lasting images. He then returned to New York City, always his primary turf, to chronicle life in East Harlem and a ***working-class*** community, largely Puerto Rican, disparaged and isolated by the city government.

In 1963, Mr. Davidson was on hand to document an aesthetic catastrophe: the demolition of the old Penn Station. But people were his natural subjects, from Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side to bird watchers in Central Park. (In 1994 he was designated the park's first artist-in-residence.) In every case, his method is to simultaneously move in close and stand apart, a practice the Queens Museum itself seems to emulate.

It was smart of the museum to leaven its prickly, concept-driven group show with this accessible career overview, and with another readily appealing exhibition, ''Ulrike Müller and Amy Zion: The Conference of the Animals.''

The title comes from a 1949 German book about a group of animals who, seeing the chronic inability of humans to act for any collective good, join forces to save the world. And the show itself, organized by Ms. Zion, an independent curator, is made up of drawings, many on loan from the Children's Museum of the Arts in New York City.

They range in date from 1909 to the near present and include juvenilia by Modernist stars like Louise Nevelson and Reginald Marsh. Most of the images are lively, inventive takes on quotidian themes: pets, parents, city scenes. But there are startling exceptions.

A 1939 drawing by Liesl J. Loeb, age 11, depicts the German ocean liner on which she and her family escaped from Europe only to be turned away at Havana harbor and sent back. (A wall text tells us more than 200 people on the ship later died in the Holocaust.) In the late 1990s, 13-year-old Petrit Halilaj, a Kosovar living in a refugee camp in Albania, drew scenes from a murderous ethnic war he was witnessing.

The show is introduced and framed by a piece commissioned by the museum: a mural by the Austrian-born, New York-based artist Ulrike Müller. Best known for her small abstract paintings, she comes through here with a floor-to-ceiling semiabstract image of the wise, activist animals of the title. Painted in toothsome nursery colors -- pink, nougat, chocolate brown -- they look like giant versions of the autumn squirrels foraging in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. They also suggest sentinels, tall and alert, guarding the premises where, in 1946, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was founded, and where an art institution that is as much a work in progress as the historical moment it exists in, resides today.

After the Plaster Foundation, or, Where can we live?

Bruce Davidson: Outsider on the Inside

Ulrike Müller and Amy Zion: The Conference of the Animals

Through Jan. 17 at the Queens Museum, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; 718-592-9700, queensmuseum.org. Advance tickets (free) are required.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/arts/design/queens-museum-art-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/arts/design/queens-museum-art-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: Heather Hart's ''Oracle of the Twelve Tenses'' (2020) in the group show ''After the Plaster Foundation, or, 'Where can we live?''' at the Queens Museum

a Bruce Davidson photograph from the 1959 series ''Brooklyn Gang''

an installation view of Ulrike Müller's ''The Conference of the Animals (A Mural),'' from 2020

and a detail of Betty Yu's Queens housing ad collage ''Speculating Flushing'' (2020), a component of ''Resistance in Progress'' (2020). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HEATHER HART AND QUEENS MUSEUM

BRUCE DAVIDSON/MAGNUM PHOTOS, VIA QUEENS MUSEUM

CALLICOON FINE ARTS AND QUEENS MUSEUM

BETTY YU

HAI ZHANG, VIA QUEENS MUSEUM) (C7)

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2020

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[***Bernie Sanders Is on the Rise. But How High Can His Numbers Go?; Poll Watch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y6P-7K41-DXY4-X42M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** A crucial question for the Vermont senator has always been whether he can expand his coalition. In a race this crowded, it’s unclear whether he even needs to do so.

**Body**

A crucial question for the Vermont senator has always been whether he can expand his coalition. In a race this crowded, it’s unclear whether he even needs to do so.

Welcome to Poll Watch, our weekly look at [*polling data*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/democratic-polls.html?module=inline) and survey research on the candidates, voters and issues that will shape the   [*2020 election*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/democratic-polls.html?module=inline).

Senator Bernie Sanders has a solid base of support. That much is clear.

And he has done a remarkably good job of boxing out Senator Elizabeth Warren for the support of the party’s left wing. He is now the choice of nearly half of Democratic voters who identify as “very liberal,” according to national polls; Ms. Warren is stuck in the 20s with that group.

But does Mr. Sanders have room to grow? In a Democratic field overloaded with well-liked candidates, can he expand his coalition beyond the young, liberal base that has always backed him?

Or, in a race this crowded, does he even need to?

While many moderate Democrats blanch at the full-throated leftism of Mr. Sanders’s policies, few in the party actually dislike the senator himself. Nearly three-quarters of Democratic voters have a favorable opinion of Mr. Sanders, while only 20 percent see him negatively, according to a recent [*Monmouth University poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/democratic-polls.html?module=inline). That puts his net favorability rating at 53, higher than any other Democrat in the race — and at least 15 points better than any other candidate, with the exception of Ms. Warren (her net favorability rating is 48).

And while his proposals for a [*single-payer health care system*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/democratic-polls.html?module=inline), free public college and a Green New Deal put him firmly on the party’s left flank, polls show that a wide majority of Democratic voters support them.

Still, many centrist Democratic voters have hesitated to get on board with his candidacy. According to polls from Quinnipiac University, Mr. Sanders’s support among very liberal voters rose by 29 percentage points [*from November*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/democratic-polls.html?module=inline) to   [*February*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/democratic-polls.html?module=inline); among all other Democrats, he gained just seven points over that period.

Likewise, while he is far and away the most popular candidate among Democrats under 50, he has the support of only about one-tenth of those 50 and over, according to the most recent Quinnipiac poll.

Some moderate Democrats still hold Mr. Sanders in suspicion after 2016, when Hillary Clinton lost the Electoral College to Donald J. Trump after a nomination fight against Mr. Sanders. In a [*CNN poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/democratic-polls.html?module=inline) last month, Mr. Sanders commanded the support of 27 percent of Democrats, but only 16 percent said he was the best candidate to unite the party.

“For many of them, they’ll never forget how he dealt with Hillary Clinton,” said Jim Manley, a Democratic strategist who worked on Mrs. Clinton’s campaign, referring to hesitant Democratic voters.

Yet the biggest obstacle for Mr. Sanders, Vermont’s junior senator, may be the perception that his ideas are too radical — and his persona too cantankerous — to win a general election. Democrats this year are largely united by their obsession with defeating Mr. Trump: More than three in five Democratic voters in both Iowa and New Hampshire said they preferred a candidate who could beat Mr. Trump over one who agreed with them on most issues, according to entrance and exit polls. Among those electability-minded voters, Mr. Sanders finished behind Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., in both states, the polls showed.

As Mr. Buttigieg rises in the polls, he has argued that a moderate candidate like himself is needed to win over swing voters in November. But Mr. Sanders has countered with a different narrative, arguing that he will bring millions of low-propensity voters — particularly young and ***working-class*** people — into the political process, giving Democrats an uncommon electoral advantage.

His strength with young voters was evident at a rally in Durham, N.C., one of three campaign stops for Mr. Sanders on Friday in states that vote on Super Tuesday in March.

Ahmad Amireh, a native Ohioan and junior at nearby Duke University, described his excitement at being able to finally cast a vote for Mr. Sanders, as he was not of voting age during the 2016 election.

“It feels amazing because there’s a candidate who gives us a reason to vote,” Mr. Amireh, 20, said.

Fiona Galinsky, 18, a high school student and aspiring filmmaker, echoed Mr. Amireh’s enthusiasm.

“Bernie Sanders reflects a greater sense of peace, love and empathy that America needs outside of politics,” Ms. Galinsky said.

Mr. Sanders’s campaign has pushed a “Bernie Beats Trump” slogan since it began early last year, and his proponents have long pointed to the fact that head-to-head polls tend to show him looking roughly as strong as former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. against Mr. Trump. And to a degree, it is catching on: Mr. Sanders is now seen as the most electable candidate by 24 percent of Democratic voters; in the fall, only one-tenth of Democrats saw him that way.

He is also on the rise among voters of color. He has courted Hispanic voters especially and is now the clear favorite among them — a fact that owes partly to the relative youth of the Latino electorate. He is also increasingly popular among African-Americans, many of whom are facing a hard decision about whom to support, now that Mr. Biden’s star is fading.

If Mr. Biden continues to sink, Mr. Sanders may have a relatively open lane with voters of color, since Mr. Buttigieg, Ms. Warren of Massachusetts and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota have all had difficulty gaining traction there.

But Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York, has bought over $350 million in television ads since the fall and is aggressively seeking out black and Hispanic voters. Among black voters, he is now polling about evenly with Mr. Sanders, according to the latest Quinnipiac poll, which found that they were each supported by about one-fifth of black Democratic voters.

Much remains in flux, and the results of the coming contests — in Nevada, South Carolina and the 14 states that will vote on Super Tuesday — will have a big impact on the rest of the race. But there are already some hopeful signs for Mr. Sanders.

Monmouth’s most recent poll of Democratic voters found that he enjoys 30 percent support among respondents living in states that will vote after Super Tuesday, versus just 21 percent among earlier voters. If he continues to do well enough to maintain front-runner status through Super Tuesday, on March 3, he may have a slightly easier map for the rest of the primary season.

Sean McElwee, the co-founder of the progressive think tank Data for Progress, said that Mr. Sanders’s high favorability ratings put him in a stronger position to win over moderate Democrats than many pundits acknowledged. He said that while Mr. Sanders’s campaign had yet to aggressively target more moderate voters, that didn’t mean it could not be done.

“It’s a question of when the campaign decides to do it, but he is undeniably at this point the front-runner, and it makes a lot of sense right now for him to begin moving beyond his base and start to aim toward the center,” Mr. McElwee said in an interview.

“Bernie Sanders has incredibly high favorability numbers among Democrats; voters overwhelmingly view him positively,” Mr. McElwee added. “I think the idea that he was unelectable was always a myth.”

Michael Venutolo-Mantovani contributed reporting from Durham, N.C.

PHOTO: While many moderate Democrats blanch at the full-throated leftism of Bernie Sanders’s policies, few in the party actually dislike the senator himself, polls show.  (PHOTOGRAPH BY Chang W. Lee/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2020

**End of Document**



[***At the Queens Museum, Home and the World; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615P-WHW1-JBG3-608P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1812 words

**Byline:** Holland Cotter

**Highlight:** In three post-lockdown exhibitions, the museum stakes out its role in the life of its neighborhood’s multiethnic citizens.

**Body**

In three post-lockdown exhibitions, the museum stakes out its role in the life of its neighborhood’s multiethnic citizens.

Over the years, the Queens Museum has helped me define my sense of what an art museum can be: a place as much about ideas as about objects, as much about politics as about aesthetics, and as much about local as about global.

All of these opposites-that-aren’t-really-opposites figure in the museum’s [*three new, post-lockdown exhibitions.*](https://queensmuseum.org/exhibitions) One, a large group gathering, considers the economics and ethics that underlie, and can easily undermine, the concept of “home.” A second is a career survey of a great American photographer who has consciously anchored his art in rootlessness. And a third show looks widely at the world through a prism of small drawings made, over nearly a century, by children.

The museum, once called the Queens Center for Art and Culture, is housed in a building with a history of shifting uses and identities. It was designed as the New York City Pavilion for the 1939 World’s Fair. After the fair, it became a borough recreation center, replete with two indoor skating rinks. And in 1946 it was loftily repurposed as headquarters for the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations.

For four years, international leaders converged there to vote on such momentous matters as the founding of the state of Israel. After the U.N. moved to a permanent Manhattan address, the building once again welcomed skaters, and in 1964 reprised its original function as a World’s Fair pavilion, at which time the famed [*Panorama of the City of New York*](https://queensmuseum.org/exhibitions), still in place, was installed.

In 1972, the museum itself was inaugurated, and in 1994 a new interior was designed by Rafael Viñoly (with further changes by Grimshaw Architects in 2013). With a central, soaring, skylight-covered atrium ringed by traditionally scaled galleries, it’s one of the most dramatic — and unwieldy — exhibition spaces in the city, suitable both for intimate art viewing and mass assembly.

What has never changed, or not for long, is a civic connection to its multiethnic, immigrant-intensive namesake borough. During the past months of pandemic closings, the museum hosted a food pantry in cooperation with two Queens-based hunger-relief organizations, La Jornada and Together We Can Community Resource Center Inc. Even after it reopened, the museum continued distributing food to the borough’s homeless population and households facing food scarcity during the pandemic.

Home, and the lack of one, are primary themes of “After the Plaster Foundation, or, Where can we live?’” The title of this group show of 12 New York artists and artist groups refers to a SoHo loft rented in the 1960s by the underground artist Jack Smith. He called the space — where he staged his performances, made his films, stored his archives, and lived — “The Plaster Foundation.” He was evicted from it in 1972.

Being forced out was an embittering experience. Smith blamed unbridled capitalism and a predatory gentrification that it produces. Both have a long New York City history, which other artists in the show touch on.

In an elaborate installation of videos mounted on an industrial-scale backhoe, Sondra Perry considers the fate of Seneca Village, a Manhattan settlement of Black property owners that was leveled in the 1850s to create Central Park as a playground for a northward surging white population.

For the show, the artist Heather Hart has constructed a full-scale house, not so different from homes once owned by middle-class Black residents in nearby Queens. But in her installation, titled “Oracle of the Twelve Tenses,” we see only the rooftop: the house, empty and possibly abandoned, seems to have sunk into the ground.

Is it possible to protest dispossession directly? Artists try. Krzysztof Wodiczko, who witnessed the expulsion of homeless people from an East Village park in the late 1980s and early 1990s, responded with a mobile sculpture called “Poliscar,” a motorized vehicle equipped with loudspeakers and recording equipment to give the homeless a collective voice.

Over the past five years, the artist Peter Scott has been photo-documenting examples of graffiti scrawled across glossy architectural advertisements found at construction sites for luxury apartment buildings. And a 2020 installation called “Resistance in Progress” by the artist Betty Yu focuses squarely on Queens itself.

Set high up on the museum’s mezzanine level, against windows facing toward the Flushing neighborhood, the archival display addresses, through real estate listings, political fliers, and video interviews with East Asian and Latin American residents, gentrification’s toll, long-term and daily. And what role do cultural institutions, supposedly embodiments of humane values, play in this? A complicated one, that the show only alludes to.

In 2018, Laura Raicovich, then the Queens Museum’s executive director, proposed making the premises available as a sanctuary space for the borough’s many undocumented immigrants. The board of trustees rejected the proposal. (Ms. Raicovich resigned the same year.) A piece in the show, “Pyre,” by Shawn Maximo, centrally located in the atrium, in roughly the space where the U.N. General Assembly once sat, reads as a teasing reminder of the sanctuary idea.

Consisting of a kind of open “fireplace” surrounded by plastic chairs and constructed from flat screens playing videos of licking flames, the installation suggests, not a warm and welcoming hearth, but a Home Depot display, with everything for show and for sale.

Finally, how can artists survive in a world where space is priced out for all but a fraction of the population? The exhibition — organized by Larissa Harris, a curator at the museum, with Sophia Marisa Lucas and Lindsey Berfond, both assistant curators — offers a couple of very tentative answers.

The Polish-born American writer, translator, and art world fixture Warren Niesluchowski (1946-2019) finessed the problem by giving up the idea of home altogether. As recorded in a beautiful video by Simon Leung, he spent most of his adult life as a global nomad, staying on the move and relying on the hospitality of friends and strangers.

And the artist Caroline Woolard, while participating in the Queens Museum Studio program in 2014, cooked up a domicile-to-go. Called “Studio/Home,” it’s a plain, small wooden cart on wheels, about the size of a walk-in closet with a built-in bed and rack-style walls suitable for hanging curtains, or clothes, or art.

Separate, but embedded within the group exhibition, is a second show, a one-gallery, one-man survey called [*“Bruce Davidson: Outsider on the Inside.”*](https://queensmuseum.org/exhibitions) Organized by Benjamin Mendez, a former exhibition and archives fellow at the museum, it’s a survey of more than 100 pictures taken by an important American photographer who has always been an artist on the move, documenter of many American cultures, permanent resident in none of them.

In 1958, Mr. Davidson was invited by Henri Cartier-Bresson to join the Magnum Photos group. He was 24. He spent the following year tagging along, camera in hand, with a band of rebellious New York City street kids. His first widely known photographic series “Brooklyn Gang,” was the result.

In 1962, he headed South and into the thick of the civil rights movement, producing some of its most lasting images. He then returned to New York City, always his primary turf, to chronicle life in East Harlem and a ***working-class*** community, largely Puerto Rican, disparaged and isolated by the city government.

In 1963, Mr. Davidson was on hand to document an aesthetic catastrophe: the demolition of the old Penn Station. But people were his natural subjects, from Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side to bird watchers in Central Park. (In 1994 he was designated the park’s first artist-in-residence.) In every case, his method is to simultaneously move in close and stand apart, a practice the Queens Museum itself seems to emulate.

It was smart of the museum to leaven its prickly, concept-driven group show with this accessible career overview, and with another readily appealing exhibition, [*“Ulrike Müller and Amy Zion: The Conference of the Animals.”*](https://queensmuseum.org/exhibitions)

The title comes from a 1949 German book about a group of animals who, seeing the chronic inability of humans to act for any collective good, join forces to save the world. And the show itself, organized by Ms. Zion, an independent curator, is made up of drawings, many on loan from the Children’s Museum of the Arts in New York City.

They range in date from 1909 to the near present and include juvenilia by Modernist stars like Louise Nevelson and Reginald Marsh. Most of the images are lively, inventive takes on quotidian themes: pets, parents, city scenes. But there are startling exceptions.

A 1939 drawing by Liesl J. Loeb, age 11, depicts the German ocean liner on which she and her family escaped from Europe only to be turned away at Havana harbor and sent back. (A wall text tells us more than 200 people on the ship later died in the Holocaust.) In the late 1990s, 13-year-old Petrit Halilaj, a Kosovar living in a refugee camp in Albania, drew scenes from a murderous ethnic war he was witnessing.

The show is introduced and framed by a piece commissioned by the museum: a mural by the Austrian-born, New York-based artist Ulrike Müller. Best known for her small abstract paintings, she comes through here with a floor-to-ceiling semiabstract image of the wise, activist animals of the title. Painted in toothsome nursery colors — pink, nougat, chocolate brown — they look like giant versions of the autumn squirrels foraging in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. They also suggest sentinels, tall and alert, guarding the premises where, in 1946, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) was founded, and where an art institution that is as much a work in progress as the historical moment it exists in, resides today.

After the Plaster Foundation, or, Where can we live?

Bruce Davidson: Outsider on the Inside

Ulrike Müller and Amy Zion: The Conference of the Animals

Through Jan. 17 at the Queens Museum, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; 718-592-9700, [*queensmuseum.org*](https://queensmuseum.org/exhibitions). Advance tickets (free) are required.

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: Heather Hart’s “Oracle of the Twelve Tenses” (2020) in the group show “After the Plaster Foundation, or, ‘Where can we live?’” at the Queens Museum; a Bruce Davidson photograph from the 1959 series “Brooklyn Gang”; an installation view of Ulrike Müller’s “The Conference of the Animals (A Mural),” from 2020; and a detail of Betty Yu’s Queens housing ad collage “Speculating Flushing” (2020), a component of “Resistance in Progress” (2020). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HEATHER HART AND QUEENS MUSEUM; BRUCE DAVIDSON/MAGNUM PHOTOS, VIA QUEENS MUSEUM; CALLICOON FINE ARTS AND QUEENS MUSEUM; BETTY YU; HAI ZHANG, VIA QUEENS MUSEUM) (C7)

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2020

**End of Document**



[***When Rich New Yorkers Fled, These Workers Kept the City Running***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:604W-BDN1-JBG3-61BJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1498 words

**Byline:** Winnie Hu and Nate Schweber

**Highlight:** While the coronavirus slowed most of the city to a crawl, commuting in the Mount Hope neighborhood of the Bronx increased because of all the essential workers living there.

**Body**

While the coronavirus slowed most of the city to a crawl, commuting in the Mount Hope neighborhood of the Bronx increased because of all the essential workers living there.

The sidewalks of Mount Hope fill up early with [*essential workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html).

The health care and construction workers come out first, followed by the delivery drivers, grocery store clerks, security guards, building porters and countless others.

They make their home in this hilltop neighborhood of 53,000 in the Bronx that has been an anchor against the [*coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html). From there, they disperse to all corners of the borough, the city and beyond to provide the services that other people count on in a global health crisis.

As New York City [*begins reopening*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html), nothing has really changed in Mount Hope. Many residents never stopped going to their jobs. Not when confronted by the dangers of the virus. Not when looting broke out during the protests for racial justice over the death of George Floyd. Not when many other New Yorkers began working from home, and others altogether fled the [*wealthiest neighborhoods in Manhattan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html).

The only time that Albertha Johnson, 47, has been able to stay home from her job as a supervisor for the city’s Human Resources Administration, the nation’s largest social services agency, was when she got the virus in April.

After two weeks off to recover, it was back to her office in Harlem where people come in for help, from domestic abuse victims to those suffering from mental illness who may become violent.

“The type of work I decided to do requires hands-on,” she said. “You can’t tell somebody ‘stop hitting somebody’ from home. I choose it because I like what I do.”

The sheer number of essential workers in Mount Hope who cannot work from home is most likely why it was the only neighborhood in the city where the total number of commuting trips actually increased during the height of the pandemic, when New York came to a virtual standstill.

The average number of weekday commutes in Mount Hope, which sits about a mile and a half north of Yankee Stadium, rose 4 percent in April from the same month the previous year, according to an analysis by [*StreetLight Data*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html), a transportation data analytics company. Across the city, commutes fell 34 percent. The analysis was based primarily on the movements of millions of cellphones around the city combined with census and other data.

Nearly all of Mount Hope’s population is black or Hispanic, according to an analysis of census data by [*Social Explorer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html), a research company. The median annual household income in the neighborhood is $30,706, compared with $38,085 for the Bronx, and $60,762 for New York City.

Essential workers are also concentrated in other parts of the city, including the Queens neighborhoods of South Jamaica, where there was virtually no change in total commuting trips, and Woodside, where there was a 5 percent decrease. Another neighborhood with many essential workers, East Harlem in Manhattan, had a 7 percent decrease.

In contrast, commuting trips declined by nearly 60 percent in Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill in Brooklyn, and in East Midtown and Turtle Bay in Manhattan. The analysis included trips by car, bus, subway, bike and walking.

In New York City, many essential workers who have shouldered the burden of the pandemic put in long, hard hours for not much money.

There are more than 1 million of these front-line workers who provide health care and social services, keep the subway and buses running, make deliveries, clean buildings, and stock shelves at groceries and pharmacies, [*according to a report*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html) by City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer.

In the Bronx, the borough with the [*highest Covid-19 death rate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html), many essential workers say they lacked adequate defenses against the virus. They were not provided with enough masks and protective gear and had limited access to testing and medical care until well after the outbreak had taken hold.

State and city officials have acknowledged the challenges they faced early on, but say that they have vastly expanded testing in the Bronx and have provided enormous amounts of protective gear, like face masks.

Health officials are increasingly looking at [*how and why people are getting sick*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html), including what jobs they have. Many doctors and public health experts believe that front-line workers are at higher risk because they often spend hours around other people and cannot always maintain social distancing.

Mount Hope falls within two ZIP codes, 10453 and 10457, that each had more than 2,000 reported coronavirus cases as of June 9, and ranked within the top 25 ZIP codes in the city in terms of the number of cases, though it did not have especially high rates of cases per capita, according to a [*New York Times analysis of health data*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html).

Ruben Diaz Jr., the Bronx borough president, said the borough has attracted many essential workers partly because of its efforts to create thousands of new jobs in recent years. The Bronx’s unemployment rate dipped to 4.7 percent in February before the coronavirus crisis exploded; it soared to [*16.5 percent in April*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html), compared with [*14.6 percent for the city as a whole*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html).

“These are the soldiers we were putting on the front-line with no ammunition and no body armor to fight the enemy,” Mr. Diaz said.

Many Bronx neighborhoods are now struggling not only with the health impacts of the virus, but also the economic fallout as workers have been laid off.

“It’s a double whammy,” said Jonathan Bowles, the executive director of the Center for an Urban Future. “These are hard-luck neighborhoods. They’re really dealing with it from both sides. I don’t know how they’re coping.”

The center [*found in a recent report*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html)that 1 in 4 people who live in the Bronx neighborhoods of Mount Hope, Morris Heights and Fordham South worked in industries decimated by layoffs — restaurants, hotels, retail and personal care services.

Mount Hope has drawn lower-income workers and families to the west Bronx with affordable rents in [*aging apartment buildings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html) and houses, and ready access to subway and bus lines. The streets are lined with family-owned pharmacies, hair and nail salons, cellphone stores, bodegas and specialty shops selling halal and African foods.

Mount Hope residents commute an average of 41 minutes to work, the same as the citywide average, according to the Social Explorer analysis, and about 26 percent of neighborhood residents have commutes of an hour or more. Only about 5 percent normally work at home.

John Carter, who has diabetes, said he was so scared of getting the virus that he took two weeks of vacation so he could stay home from his job as a cook in Brooklyn. But when that ended, he said, his boss told him, “You have to come to work — or.”

Mr. Carter added, “You know what the ‘or’ means.”

“You talk about essential workers, putting their lives on the line, why can’t we be treated like humans?” said Mr. Carter, 44, who has to take three subway lines to work.

The virus has also rattled his neighbor, Roy Lee-Bey, who now wears rubber gloves to deliver bottled water from his truck. “People need water,” said Mr. Lee-Bey, 46, who earns $63,000 a year. “And you never know when you’re going to be in need of assistance.”

Ms. Johnson, the supervisor at the city’s social services agency, has spent part of her federal stimulus check on taxi rides to her job in Harlem. She usually takes the subway but wanted to minimize her exposure to the virus.

She started coughing anyway and went to a doctor. He told her it was probably allergies. When she didn’t get better, she saw another doctor, who tested her for Covid-19. She was positive.

Ms. Johnson, a single mother of one daughter, said she moved to Mount Hope 18 years ago and could never afford to leave. Her dream is to buy a house in New Jersey. “This area is collectively a ***working-class*** neighborhood,” she said. “We can’t save money. We can’t afford to sacrifice to get better.”

Jennifer Lutchman, a nurse’s aide who immigrated from Guyana, begins her day by checking her own temperature before getting on a bus to go to work.

“My patients are very scared and I’ve hardly had a good night’s sleep,” said Ms. Lutchman, 41, who has watched people around her get sick.

Ms. Lutchman earns $19 an hour, barely enough to support her family. Her husband, a security guard, was laid off from the Disney store in Times Square during the pandemic.

When the protests erupted, she worried about getting home before the city curfew, which has since been lifted. All night long, she heard police and ambulance sirens and helicopters whirring above. Her father’s pharmacy in the middle of Mount Hope was [*ransacked by looters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/business/coronavirus-essential-workers-pay-raises.html).

But her patients needed her, she said, so she kept going to work.

“We don’t know what’s out there and we’re putting ourselves at risk,” she said. “We don’t know what we’re bringing home to our families.”

Elaine Chen contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: ROY LEE-BEY, a delivery truck driver.; JENNIFER LUTCHMAN, a nurse’s aide. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AL J. THOMPSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A5)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Texas Is a Tossup. So Why Won’t Trump or Biden Campaign There?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615N-RD41-DXY4-X1M8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1800 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Martin

**Highlight:** A victory by the Democrats would herald the arrival of a formidable multiracial coalition in the country’s largest red state.

**Body**

A victory by the Democrats would herald the arrival of a formidable multiracial coalition in the country’s largest red state.

BROWNSVILLE, Texas — When Senator Ted Cruz of [*Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-texas.html) spoke with President Trump on the phone last week, he congratulated the president on his debate performance, nudged him to keep driving policy-oriented attacks against his opponent, Joseph R. Biden Jr., and relayed one more message.

“We have a fight” in Texas, Mr. Cruz said he told Mr. Trump, warning him that the country’s second-largest electoral prize was in play and that he should take it seriously. In an interview, Mr. Cruz said he expected the president to win here — but that he also saw the same surging liberal energy in his state that had propelled Beto O’Rourke to a closer-than-expected defeat against him two years ago.

“There’s no doubt that it’s a real race,” said the senator, echoing a similar case Mr. O’Rourke made to Mr. Biden earlier this month in [*their own phone conversation.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-texas.html)

But it’s not clear if Mr. Trump or Mr. Biden fully believe it.

They may be on opposite sides of the partisan divide, but [*Texas Republicans and Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-texas.html) alike believe the long-awaited moment has arrived: The state is a true presidential battleground, and either candidate could prevail next week.

Although a Democrat has not carried Texas since 1976, recent public and private polls suggest a highly competitive race, with some surveys showing Mr. Biden up narrowly and others showing Mr. Trump enjoying a small lead.

Yet even as leading figures in both parties urge their respective presidential nominees to take Texas seriously, the campaigns are still reluctant to spend precious remaining time and money there. Neither Mr. Trump nor Mr. Biden is expected to appear in the state before the election, the president has not spent a cent on television commercials, and until this week Mr. Biden had resisted advertising in Texas’ two largest markets, Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth.

Though the state isn’t essential to a Biden victory, Democrats have been more aggressive here. Mr. Biden is dispatching his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, to Texas on Friday, and Democrats have also planned a multicity bus tour across the state. A pair of Democratic billionaires, Dustin Moskovitz and Michael R. Bloomberg, have separately poured money into the state at the 11th hour.

Senator John Cornyn, a Republican facing his own difficult race against M.J. Hegar, said Wednesday that “the thing that worries me the most” is the Democrats’ late spending, predicting that he would be “outspent by more than 2-to-1.”

The stakes here are, well, Texas-sized.

A Biden win would doom Mr. Trump’s chances for re-election. More significantly, it would herald the arrival of a formidable multiracial Democratic coalition in the country’s largest red state. That would hand the Democrats an electoral upper hand nationwide and all but block Republicans from the White House until they improve their fortunes with college-educated white voters, younger people and minorities.

It’s those demographics that are imperiling Mr. Trump in Texas.

Recent polls, soaring early vote participation in the state’s most populous counties, and more than 50 interviews with Texans in three pivotal regions point to an increasingly competitive race because of a spike in turnout by an electorate that is diverse, loathes the president and makes a mockery of his pistols-and-petroleum [*stereotype of the state.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-texas.html)

The pandemic has slowed the Texas economy, the top selling point for its politicians and the engine for the state’s population growth, with unemployment rising from 6.8 percent in August to 8.3 percent in September. Covid-19 cases are rising; over the past week, there have been more than 6,300 new cases per day on average, [*an increase of 43 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-texas.html) from the average two weeks earlier.

With two days left of early voting, turnout in Texas has nearly exceeded the total number of votes cast in the state in the 2016 election. Voters under 30 have showed up in historic numbers, with over 904,000 of them already casting ballots (only 1.1 million such young Texans voted in all of 2016). College-educated white voters and Asian-Americans have turned out in even larger numbers, with both groups casting more ballots than they did four years ago, according to the Democratic group TargetSmart.

While Democrats were infuriated with the decision by Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, to limit the number of drop boxes for absentee ballots to one per county, they believe his decision to extend early voting from two to three weeks and to push local elections from the spring to November’s ballot has bolstered their turnout efforts.

Participation has been particularly high in the metropolitan areas — and not just the biggest cities, but also in booming exurban counties, where a diverse new mix of voters is shattering turnout records in the bedroom communities of Dallas, Austin and Houston.

“It is a competitive state, meaning a Democrat can now win statewide,” acknowledged Steve Munisteri, a former chairman of the Texas Republican Party, noting that about 10 million people had moved to the state in the last 20 years. “We’ve had the equivalent of two medium-sized states move in.”

Yet while Texas Republicans are anxious about what they see as a tightening race — and trying to persuade Mr. Trump to confront the threat — Texas Democrats are frustrated by what they see as a lack of investment by the Biden campaign in a state they think would be even more promising had they spent more sooner.

Nowhere has that lack of spending proven more evident than in the heavily Hispanic, and heavily Democratic, Rio Grande Valley, where early vote turnout has lagged the metropolitan areas in part because there’s little partisan competition for congressional or state legislative races.

“This is where the gap is because there are no contested elections down here,” said Gilberto Hinojosa, the chair of the Texas Democratic Party, who has been lobbying Mr. Biden’s campaign all year. “You don’t have the spending that you have in these other areas.”

Mr. Hinojosa said he had received only $15,000 for get-out-the-vote efforts. “The party has had to jump in here,” he said, alluding to Texas Democrats. After initially only planning to have Ms. Harris visit the state’s two largest metropolitan areas, Mr. Biden’s campaign announced Wednesday that she would also visit the Rio Grande Valley.

In border communities like Brownsville and McAllen, the question for Mr. Biden is not whether voters will support a Democrat — they do so reliably — but whether voters in this ***working-class*** region [*hit hard*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-texas.html) by the coronavirus will turn out at the same levels as the more affluent parts of the state.

Visits to a pair of precincts last week in the Rio Grande Valley revealed a noticeable number of first- or second-time voters, including many students. Many of them were Hispanic and they cast their ballots overwhelmingly for Mr. Biden — or, as they put it, against Mr. Trump.

“It would be hypocritical if, being a woman, being a minority, we vote for a candidate like Trump,” said Denice Salinas, a senior at a local state university, who came to the polls outside McAllen with her sisters and mother, each of whom voted for Mr. Biden.

In Houston’s Harris County, a group of young officials in Texas’ most populous county have gone to great lengths to expand voting, erecting polling places at the site of the old Astrodome, the Houston Rockets arena and the Rice football stadium. Some precincts will open at 7 a.m. on Thursday and stay open all night, not closing until the early vote period ends at 7 p.m. Friday.

“We have done everything we could possibly do to increase voting access,” said Chris Hollins, the youngest and first Black clerk of Harris County, noting that they had tripled the number of early voting precincts from 2016.

1.27 million of the 2.48 million voters in Harris County had already voted by the end of the day Wednesday, nearly as many people as who voted overall four years ago there. If Mr. Biden can significantly expand beyond the 54 percent of the vote Hillary Clinton garnered there in 2016, the gain in raw votes in such a highly populated community could draw him close to Mr. Trump statewide.

The newly elected county executive, Lina Hidalgo, implored Mr. Biden to come to Texas with the lure of even higher turnout.

“We’ve got another million votes to deliver in Harris County,” said Ms. Hidalgo.

Last week, Representative Lizzie Fletcher showed off the county’s main voting hub near the Astrodome and its even larger successor, NRG Stadium, pointing to the rows of drop-off tents set up in its sprawling parking lot and explaining why turnout in the city was boding well for Mr. Biden.

“The divisive nature of the politics that we’re seeing in the Trump era — that’s a hallmark of his style — is not our style here,” said Ms. Fletcher, a Democrat who in 2018 captured a long-held Republican seat representing some of Houston’s toniest neighborhoods, precincts where Biden signs are far more common than Trump signs.

That was clear enough from the diverse array of voters who trickled back to their cars after casting votes in Houston, the vast majority of whom said they were backing Mr. Biden out of animus toward Mr. Trump.

“I’m tired of Trump,” said Irene Duron, who cast her ballot still wearing her scrubs from her job in clinical technology. “And I usually vote Republican.”

Even more striking were a few dozen interviews Saturday at an early voting site in what has been a more conservative community than Houston: Fort Worth’s Tarrant County. Mr. Trump won there by about nine percentage points in 2016.

The voters were overwhelmingly young and people of color, many of them of Asian or Hispanic descent, and nearly all of them said they were supporting Mr. Biden.

“I think most of the young generation is for Biden,” explained Brian Nguyen, a 20-year-old college student, after he voted.

Texas Republicans hope Mr. Biden’s stumble at the final debate, in which he appeared to suggest he wanted to end the oil industry, will snuff out his hopes of scoring an upset in Texas.

But they know Mr. Trump’s caricature of the state is wildly at odds with what could be made clear to the country next week.

“Texas is changing,” said Mr. Cruz. “We’re not home to just oil and gas wildcatters.”

PHOTOS: Early voting in Austin, Texas. The last Democratic candidate to carry Texas in a presidential election was Jimmy Carter in 1976. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Houston in March, and President Trump in Orange, Texas, in August, with Gov. Greg Abbott and Senator Ted Cruz. Texans from both parties believe the state is a tossup. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A27)

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**Body**

‘Funny Girl’ and ‘A Strange Loop’ on Broadway, Ashwini Ramaswamy’s dances, Olivia Rodrigo’s pop takeover: what our critics and writers are looking forward to this season.

Broadway

‘TAKE ME OUT’ Peanuts and crackerjacks may not be available at Second Stage’s Hayes Theater, but anyone who thinks that live theater is the ultimate spectator sport should root for the Broadway revival of Richard Greenberg’s comedy. Set in the locker room of a professional baseball team, the play stars Jesse Williams (“Grey’s Anatomy”) as a big-shot player who wants to come out as gay. Openly queer athletes are somewhat more common than when Greenberg wrote the play, which debuted at the Public Theater in 2002 and later won three Tony Awards. But they remain a rarity in team sports. So the play’s conversations around excellence, sexuality and the boundaries between public and private lives, should still make it around the bases. Scott Ellis directs, and Jesse Tyler Ferguson (“Modern Family”) and Patrick Adams (“Suits”) co-star. ALEXIS SOLOSKI

Previews begin March 10; opens April 4 at the Hayes Theater, Manhattan.

‘FUNNY GIRL’ It’s hard to think of another Golden Age megahit that hasn’t had a Broadway revival. Surely it’s not the fault of the terrific songs, by Jule Styne and Bob Merrill, including “Don’t Rain on My Parade” and “People.” And though the original book isn’t top-notch, it gets the job done, telling the story of the comedian Fanny Brice from teenage years to stardom by way of romantic catastrophe. No, the reason is simple: Barbra Streisand. Nearly 60 years after creating the role, she essentially still owns it. So let’s just say for now that the delightful [*Beanie Feldstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/05/movies/beanie-feldstein-favorites.html), who heads this revival, is borrowing it. Whether she can make the production, directed by Michael Mayer and with a revised book by Harvey Fierstein, as memorable as the first — well, check back in 60 years. JESSE GREEN

Previews begin March 26; opens April 24 at the August Wilson Theater, Manhattan.

‘MACBETH’ Is it ever not “Macbeth” time? “The Scottish Play,” as superstitious theater folk call it, has had nearly 50 Broadway productions since 1768, each age no doubt finding in it an echo of its own. In ours, the toxic brew of ambition and credulousness seems to resound most clearly. Will the director Sam Gold, whose takes on “[*King Lear*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/theater/king-lear-review-glenda-jackson.html)” and “[*The Glass Menagerie*](https://www.vulture.com/2017/03/theater-review-sally-field-in-a-reimagined-glass-menagerie.html)” were so divisive, draw the modern parallels? All I can say for sure is that with Daniel Craig ([*a memorably blasé Iago*](https://www.vulture.com/2016/12/theater-review-a-pair-of-othellos.html) in Gold’s downtown “[*Othello*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/12/theater/review-othello-david-oyelowo-daniel-craig.html)” in 2016) and Ruth Negga ([*a riveting Hamlet in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/theater/hamlet-review-ruth-negga.html)) as the suggestible Macbeth and his suggestive Lady, this revival should be a deep dive into cold water. JESSE GREEN

Previews begin March 29; opens April 28 at the Longacre Theater, Manhattan.

‘FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE/WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF’ The year before her death in 2018, the playwright Ntozake Shange went to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington to see a program by the choreographer Camille A. Brown. It was the first time they met, but they soon saw each other again — and Brown found herself in the startling position of hearing Shange, the revered author of the landmark choreopoem “For Colored Girls,” ask to interview her about her work, because she so enjoyed Brown’s movement language. Dance is elemental to “For Colored Girls,” which first opened on Broadway in 1976 and ran for nearly two years, with Shange herself as the Lady in Orange, one of the rainbow of women of color who tell their stories in the play. Revived at the Public Theater in 2019 with Brown (“Once on This Island”) as choreographer, it comes to Broadway this spring with Brown both directing and choreographing. LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES

Previews begin April 1; opens April 20 at the Booth Theater, Manhattan.

‘THE MINUTES’ Tracy Letts kills with laughs. In his 2007 breakthrough, “[*August: Osage County*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/05/theater/reviews/05august.html),” the victim was the American family. In “[*Linda Vista*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/10/theater/linda-vista-review.html),” which hit Broadway in 2019, men took the blade of his scythe. In those plays, and in many others, he gets you rooting for the worst people until you realize you are then complicit in their destructiveness. “The Minutes,” directed by Letts’s frequent collaborator Anna D. Shapiro, is a 90-minute comedy satirizing the workings of a self-satisfied bureaucracy in a fictional Midwestern city called Big Cherry. It features a cast of Letts experts, including Ian Barford, Blair Brown, K. Todd Freeman, Sally Murphy and, as Mayor Superba, Letts himself. But if it looks like he’s wielding his usual weapons, the target is even bigger than before: America’s idea of its own goodness. JESSE GREEN

Previews begin April 2; opens April 17 at Studio 54, Manhattan.

‘A STRANGE LOOP’ Since it premiered at Playwrights Horizons in 2019, Michael R. Jackson’s searingly funny and heartbreakingly frank musical “A Strange Loop,” in which he reflected on his experience as a young, queer Black man, has gone on to earn critical raves and a slew of awards, including the Pulitzer Prize in 2020. Now, Page 73, Playwrights Horizons and Woolly Mammoth are bringing the acclaimed production to Broadway, with Jaquel Spivey in the central role of a musical theater writer working as an usher at “The Lion King” and whose thoughts come to blistering life as a sort of Greek chorus. Jackson dismantles orthodoxies with verve and bite, and reserves some of his most pointed barbs for such institutions as church and Tyler Perry. You may never think of that Atlanta mogul the same way again. ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Previews begin April 6; opens April 26 at the Lyceum Theater, Manhattan.

‘HANGMEN’ After Martin McDonagh’s slow-burn thriller was forced to close with the rest of Broadway in March 2020, its producers declared that it couldn’t come back. But McDonagh (“The Pillowman,” “The Lieutenant of Inishmore”) has a way with a plot twist. So here is one more: This 1960s-set work of psychological suspense will return to the same theater, with a somewhat altered cast. Gone is Dan Stevens (“Downton Abbey”) as a magnetic London lowlife; in his place is Alfie Allen (“Game of Thrones”). Mark Addy, who played an executioner turned pub owner in the North of England, has also been replaced, by David Threlfall. What remains in this production, which originated at the Royal Court in London, are McDonagh’s shocking gifts: for taut plotting, sharp dialogue and a theatrical style that balances each play on a knife’s edge of comedy and terror. Matthew Dunster directs. ALEXIS SOLOSKI

Previews begin April 8; opens April 21 at the Golden Theater, Manhattan.

Off Broadway

‘CONFEDERATES’ Dominique Morisseau, one of the most exciting playwrights working today, is best known for her Detroit cycle, which feels like the magnificent progeny of August Wilson’s American Century Cycle. She makes magic with language: Her characters are real, her metaphors are sharp, and her dialogue reads like poetry. Morisseau’s work was on Broadway earlier this season with “Skeleton Crew,” and she follows that with the New York premiere of “Confederates,” which tackles institutional racism as it’s experienced by two Black women who live over a century apart. Stori Ayers directs. MAYA PHILLIPS

Previews begin March 8; opens March 27 at the Signature Theater, Manhattan.

‘SUFFS’ There’s a scene in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s film adaptation of the Jonathan Larson musical “Tick, Tick … Boom!” in which the camera pans a silent assembly of musical theater writers: essential composers and lyricists of the 21st-century New York stage. Blink and you miss her, but Shaina Taub is in there. So don’t blink, and definitely don’t miss her work. The subject of her latest musical, “Suffs,” is the fight, just over a century ago, for American women’s right to vote. The topic might sound potentially dry as dust, or doctrinaire to a fatal degree. But Taub, a musical magpie with a wholly distinctive voice, has a genius for storytelling that’s smart and political but also playful and funny; for proof, see her tuneful adaptations of “Twelfth Night” and “As You Like It.” And while she’s lately teamed up with Elton John to write the Broadway-bound musical “The Devil Wears Prada,” “Suffs” is all hers. LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES

Previews begin March 10; opens April 6 at the Public Theater, Manhattan.

‘BOOK OF MOUNTAINS &amp; SEAS’ The composer-librettist Huang Ruo and the director-designer Basil Twist are calling their new work choral theater, but it’s also puppetry on an operatic scale — bold, elegant, monumental. Adapted from Chinese myths and delayed from its American premiere when the Omicron variant shut down the Prototype Festival in January, “Book of Mountains &amp; Seas” arrives for its brief run at St. Ann’s Warehouse with 12 singers from the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, two percussionists and a half dozen nimble puppeteers. First performed last year in Copenhagen, it’s a sensory immersion of sound, light and movement that feels sometimes as if elements of Twist’s most famous puppet piece, “Symphonie Fantastique,” had escaped the water tank to soar majestically in the open air. LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES

March 15-20 at St. Ann’s Warehouse, Brooklyn.

‘HARMONY’ Back in 2019, The New York Times trumpeted that after taking off at the La Jolla Playhouse in 1997 and spending more than two decades circling the runway, Barry Manilow and Bruce Sussman’s labor-of-love musical “Harmony” — about the German vocal sextet the Comedian Harmonists, which was immensely popular between the two world wars — was going to have its Off Broadway premiere. In the spring of 2020. Now, the show is finally arriving, with the choreographer-director Warren Carlyle overseeing a cast led by Chip Zien and Sierra Boggess. If nothing else, this is another sign that after its Yiddish version of “Fiddler on the Roof” and its recent collaboration with New York City Opera on “The Garden of the Finzi-Continis,” the producing National Yiddish Theater Folksbiene has become a force on the New York musical landscape. ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Previews begin March 23; opens April 13 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, Manhattan.

‘CYRANO DE BERGERAC’ There is no shortage of variations on Edmond Rostand’s 19th-century play “Cyrano de Bergerac,” in which the brilliant but big-nosed Cyrano writes beautiful love poems that his handsome but — let’s say, less brilliant — comrade Christian passes off for his own to impress Roxane, a woman whom Cyrano himself loves. Next up is the Jamie Lloyd Company’s “Cyrano de Bergerac,” adapted by Martin Crimp and directed by Lloyd, which will come to Brooklyn from a critically acclaimed run in London. It’s a slick, modern version, with Cyrano using rap and spoken word as his means of seduction. Starring as Cyrano is James McAvoy, who often seems to alter his very foundations — his voice and mannerisms, his energy, his whole physical presence — for a role. MAYA PHILLIPS

Previews begin April 5; opens April 14 at the Harvey Theater, Brooklyn Academy of Music.

‘A CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD’ Samuel D. Hunter has built a rich oeuvre from fertile ground: the Idaho landscapes of his youth. His deceptively quiet plays (“Lewiston/ Clarkston,” “A Bright New Boise,” “Greater Clements”) explore faith, desire, sex and loss, in dialogue attuned to the rhythms of ordinary speech. The MacArthur Foundation acknowledged his ability to create “dramas that explore the human capacity for empathy and confront the socially isolating aspects of contemporary life across the American landscape.” This new play, directed by David Cromer, is again set in Idaho — and is perhaps the most intimate he has written. It has just two characters, men working to understand what the world does and doesn’t owe them. Though Hunter often prefers characters on what he calls “the losing end of American life,” he has promised that this new play is hopeful. ALEXIS SOLOSKI

Previews begin April 12; opens May 2 at Signature Theater, Manhattan.

‘WISH YOU WERE HERE’ The vagaries of postponements and rescheduling now give us two nearly simultaneous opportunities to discover the [*world of Sanaz Toossi*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/17/theater/sanaz-toossi-english-wish-you-were-here.html), a young first-generation Iranian American playwright from Orange County, Calif. Hot on the heels of “English” (at the Atlantic Theater Company), which looks at a small group of Iranians preparing for the Test of English as a Foreign Language, “Wish You Were Here” follows five young women in Karaj, a suburb of Tehran. (The actress Marjan Neshat appears in both shows.) They are about 20 when the play begins, in 1978, and we stay with them until 1991 as they navigate not only their friendship, but also their sense of home and belonging. A revolution is unfolding, followed by war with Iraq; life-changing decisions must be made. Toossi reunites with Gaye Taylor Upchurch, who directed last year’s audio version from the Williamsburg Theater Festival and Audible. ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Previews begin April 13; opens May 2 at Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan.

‘WEDDING BAND’ Alice Childress was a force to be reckoned with in the theater, even if she didn’t always get her due. After all, she would have been the first Black female playwright on Broadway if she hadn’t refused to compromise on her work. That would-be first was her play “Trouble in Mind,” which finally premiered on Broadway last fall. How fortunate we are to get her follow-up to “Trouble,” “Wedding Band,” a rarely produced play about an illicit interracial relationship in the South during World War I. Awoye Timpo directs this, only the second New York production, with modern race politics — including the Black Lives Matter movement — as the trouble in mind. MAYA PHILLIPS

Previews begin April 23; opens May 1 at Polonsky Shakespeare Center, Theater for a New Audience, Brooklyn.

‘THE BEDWETTER’ Sorry, “Urinetown,” you’re not the only musical about a certain bodily function anymore. Subtitled “Stories of Redemption, Courage, and Pee” Sarah Silverman’s 2010 [*memoir*](https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/04/books/04book.html) is frank, vulnerable and, of course, brutally funny. Chances are good these qualities will be present in this musical adaptation, since Silverman herself wrote the book with the playwright Joshua Harmon (“Prayer for the French Republic”), as well as the lyrics, with the composer [*Adam Schlesinger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/arts/music/adam-schlesinger-dead-coronavirus.html). The show is bound to be bittersweet: Schlesinger, who is best known for his scores for Broadway’s “Cry-Baby” and the TV series “Crazy Ex-Girlfriend,” died of coronavirus complications in April 2020, around the time “The Bedwetter” was originally scheduled to premiere. ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Previews begin April 30; opens May 23 at the Linda Gross Theater, Atlantic Theater Company.

‘WHO KILLED MY FATHER’ At the intersection of memoir, sociological study and call to arms, the French writer Édouard Louis’s books, which often dissect his ***working-class*** upbringing, have become an unlikely inspiration for successful plays. Two of them, “The End of Eddy” and “History of Violence,” even [*opened in New York the same week in 2019*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/06/theater/edouard-louis.html). Now, Louis is even more directly involved in the theatricalization of his own life: He is starring in a stage version of “Who Killed My Father,” in which he intermingled a look at the destructive impact of physical work on his father’s body with a takedown of France’s class structure. The production reunites Louis with the brilliant German director Thomas Ostermeier, who also staged “History of Violence.” ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Previews begin May 18; opens May 22 at St. Ann’s Warehouse, Brooklyn.

Pop

BURNA BOY Nigerian Afrobeats has gathered a worldwide audience through sleek understatement: an insinuating basic beat that’s equal parts syncopation and silence, productions that conjure bassy depths and open spaces, singers who offer calm confidence rather than histrionics. The pandemic derailed international touring for Afrobeats stars, postponing their chances to claim their ever-expanding American audience. It’s fitting that [*Burna Boy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/arts/music/burna-boy-twice-as-tall.html), the songwriter who won the 2021 Grammy Award for best global music album with “Twice as Tall,” will be the first Nigerian musician to headline Madison Square Garden, with a show billed as “One Night in Space.” With his amiable, husky baritone and the assistance of some of Africa’s most innovative producers, Burna Boy has delivered a steady flow of international hits like [*“Question,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rOer3k2DWg) [*“Kilometre”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKv5CBr-kKo) and [*“Want It All”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0FE2Hjn30E) from 2021, and his catalog features cultural messages along with party tunes. He has already headlined arenas in Africa, Europe and England; the United States can soon catch up. JON PARELES

April 28 at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan.

ALABASTER DEPLUME Performing as Alabaster dePlume, the U.K.-based saxophonist, vocalist and activist Gus Fairbairn draws equally, and a bit cautiously, upon Indian raga, western New Age music, Hailu Mergia’s late-70s recordings [*with the Dahlak Band*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU_gcM7lmD8) and the psych-folk appropriations of the [*Incredible String Band*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoQ3tmohEX4). He knows that most of the ideas in his music — musically, lyrically, critically — originated somewhere else; they’re a historical inheritance, and they’re here through colonial encounter.

But just knowing doesn’t count for much, and dePlume’s real appeal (as an auteur, a philosopher, a saxophonist) comes from listening to him push through the anxieties of influence into sincerity. More and more, the music wears humane intentions on its sleeve: On “Don’t Forget You’re Precious,” from his latest album, “Gold,” due April 1, he admonishes a listener in a purring first-person: “​​I remember my pin number/I remember my ex’s email address/But I forget I’m precious.”

Those intentions come through strongly in performance, where dePlume encourages his side musicians to “bring your whole self,” as he said in an [*interview*](https://thequietus.com/articles/27926-alabaster-de-plume-interview) with The Quietus. He avoids playing consistently with the same group so that every show is guided by intuition. When he arrives in Brooklyn, he’ll be joined by the violist Marta Sofia Honer and the electronic musician Jeremiah Chiu, in a band he pulled together with help from Jaimie Branch, a trumpeter and his International Anthem label mate. GIOVANNI RUSSONELLO

March 19 at Public Records in Brooklyn.

DUA LIPA Released in the surreal and cursed March 2020, Dua Lipa’s nimble, disco-sleek second record, “Future Nostalgia,” was one of the first [*blockbuster pop albums put out during the Covid-19 pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/arts/music/dua-lipa-future-nostalgia-coronavirus.html). That it has taken her nearly two years to tour it, though, does not mean its sound has become a distant, early lockdown memory: “Future Nostalgia” has had such a long tail in the usually mercurial pop world that you’d still be hard pressed to scan the radio dial and not come across one of its many smash hits. (Its fifth single, “Levitating,” has been on the Billboard Hot 100 for 66 weeks and counting.)

This also means that Lipa’s star wattage has increased considerably since she last toured the United States, for her 2017 self-titled debut album. Consider that the last venue she headlined in New York was the 2,500-seat Hammerstein Ballroom; the Future Nostalgia Tour will come to two local arenas. If her effervescent, impressively calisthenic [*performance*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFWv44Z4Jhk) at last year’s Grammys was any indication, Lipa will have no trouble commanding such a huge stage. And given the fact that Lipa’s buoyant tunes were the soundtrack of so many people dancing on their own during those long, lonely months of lockdown, the prospect of grooving to them in a communal setting promises to be extra cathartic. LINDSAY ZOLADZ

March 1 at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan; March 4 at Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.

OLIVIA RODRIGO Most musicians — even the ones who appear to be overnight sensations — have to pay their dues on small stages first. [*Olivia Rodrigo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/arts/music/olivia-rodrigo-drivers-license.html)’s breakout year happened while the pandemic paused live music, so while she’s a front-runner for a best new artist Grammy, she’s still barely played in front of live audiences at all, save for a few performances on late night TV and at award shows. And so the sold-out Sour Tour will be a proving ground for Rodrigo, whose alternately punky and wrenching debut album, “Sour,” was one of the best and most talked about of last year. Rodrigo’s recent eight-song [*appearance*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKKT6X-Q6kg) at “Austin City Limits,” taped for a crowd of giddy fans, was a better showcase for the quieter, more introspective side of her songwriting, like the world-stopping ballad [*“Drivers License”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/arts/music/olivia-rodrigo-drivers-license.html) or the scorched post-breakup note “Traitor.” But her tour will likely provide an opportunity for pop-punk anthems like “Good 4 U” and “Brutal” to connect with a more kinetic audience — plenty of people have been waiting far too long to scream along with Rodrigo’s every word. ZOLADZ

April 26-27 at Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan.

WILCO Vindication doesn’t get much purer, or better deserved, than the fate of Wilco’s 2002 album, “Yankee Hotel Foxtrot.” After making three albums of rootsy indie-rock, full of 1960s and 1970s echoes, Jeff Tweedy steered Wilco toward studio experimentation, incorporating unexpected instruments, random noises and surreal mixes. Its opening song, “I Am Trying to Break Your Heart,” was a frontal assault on naturalism, savoring loops, glitches and distortion. Wilco’s label, Reprise, told Tweedy the album was horrible and [*“career-ending,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/21/arts/music-a-jilted-band-finds-love-after-all.html) refused to release it and dropped the band. But Wilco then streamed the songs online to a hugely enthusiastic response. Nonesuch (part of the Warner Music Group along with Reprise) picked up “Yankee Hotel Foxtrot”; it reached the Top 20 and sold more than half a million copies. Wilco has endured as a shape-shifting band, with songs that can be transformed onstage. It will mark the 20th anniversary of “Yankee Hotel Foxtrot” by [*performing the whole album*](https://wilcoworld.net/) for five nights in New York City and three in Chicago. The sonic palette may seem slightly less radical two decades later, but the songs remain sturdy, full of private yearnings and insights about America. PARELES

April 15-17 and April 19-20 at the United Palace Theater in Manhattan; April 22-24 at the Auditorium Theater in Chicago.

Classical

‘LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR’ There have been all kinds of updatings at the Metropolitan Opera in recent years. “Rigoletto,” set in the Renaissance, has been moved to Rat Pack-era Las Vegas, then Weimar Germany. “Carmen,” which the libretto places in the early 19th century, was pulled forward to the time of the Spanish Civil War.

But rarer — particularly in a core repertory still dominated by Italian-language classics — are Met productions set in a realistic present day. That can be a step too far for conservative opera aficionados who have grudgingly dealt with (and sometimes booed) the company’s mildly modernized takes on some of their favorites.

The Met’s new staging of Donizetti’s [*“Lucia di Lammermoor”*](https://www.metopera.org/season/2021-22-season/lucia-di-lammermoor/) is therefore a likely flash point. The Australian director Simon Stone ([*“Yerma”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/28/theater/yerma-review-billie-piper-lorca.html) at the Park Avenue Armory and [*“Medea”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/theater/medea-review.html) at the Brooklyn Academy of Music) is setting the work not in its original 18th-century Scottish Highlands, but in a struggling Rust Belt town today.

For Stone, both of those milieus are ones in which society’s denial of the power and prosperity that men had assumed was theirs translates to the abuse of women. Living in [*what he calls*](https://www.metopera.org/discover/articles/fading-dreams/) a “wasteland of free-market capitalism,” pockmarked by pawn shops, liquor stores and boarded-up houses, Stone’s title character — forced, with tragic results, into marrying against her will — is an opioid addict who meets her secret lover at a motel.

The 2007 Mary Zimmerman staging being replaced by this one was also updated, to the Victorian era, but retained a sumptuousness that satisfied traditionalists. Abandoning that, Stone is under pressure to render his fresh vision through his cast, led by Nadine Sierra as Lucia, Javier Camarena as her beloved Edgardo, and Artur Rucinski as her cruel brother. Riccardo Frizza conducts what promises to be a very interesting premiere. Opens April 23. ZACHARY WOOLFE

JOHNNY GANDELSMAN The violinist Johnny Gandelsman doesn’t take on projects lightly. In addition to his work with the quartet Brooklyn Rider, and with the Silkroad Ensemble, he maintains a robust solo career that has unfolded with one ambitious undertaking after another.

With feather-light and fiddling bow strokes, he recorded a novel account of Bach’s six sonatas and partitas for solo violin, which he programmed as a breathless marathon instead of the usual assortment of selections. Then he transcribed Bach’s six cello suites for his instrument, again presenting them all together, and justified what might have seemed like a gimmick with an illuminating re-evaluation of music that could hardly be better known.

His latest project, “This Is America,” is a swerve from the Baroque, but no less daunting and even more enterprising.

In the spirit of another restless violinist, Jennifer Koh, Gandelsman has gone on a commissioning spree, ordering more than 20 new pieces from a group of composers who collectively demonstrate the possibilities of truly diverse programming. What emerges, he hopes, is an argument for the impossibility of capturing the United States in any straightforward or reductive way, as well as for the benefit in aspiring instead to a prismatic portrait of place.

He has started rolling out the premieres in a tour whose stops include two evenings at [*Baryshnikov Arts Center*](https://bacnyc.org/performances/performance/johnny-gandelsman?gclid=CjwKCAiAgbiQBhAHEiwAuQ6Bknz8tPyf6MzOFJkq-R0rYxBSxJvNO_2takFI9pd5w6qLP_3zkPyFORoCWrcQAvD_BwE). Both programs open with Bach cello suite transcriptions, but spread between them are also 10 “This Is America” works. On the roster are excellent known quantities, such as Tyshawn Sorey (“For Courtney Bryan”), Rhiannon Giddens (“New to the Session”) and Angélica Negrón (“A través del manto Luminoso”); as well as Olivia Davis, Nick Dunston, Christina Courtin, Marika Hughes, Adele Faizullina, and Rhea Fowler and Micaela Tobin. March 16 and 17. JOSHUA BARONE

CARNEGIE HALL Scan the schedule at Carnegie Hall, and it’s painfully apparent that it’s still impossible for major overseas orchestras to appear on these shores as they once could — at least unless they are led by the conductor Valery Gergiev, who brings his Mariinsky Orchestra to town ([*May 3*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/05/03/Mariinsky-Orchestra-0800PM), [*May 4*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/05/04/Mariinsky-Orchestra-0800PM)) after an initial visit with the Vienna Philharmonic at the end of February.

One of the few to cross the ocean is the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, whose concert with the immaculate pianist [*Mitsuko Uchida*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/14/arts/music/mitsuko-uchida-schubert-carnegie.html) ([*March 25*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/03/25/Mahler-Chamber-Orchestra-Mitsuko-Uchida-Piano-and-Director-0800PM)) would be a highlight of any season, let alone this necessarily sparse one. Together, they will play two Mozart concertos, the repertoire in which Uchida has for so long excelled: the genial, graceful No. 23 in A, and the No. 24 in C minor, one of the composer’s darkest pieces.

But if the Mahler ensemble’s appearance is the exception that proves the rule, Uchida’s is something like the opposite: Pianists dominate at Carnegie this spring. Uchida herself will preface her Mozart by appearing with the tenor Mark Padmore, an ideally penetrating pairing for Schubert’s troubled “Schwanengesang” ([*March 13*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/03/13/Mark-Padmore-Tenor-Mitsuko-Uchida-Piano-0300PM)).

Daniil Trifonov ([*March 3*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/03/03/Daniil-Trifonov-Piano-0800PM)), Beatrice Rana ([*March 9*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/03/09/Beatrice-Rana-Piano-0800PM)), Gabriela Montero ([*March 18*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/03/18/Gabriela-Montero-Piano-0730PM)) and Andras Schiff ([*March 31*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/03/31/Sir-Andrs-Schiff-Piano-0800PM)) all arrive in March, with Montero offering an intriguing Carnegie debut putting Schumann, Shostakovich and Chick Corea suggestively together with her own pieces and improvisations. Yuja Wang ([*April 12*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/04/12/Yuja-Wang-Piano-0800PM)), Emanuel Ax ([*April 28*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/04/28/Emanuel-Ax-Piano-0800PM)) and Evgeny Kissin ([*May 20*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/05/20/Evgeny-Kissin-Piano-0800PM)) take their place on the piano bench later; if their programs look a little same-old, Yefim Bronfman ([*April 18*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/04/18/Yefim-Bronfman-Piano-0800PM)) adds to his repertory with a sonata by the uncompromising [*Galina Ustvolskaya*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/27/arts/music/galina-ustvolskaya.html). And if that’s not enough, Igor Levit returns after his [*January recital*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/14/arts/music/review-igor-levit-carnegie-hall.html) to perform Brahms with the New York Philharmonic ([*May 6*](https://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2022/05/06/New-York-Philharmonic-0800PM)). DAVID ALLEN

ANTHONY DAVIS The composer and pianist Anthony Davis’s operas have been absurdly difficult to seek out this century. But that’s about to change.

Portland Opera [*will present “The Central Park Five”*](https://www.portlandopera.org/performances-tickets/21-22-season/the-central-park-five/) — which earned Davis the 2020 Pulitzer Prize — in March. And Michigan Opera Theater in Detroit will bring Davis’s first operatic triumph, “X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X,” from 1986, to its stage [*in May*](https://michiganopera.org/season-schedule/x-life-and-times-of-malcolm-x/), in a new production by the Tony Award nominee Robert O’Hara.

New Yorkers may want to keep an eye on this “X,” which is [*bound for the Metropolitan Opera*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/16/arts/music/malcolm-x-opera-met.html) in the fall of 2023. A concert presentation will also be on offer from the [*Boston Modern Orchestra Project in June*](https://www.bmop.org/season-tickets/told-x-life-and-times-malcolm-x). In both Boston and Detroit, the title role will be sung by the bass-baritone Davóne Tines, whose fleet, complex characterizations have proved dazzling in New York — including his lead appearance in [*Hans Werner Henze’s “El Cimarrón.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/arts/music/el-cimarron-review.html)” (The baritone Will Liverman is scheduled to take the part at the Met.)

Even if the production weren’t headed to New York, Davis’s score would make “X” a destination opera. Just [*as in his orchestral music*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/21/arts/music/classical-music-new-york-philharmonic.html) and compositions for smaller jazz ensembles, his approach in this opera merges modernism with a wide-angle appreciation of swing and the blues. Although “X” made a strong impression on a 1992 recording, now out of print, Davis is taking this opportunity to revise the score. This spring will be our first opportunity to hear his latest vision of it. SETH COLTER WALLS

Dance

MOVEMENT RESEARCH AT JUDSON CHURCH [*This weekly series*](https://movementresearch.org/events/series/movement-research-at-judson-church), which dates to 1991, is an ever-shifting bill of experimental dance. Each program, free on Monday nights, is a stand-alone adventure — the chance to see an imagination blossom on a bare-bones stage. Where is dance going? How is the art form developing in a new generation, and how have choreographers continued to work through the pandemic? Now, more than ever, Judson is critical to the ecosystem of downtown dance.

When Movement Research, dedicated to the investigation of dance and movement-based forms, resumed its Judson performances last fall, the idea was to celebrate the series’ 30th anniversary, but cancellations were unavoidable; the same thing happened in early winter as yet another wave of the pandemic hit. When, finally, the show did go on one night in February, it felt like a beam of light.

This spring, Judson gets another shot at celebrating its anniversary beginning with Lai Yi Ohlsen and Brendan Drake on March 21 and continuing with Benjamin Akio Kimitch and the [*mesmerizing duo of Molly Lieber and Eleanor Smith*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/21/arts/dance/molly-lieber-eleanor-smith-gloria-review.html) the following week.

The season wrap-up is organized by Maria Hupfield, through Movement Research’s Artists of Color Council, a group addressing issues of equity and cultural diversity. The lineup features Indigenous Kinship Collective NYC (KIN), Emily Johnson and Rosy Simas, dance artists very much in tune with the urgency of our time. Dance may have been put on hold, but it has a future. Movement Research proves it. GIA KOURLAS

Through May 23 at Judson Church, Manhattan.

SARA MEARNS The ballet dancer is just one part of the dancer that is Sara Mearns. In this Joyce Theater production, she explores other sides of her artistry in a collection of collaborations, including a crucial one [*with the choreographer and dance artist Jodi Melnick*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/06/arts/dance/when-these-dancers-sara-mearns-jodi-melnick-collaborated-2-learning-curves-met-as-one.html). It is through Melnick that Mearns, a principal dancer at New York City Ballet, delved into a new way of moving, a new way of thinking about dance and about the intricacies of the body.

Together, their contrasts and similarities create, strange as it may sound, a minimalism of excess rooted in delicate, powerfully subtle, liquid dancing. They have spent hours in the studio together; it shows. A highlight will be Melnick’s “Opulence,” a duet that was originally part of a program at Jacob’s Pillow in 2019.

The program also includes a short film — shot in Long Island City in March 2020, just before the pandemic shutdown — directed and choreographed by Austin Goodwin for Mearns and Paul Zivkovich, as well as new duets by Vinson Fraley, a member of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company and Guillaume Côté, of National Ballet of Canada.

In other words, this isn’t another ballerina-in-the-spotlight kind of situation. Not only will Mearns debut a solo by the esteemed choreographer Beth Gill — so curious to see this! — but she has also programmed a Cunningham MinEvent, staged by Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener, featuring live music by John King. Cunningham isn’t new to Mearns; she performed in “[*Night of 100 Solos: A Centennial Event*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/12/arts/dance/learning-to-dance-merce-cunningham-risk-in-calm-containers.html),” which celebrated that choreographer’s legacy in 2019. She’s assembled a stellar cast: She will be joined by Taylor Stanley, Jacquelin Harris, Chalvar Monteiro, Burr Johnson and Melnick. It’s star power done right. KOURLAS

March 8-13 at the Joyce Theater, Manhattan.

STORYBOARD P Storyboard P is an incredible dancer in the most literal sense, the kind who makes it hard to believe your eyes. His name alludes to film, and many people (including him) have likened his style to stop-motion animation and special effects. Gliding and floating in liquid relation to music or flickering to register noise in the signal, he’s a master of illusion whose sophistication and subtlety reward the closest attention. But even more astonishing than his skill is the freedom of his improvisatory imagination. It follows unpredictable twists into deep and strange channels, the territory of dreams.

In the Crown Heights neighborhood where he grew up and in the community that developed the street dance known as flex, he was recognized as exceptional at least by the mid-2000s, when he started winning competition after competition, even if he never quite fit in. Around 10 years ago, news began to spread more widely. Appearing in his own clips, in short films by [*Khalil Joseph*](https://vimeo.com/48551671) and Arthur Jafa and in music videos [*for the likes of Jay-Z*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67m0ng6fKQE), he became a YouTube star. In profiles — in The New Yorker, The Guardian and The Wire — he talked about forging a new kind of career for a dancer, as “a visual recording artist.”

Instead, apart from a cameo in [*another Jay-Z video (the Arthur Jafa-directed “4:44”)*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSkA61esq_c), he largely disappeared from the public eye. But he’s resurfacing at Performance Space New York for two freestyle performances called “No Diving 2.” Who knows what might happen. BRIAN SEIBERT

April 7-8 at Performance Space New York, Manhattan.

ROBERT GARLAND AT DANCE THEATER OF HARLEM Dance Theater of Harlem was founded in 1969 with two braided missions: to create a place for Black dancers in ballet and to extend the tradition of George Balanchine and New York City Ballet, where Arthur Mitchell, Dance Theater’s mastermind, got his start. These missions have been carried into the present in the work of the company’s resident choreographer, Robert Garland.

In “Return” (1999), set to recordings by James Brown and Aretha Franklin, and [*“New Bach” (2002)*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/01/arts/dance/speaking-in-dance-dth-robert-garland.html), Garland found a way to combine neoclassical ballet with Black vernacular dance and what he has called “Harlem swag.” His “Gloria” (2013), set to Poulenc and incorporating students, movingly encapsuled the troupe’s phoenixlike rebirth after a nine-year hiatus. In their excellence, these pieces to old music showed how values from the past still had relevance.

In 2020, when the pandemic shut down theaters, [*Garland was about to debut “Higher Ground,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/24/arts/dance/robert-garland-dance-theater-of-harlem.html) set to some of the more politically sharp tracks from Stevie Wonder’s genius streak of the 1970s. The work finally gets its New York premiere in April, as part of the City Center Dance Festival. The music comes from Garland’s youth but is freshly topical in the age of Black Lives Matter. Even more significant, the dance is an intensely affecting response to that music that could be done only by a ballet company — this ballet company. It feels like the kind of work that Dance Theater of Harlem was made to do. SEIBERT

.April 5, 8-10, at New York City Center, Manhattan.

ASHWINI RAMASWAMY Two years after its originally scheduled New York premiere, Ashwini Ramaswamy’s “[*Let the Crows Come*](https://bacnyc.org/performances/performance/ashwini-ramaswamy-2022)” finally lands at the Baryshnikov Arts Center. Ramaswamy, who lives in Minneapolis, grew up steeped in the tradition of the South Indian classical dance form Bharatanatyam, and her work often explores the in-betweenness of her cultural identity, the experience of being from both India and the United States.

In “Let the Crows Come,” she is joined by two other Minneapolis dancers with different areas of expertise: Alanna Morris, who has a background in contemporary and Afro-Caribbean forms, and Berit Ahlgren, a practitioner and teacher of Gaga, the movement language developed by the Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin. Each dancer offers an interpretation of the same Bharatanatyam solo, refracting its rhythmic footwork, sculptural postures and intricate gestures through her own lens. Ramaswamy likens the structure to “a memory that’s experienced differently from person to person.” In the live music, along similar lines, the composers Jace Clayton (also known as DJ Rupture) and Brent Arnold take inspiration from an original Carnatic score by Prema Ramamurthy.

New York audiences might know Ramaswamy, a dancer of vibrant clarity and warmth, from the [*Ragamala Dance Company*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/24/arts/dance/ragamala-dance-joyce-theater-review.html), the Bharatanatyam troupe led by her mother and sister, with whom she still trains and performs. In a phone interview, she said her work remains intimately tied to theirs.

“I wouldn’t say I’m branching out on my own,” she said, “but figuring out my method and my voice within that aesthetic and that lineage.”

The title “Let the Crows Come” alludes to a flow between past and present, referring to a Hindu ritual of honoring ancestors through offerings of rice. When crows come to eat the rice, Ramaswamy said, “it means your ancestors are telling you, ‘I’m OK. Keep living your life, but I’m always there with you.’” SIOBHAN BURKE

April 13-15 at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, Manhattan.

OKINAWAN DANCE AND MUSIC It’s not often that dance from Okinawa makes its way to New York; when it does, you want to clear your calendar. That’s one lesson I learned from the Japan Society’s exquisite presentation, back in 2015, of Okinawan dance and music. As part of a five-city American tour, a new program, “[*Waves Across Time: Traditional Dance and Music of Okinawa*](https://www.japansociety.org/arts-and-culture/performances/traditional-dance-music-okinawa),” comes to the Japan Society in March. The tour — also stopping at Furman University in Greenville, S.C.; the Kennedy Center in Washington; Lafayette College in Easton, Pa.; and the University of Chicago — marks the 50th anniversary of the return of Okinawa to Japan, following the American occupation of the islands after World War II.

Assembled by Michihiko Kakazu, the artistic director of the National Theater Okinawa, the two-part evening includes court dances from the classical repertory of kumiodori, a kind of Noh-inspired theater, dating to Okinawa’s era as an independent kingdom, Ryukyu, from the 15th to 19th centuries. Stately, slow and lavishly costumed, these contrast with the program’s other half: more recent, upbeat popular and folk dances, zo-odori. A lecture on the histories of these forms precedes each performance, and interactive workshops invite a closer look at their rhythmic and physical structures. BURKE

March 18-20 at the Japan Society, Manhattan.

PHOTOS: Ruth Negga and Daniel Craig will star in “Macbeth” at the Longacre Theater, with previews beginning on March 29. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANTAL ANDERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; DEVIN OKTAR YALKIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Jaquel Spivey, center, will play the central role of Usher in “A Strange Loop,” by Michael R. Jackson, in April. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TERESA CASTRACANE); From left, Patrick J. Adams, Jesse Williams and Jesse Tyler Ferguson will star in “Take Me Out” at the Hayes Theater, with previews beginning March 10. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE WESSEL) (AR26); PHOTOS: Dua Lipa’s tour will include concerts at Madison Square Garden on March 1 and the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J., on March 4. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON KOERNER/GETTY IMAGES FOR PERMANENT PRESS MEDIA); Radio City Music Hall will welcome the breakout star Olivia Rodrigo on April 26-27. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS PIZZELLO/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS); Mitsuko Uchida will perform on March 13 and March 25 at Carnegie Hall. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROYUKI ITO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Burna Boy will be the first Nigerian musician to headline a show at Madison Square Garden when he performs on April 28. He won the 2021 Grammy Award for best global music album with “Twice as Tall.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMY HARRIS/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) (AR28); PHOTOS: Kouadio Davis, left, and Alexandra Hutchinson of Dance Theater of Harlem in Robert Garland’s “Higher Ground,” which will be performed at New York City Center in April. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THEIK SMITH); Movement Research’s dance series at Judson Church resumes in March. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITNEY BROWNE); Ashwini Ramaswamy’s “Let the Crows Come” lands at the Baryshnikov Arts Center on April 13-15. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAKE ARMOUR) (AR29)

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[***After Slim Loss in 2016, G.O.P. Considers New Hampshire in Play***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y67-R6F1-DXY4-X3D2-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The president, who lost the state by a few thousand votes in 2016, now has the support of the Republican establishment. But not all Republicans are convinced.

MANCHESTER, N.H. -- In 2016, Donald J. Trump came within a few thousand votes of winning New Hampshire in the general election. This time around, fueled by a stockpile of donations, his campaign is looking at New Hampshire and its four electoral votes as a key target in its efforts to expand the map.

There are some factors working in his favor. Instead of a feud with one of the Republican Party's few female senators as well as a former governor, the president has the state party apparatus backing him. And his advisers think the policies he has implemented fit the contours of the state.

But securing victory in a state that has been won by a Democrat in every presidential election since 2000 will be a test of both the president's durability and his political operation.

Mr. Trump's allies say the issues are with him. The unemployment rate in the state was 2.6 percent in October 2019, lower than the national figure. Mr. Trump has highlighted his administration's efforts to stem the opioid crisis in a state that continues to rank among the top five in opioid-related deaths.

The president's new North American trade deal, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, affects New Hampshire businesses importing timber, syrup and dairy from Canada, campaign officials said. Officials also pointed to efforts by the Interior Department to eliminate the Seamounts Marine National Monument, located off the Atlantic Coast, as a move that appeals to New Hampshire voters because it could open up previously protected areas to commercial uses like fishing.

Corey Lewandowski, Mr. Trump's first 2016 campaign manager and a New Hampshire resident who considered running for the Senate seat held by the Democrat Jeanne Shaheen, said that those factors, ''coupled with the fact that the president should have won last time,'' work in his favor -- an apparent reference to the relatively little party support Mr. Trump had in his losing battle with Hillary Clinton.

Yet if the New Hampshire Republican Party now belongs to the president, it has also seen a significant decline in enrollment.

''New Hampshire is going to be a challenge for him to win in November,'' said Jennifer Horn, the former New Hampshire Republican chairman and a staunch critic of Mr. Trump. ''A week ago, we had more than 20,000 fewer registered Republicans than there were Election Day in 2016.''

Ms. Horn noted that Republican candidates lost large, consistently red areas in the 2018 midterm elections, and that the same thing could happen here to Mr. Trump. While other state Republicans played down concerns about the drop in party members on the voter rolls as the natural ebb and flow that happens in a state with same-day voter registration, Ms. Horn said 20,000 was ''way outside the norm.''

And the state's demographics reflect the type of place where Mr. Trump will face challenges: concentrations of ***working-class*** whites, but multitudes of college-educated voters, who polls show have been abandoning the Republican Party.

''We've had great success in the municipal elections, and of course we had the historic wins in 2018,'' said Ray Buckley, the state Democratic chairman. ''There's a lot of energy on the ground here. We've built a year-round organization.''

Aware of some of the challenges ahead, the Trump campaign appears eager to get a head start.

While Pete Buttigieg was trying to emerge from the Democratic field and Joseph R. Biden Jr. was trying to stay in it, Mr. Trump turned up in Manchester for a rally Monday night and Trump surrogates fanned out Tuesday to diners and polling sites throughout the state, even though he faces only token opposition in the Republican primary.

Their mission: talk up Mr. Trump's policies, distract attention from Democrats and set the stage for the general election.

''We're trying to fly the Trump flag when all the action is on the other side,'' said Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who strolled into Bedford High School, just outside Manchester, to greet voters on Tuesday morning. ''If the economy stays good, I think he's very much in play here.''

Senator Rick Scott of Florida was on hand outside Manchester on Tuesday morning to paint Democrats with the brush of ''socialism.'' Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son, spent the day at diners and high schools campaigning for his father. Representatives Steve Scalise of Louisiana, Mark Meadows of North Carolina and Greg Pence of Indiana, among others, stayed behind after Mr. Trump's rally on Monday night and made diner visits and talked with local news media.

Two supporters who were scheduled to campaign on the ground for him -- Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky and Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida -- hitched a ride home Monday night on Air Force One instead, to deal with legislative matters in Washington or attend the transfer of remains for two soldiers killed over the weekend in Afghanistan. Taking their place were prominent New Hampshire Republicans, a change from four years ago.

Gov. Chris Sununu bound into a local high school, where he purchased a box of Krispy Kreme doughnuts from a student bake sale and stayed on message.

''The Trump tax cuts here worked,'' he said. ''The U.S.M.C.A., very powerful, for a lot of our businesses that trade with our friends to the north. The regulatory reform streamlined the process.'' He also credited the administration with investing $50 million in the state to battle the opioid crisis.

The last time Mr. Trump was running, John H. Sununu, the current governor's father and a former governor himself, questioned Mr. Trump's history of business losses and said his coarse language was ''demeaning of the office he's seeking.''

Trump campaign officials said they blamed the president's 2016 loss in large part on his feud with Kelly Ayotte, a senator at the time who was locked in a close re-election race and tried to thread the needle by saying she would vote for Mr. Trump but not endorse him. Ms. Ayotte lost her seat, and Mr. Trump lost the state, an outcome one campaign official described as a political murder-suicide.

Monday found Ms. Ayotte campaigning for the president at a ''Cops for Trump'' event with Ivanka Trump and Vice President Mike Pence. Reached on the phone on Tuesday, Ms. Ayotte hung up on a reporter. ''I'm busy. I have to go,'' she said when asked to comment on the state of the race in New Hampshire.

But the show of Republican force appeared to be having its desired effect of sparking fears among Democratic voters about the strength of their own candidates.

Mark Goodridge, 75, of Bedford, said he was voting for Mr. Biden. But he said he was anxious that he might lose to Mr. Trump.

''You see the Trump signs out there? Did you see how many are out there?'' he asked, pointing to the pop-up stand of Trump campaign T-shirts and gear set up outside the school's entrance.

His wife, Margaret, 76, chimed in. ''I think it depends on who the Democrats pick,'' she said. ''If we get the right candidate ... '' Her voice trailed off, before she added, ''Which is kind of a worry.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/11/us/politics/trump-nh-new-hampshire.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/11/us/politics/trump-nh-new-hampshire.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: President Trump on Monday in New Hampshire, which has been won by a Democrat in every presidential election since 2000. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 12, 2020

**End of Document**



[***As Campaigns Hit Road, Trump Seethes at Home***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60ST-KNS1-JBG3-6151-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns

**Body**

The unofficial Labor Day kickoff to the fall campaign centered on Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, two pivotal states for both the president and Joseph R. Biden Jr.

LA CROSSE, Wis. -- For a few hours, the unofficial Labor Day start to the fall presidential campaign centered around Wisconsin, as Vice President Mike Pence tried to poach Democrats in this Mississippi River town and Senator Kamala Harris sought to rally the Democratic base in Milwaukee.

But their dueling events at opposite ends of this increasingly pivotal state -- as well as Joseph R. Biden's visit to another battleground, Pennsylvania -- were soon overwhelmed by a force as strong as any current: President Trump's thirst for attention.

The only member of the two tickets not to be on the campaign trail Monday, Mr. Trump abruptly called a White House news conference and then used it to air a range of personal and political grievances. He called his opponents names -- Mr. Biden was a ''stupid person'' and Ms. Harris was ''not a competent person.'' Yet more notable than his usual partisan insults was his extraordinary attack on the country's senior military officials.

Defending himself for a fifth straight day following a report in The Atlantic that he ridiculed America's war dead, Mr. Trump suggested the accusations came from Pentagon leaders, whom he described as war profiteers.

''They want to do nothing but fight wars so that all of those wonderful companies that make the bombs, that make the planes, that make everything else, stay happy,'' Mr. Trump said of the officers he commands, making no mention of his own choice for defense secretary, Mark T. Esper, who was an executive at the defense contractor Raytheon.

The broadside, coming after current and retired officers have been notably quiet about claims that the president described those killed in action as ''losers,'' only added more fuel to an explosive story line that many Republicans want Mr. Trump to put behind him.

For the purposes of the campaign, Mr. Trump's preoccupation with the Atlantic article illustrated the limited value of the presidential bully pulpit in the hands of a candidate unwilling to drive a focused message.

Monday, after all, was poised to showcase a showdown between Mr. Pence and Ms. Harris, who were appearing together for the first time in the same state on the same day.

The vice president, joined by Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia, was hoping to appeal to the white ***working-class*** voters along the state's western border who supported Democrats for a generation before helping tip the state to Mr. Trump by less than a percentage point in 2016.

Standing before a group of employees at a regional utility company, Mr. Pence trumpeted the administration's work on behalf of dairy farmers, claimed credit for the state's booming economy before the coronavirus crisis and repeatedly attacked Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris by name.

Noting that Ms. Harris was one of only 10 senators to oppose the renegotiated North American free trade pact, because it did not do enough to address climate change, the vice president argued that she had put a ''radical environmental agenda ahead of Wisconsin dairy and ahead of Wisconsin power.''

Though the company they spoke at employs some union members, neither Mr. Pence nor Mr. Scalia alluded to organized labor in their remarks, a reflection of their roots on the right but a notable decision given Mr. Trump's strength in some union households.

Mr. Pence used the start of his speech to claim that Mr. Biden would perpetuate ''policies that have literally led to violence in our major American cities,'' reprising the Republican attack line that Democrats would preside over a dangerous, lawless nation.

Mr. Pence also scorned Mr. Biden for not criticizing Democratic mayors or mentioning the far-left group Antifa by name in his condemnations of violence.

While he acknowledged that the use of force by law enforcement should be ''thoroughly investigated,'' Mr. Pence did not refer to the police shooting of Jacob Blake, instead focusing on the violent aftermath of the shooting in Kenosha, Wis., much as Mr. Trump did in his visit there last week.

In his own trip there last week, Mr. Biden met with the Blake family, as Ms. Harris did Monday upon arriving in Milwaukee.

She also met with union workers as well as Black business owners and pastors in the city, where Democratic turnout dipped four years ago and aided Mr. Trump's victory.

''We have to get this done, I need your help in Milwaukee,'' Ms. Harris told supporters lined up to greet her on the sidewalk, encouraging them to participate in early voting.

Even before the events in Kenosha, the state's evenly divided politics and Mr. Trump's need to keep his 2016 map largely intact were already thrusting Wisconsin to the center of this year's race.

After Hillary Clinton memorably failed to campaign here four years ago, Mr. Biden last week chose Wisconsin as his first Midwestern campaign stop after the Democratic convention, and he has assured local party leaders that he will return regularly.

Desperate to keep Wisconsin in their column, local Republicans this summer sought to put the rapper Kanye West on the state's ballot in hopes he could drain votes from Mr. Biden and make it easier for the president to win with less than a majority, as Mr. Trump did four years ago. But they were late filing paperwork for Mr. West and are now in court appealing the decision to keep him off the ballot.

More recently, as Mr. Pence demonstrated Monday, Republicans have tried to elevate law-and-order issues to make up ground against Mr. Biden in Wisconsin.

The former vice president has responded by airing a commercial, here and in other swing states, that features footage from a speech he delivered last week in Pittsburgh, in which he pointedly denounced violent protests.

There's no evidence yet that the effort to portray Mr. Biden as soft on crime is cutting into his advantage: He has enjoyed a steady lead in Wisconsin polls for months, including those taken in the aftermath of the Kenosha unrest.

Comparing this election with the one in 2016, when third-party candidates captured more than 6 percent of the vote in Wisconsin and an unusually large number of voters said they were undecided in final days of the election, Charles Franklin, a Marquette University pollster, said the current race was far more stable.

''You've got a smaller third-party share and a smaller pool of people still to break so that makes it less uncertain going into the last 60 days,'' said Mr. Franklin, whose surveys show about half as many undecided voters as he found four years ago.

Mr. Trump's overall margin in Wisconsin four years ago was less than 23,000 votes, lower than the total number of votes cast for third-party candidates in Milwaukee County alone that year.

Still, the 2016 results and a similarly narrow win in 2018 by the Democratic governor, Tony Evers, make clear that Wisconsin is poised to have the sort of knife's-edge race that characterized presidential elections in the state before former President Barack Obama's two sizable victories.

A victory by Mr. Biden here would be a significant blow to Mr. Trump's Electoral College calculus. If the president were to hold every other state he captured in 2016, he'd need to win at least one of three crucial swing states to claim re-election: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. With his campaign increasingly concerned about Michigan, where it has cut its advertising, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania loom even larger.

Not coincidentally, Pennsylvania is where Mr. Biden was on Labor Day.

His day reflected the traditional spirit of the holiday in Democratic politics, minus the parade routes and union-hall gatherings where Mr. Biden has been a fixture for decades. They were canceled this year because of the pandemic.

At a stop in Lancaster, Pa., Mr. Biden promised that he would be ''the best friend labor has ever had in the White House'' and criticized Mr. Trump for treating the stock market as representative of the whole economy.

Later in the day, at a virtual event with Richard Trumka, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. president, in Harrisburg, Mr. Biden attacked the president for presiding over the huge job losses during the pandemic and promised that his administration would ''put people to work right away'' with a large-scale infrastructure program. Union members, he said, ''deserve a president who fights like the devil for you.''

But Mr. Biden, too, returned to the subject of Mr. Trump's respect for the military -- ''none of the veterans you know are losers,'' he said -- and accused the president of failing to appreciate not only soldiers but also a larger community of workers who believe in self-sacrifice.

''He'll never understand you,'' Mr. Biden told the online audience of union members, adding, ''He'll never understand our cops, our firefighters.''Turning more personal, he used an interview with a Pennsylvania television station to rebut Mr. Trump's claims that was on the decline. ''Watch how I run up ramps and how he stumbles down ramps, OK?'' Mr. Biden said.

At his news conference, Mr. Trump leveled attacks of his own against Mr. Biden, often in scattershot terms.

And instead of focusing on Friday's jobs report, which showed unemployment falling, Mr. Trump vented about other topics.

He complained about mail-in ballots in the upcoming presidential election, lamented that there was ''no retribution'' by local authorities against acts of rioting, and litigated his past comments about American troops after assailing Pentagon leaders.

Repeating his past denials of The Atlantic's report, Mr. Trump said only ''an animal'' would make the comments attributed to him. But he also reiterated his low opinion of John McCain, former prisoner of war and Republican senator who died in 2018.

''I was never a fan of John McCain,'' the president said, accusing him of supporting ''endless wars'' and circulating ''the fake dirty dossier'' about Mr. Trump.

''Am I supposed to say, what a wonderful guy?'' the president asked.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/07/us/politics/wisconsin-biden-harris-trump-pence.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/07/us/politics/wisconsin-biden-harris-trump-pence.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ron Graham, a descendant of Creek enslaved people, is fighting for his tribal citizenship rights in Oklahoma. Above, Mr. Graham's ancestor Theodore Graham, center, with his youngest sibling, Rowena, in a photograph from around 1912. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RON GRAHAM

CHRIS CREESE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 8, 2020

**End of Document**



[***LaToya Ruby Frazier, American Witness; arts and letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:623X-TDR1-DXY4-X3HG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** A marriage of art and activism, the artist’s searing photographs reveal the human toll of economic injustice.

**Body**

A marriage of art and activism, the artist’s searing photographs reveal the human toll of economic injustice.

WHEN GENERAL MOTORS announced plans to slash its domestic work force in 2018, company stock soared 5 percent. [*LaToya Ruby Frazier*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), a Chicago-based artist whose photographs and videos champion unsung members of the ***working class***, was furious. She decided to embark upon a new series devoted to the autoworkers who were contending with the possible loss of their plant in Lordstown, Ohio; they would be the subject of an upcoming exhibition and a published [*photo essay*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/). But before any of that could happen, the workers had to agree to let her into their lives. Frazier traveled to their union hall and sat in the foyer as the members filed in for a big meeting that would begin with a vote on her.

She was both astonished by their diversity — they were young and old, Black and white, male and female — and aware that she wasn’t necessarily welcome. “As a Black woman, I know what it feels like when someone’s eyes rest on me in a hostile way,” she said. “And I think they have a right to do that. ... You’re being told awful news that is going to destroy your livelihood, your income, your family, your community. These people were not in a good mood when I got there.” The doors closed and Frazier waited, heart pounding, while Local 1112 of the United Auto Workers union decided whether to grant her unprecedented access.

The vote was a unanimous yes. The doors opened and Frazier strode inside with four cameras slung across her chest and shoulders. She immediately dropped to the floor and began crawling around the perimeter of the hall, capturing the expressions of anguish, confusion and disbelief written on the faces of people whose lives were falling apart.

Frazier’s radical empathy has brought her to places whose occupants have every reason to distrust outsiders. She photographs communities gutted by unemployment, poverty, racism and environmental degradation, seeking out subjects dehumanized or ignored by the mainstream media. At 39, she sees her life’s work as an archive of humanity, one that particularly documents the courage and diversity of blue-collar workers and the consequences of the policies that condemn them to struggle. For her, this is what it means to be a patriot. “I am showing these dark things about America because I love my country and countrymen,” she said. “When you love somebody, you tell them the truth. Even if it hurts.”

Socially conscious artistic practices may be in vogue these days, but Frazier goes beyond hollow claims of “raising awareness” with an essay in a magazine or a show at an art museum. She is the rare photographer who approaches relationships with her subjects as lifelong commitments, and who tries to make substantial, material differences in their lives. Frazier’s conviction in art that involves — and transforms — entire communities aligns her with [*Rick Lowe*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), an artist who, with his collaborators, famously converted an underserved swath of Houston into a nexus for housing, art programming and neighborhood development activities. She also carries on the legacy of the German artist [*Joseph Beuys*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), who believed that participatory art could heal society. Frazier, though, pursues these conceptual ideals while still producing formally elegant images using traditional techniques. Working mainly with a medium-format camera and black-and-white film, her intimate domestic portraits and expressive landscapes are classically beautiful, even when they depict harrowing realities. Making photographs as poetic as they are political is, for Frazier, a way of honoring her subjects. “She doesn’t pop in and pop out,” said the artist [*Carrie Mae Weems*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), Frazier’s friend and early mentor. “These are long-term projects that deeply matter, not only to her but to the community and, ultimately, I think, to the nation.”

This fall, Frazier will publish “Flint Is Family in Three Acts,” a record of her five-year collaboration with people affected by the ongoing contaminated-water crisis in Flint, Mich. “The Last Cruze,” a formidable and moving volume of portraits and interviews with the autoworkers, was released in December. “If you take the work seriously, it changes how you see people,” said the artist [*Doug DuBois*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), another friend and mentor, who taught Frazier at Syracuse University. Her work has the power to propel viewers “from empathy to activism,” he said. “If you get it, you’re going to get angry.”

Frazier herself is fierce, prone to eloquent, impromptu diatribes on oppression in its many forms, from Reaganomics to redlining. She wears gold-rimmed glasses and her hair in an Afro, a look she describes as “militant nerd.” And she’s funny — quick to find the dark humor in bleak situations. A few years ago, when a doctor told her that lupus, an incurable autoimmune disease, had rendered her skin photosensitive to the point where she can’t safely go outside on sunny days or even sit under fluorescent lights, she couldn’t help but laugh. “So I’ve become one with my medium?” she asked, her raspy voice incredulous. “I’m cracking up. He doesn’t think it’s funny, but it’s like, how ironic.”

IF FRAZIER IS drawn to families, it’s because she knows that the ways in which they form — and fracture — often reveal larger histories. The story of her own family is a chronicle of the rise and fall of American industry. Her ancestors moved to Braddock, Pa., in the early 1900s, joining the first Great Migration that brought more than a million Black workers from Southern towns to Northern cities in search of better economic opportunities and to escape Jim Crow. Braddock is home to the Edgar Thomson Steel Works, Andrew Carnegie’s first mill. Frazier’s grandmother knew it as a bustling Pittsburgh suburb with department stores, theaters and restaurants. But by the time Frazier was born in 1982, the industry had collapsed. Businesses folded, basic amenities had become scarce and the streets were lined with the wreckage of empty homes. Most of the white population fled, and the people who remained lived in exile from the lives they had planned on leading. Frazier spent her infancy with her mother, a nurse’s aide and bartender, her father, an artist and interior designer, and her two siblings in a public housing project wedged between the Monongahela River and the factory that had once been the lifeblood of the town.

Frazier’s earliest memories are of the mill. The flames from the flare stacks would burn blue at night, and thick soot that could turn a white shirt gray by lunchtime billowed in the air, staining cars, streets and windows. “If you’re growing up in Braddock, Pa., in 1982, you’re looking at some serious devastation,” she said. The union-busting, erosion of social welfare programs and outsourcing of jobs plunged countless Americans — especially women, people of color and blue-collar workers — into poverty. Frazier grew up watching the crack epidemic infiltrate the community and, with it, the rise of war on drugs policies effectively designed to criminalize the poor. Her mother, Cynthia, abused crack cocaine at the time. From the age of 5, Frazier lived with her maternal grandmother and step-great-grandfather, whom she called Gramps.

Grandma Ruby, the artist’s eponym, was a redoubtable guardian who kept her granddaughter safe by keeping her busy. Frazier played the guitar by 6 and viola by 9; participated in after-school science fairs, mock trials and debates; and competed on the basketball team. Frazier took her first photography class as a student at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania, where she enrolled in 1999, and where she found a mentor in the artist Kathe Kowalski, who introduced her to the portraits of the rural poor that the Farm Security Administration photographers had taken during the Great Depression. Studying the work of [*Dorothea Lange*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), Frazier was both inspired and frustrated. Lange, who had traveled the Dust Bowl as a government employee, building a record of human suffering and resilience to rally support for New Deal aid programs, had taken copious notes about the gaunt, dispossessed farmhands she photographed, but these were often not published with Lange’s images. As a result, her subjects were reduced to types, their identities erased. [*Florence Owens Thompson*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), the woman in “Migrant Mother,” Lange’s 1936 masterpiece, was not named for more than 40 years and was never compensated for her participation in what became the most iconic image of the Great Depression. How, Frazier wondered, could she change the skewed power dynamics that had long defined documentary photography?

She decided she would tell her own story, tracing the ways in which industrial decline, poverty and the war on drugs had shaped and changed her family. Over the course of the next decade and a half, Frazier would reveal — in 108 searing portraits, tender still lifes and stark, unsentimental landscapes — the human cost of abstract economic policies in a series she later titled “The Notion of Family” (2001-14). Shooting in black and white and relying mostly on available light, Frazier nodded to her idols [*Gordon Parks*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/) and [*Lewis Hine*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), photographers who used their cameras to demand social justice, but managed “to reinvent the tradition and history of documentary photography and make it her own,” said the artist [*Gregory Crewdson*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), the director of graduate studies in photography at the Yale School of Art, where Frazier has served as a guest critic. “Historically the tradition of documentary photography has been of the photographer going into a location and documenting it as an objective observer from the outside looking in, but her pictures show a much more complicated blur between her and her subjects that perhaps shows more complexity, more depth, more intimacy, more of a personal investment.”

Some of the earliest images in the series depict Gramps’s cracked and swollen feet and Grandma Ruby wiping him clean. He had been a mill worker, and his physical deterioration became a symbol for Frazier of the dissolution of upward mobility. The photographs of Grandma Ruby demonstrate the fortitude of a woman who quietly persevered through segregation, a widow who raised six children alone. In “Grandma Ruby Smoking Pall Malls,” from 2002, she stands in her darkened living room, illuminated from one side like the saints and angels in paintings by Frazier’s favorite Italian masters, [*Caravaggio*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/) and Bernini.

But it’s the work that Frazier made in volatile collaboration with her mother that forms the most compelling through line in the series. Photography became their primary means of confronting the frayed ends and live wires of their relationship. “Mom and Me on Her Couch,” a picture from 2010, shows Frazier and Cynthia dressed identically in jeans and white tank tops, leaning away from one another at opposite ends of a sofa. Frazier looks drained; her mother, grimly preoccupied. The emotional rift between them finds expression in the chasm between the cushions, a vertical boundary line that extends upward in the form of a window bar.

“We both have so much angst and anger with one another, and most of that is due to the fact that my grandmother had to play the role of mother to me, which made us more or less rival siblings,” Frazier [*told The Morning News*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/) in 2009, when she was still at work on the series. “Because we’re really strong-willed women, often we butted heads.” One summer day, Frazier’s mother — angry about something Frazier had done or didn’t do — ripped all of her portfolio prints in half and threw them in the street. But they returned to the work. “I’ve always seen the beauty in my mother’s imperfections,” said Frazier. “I’ve always loved her unconditionally.” They posed and styled one another; imitating and riffing off each other’s body language in a visual call and response. Frazier’s mother was often the one pressing the shutter and controlling the image. The process, said Frazier, allowed them to drop their guard and laugh about the qualities they couldn’t help but share. In “Momme,” from 2008, Frazier looks straight ahead at her mother, who sits in profile between her and the viewer, half obscuring Frazier. The contours of their lips align in the illusion of a kiss; their features seem to form a single face.

The power of the series lies not only in Frazier’s willingness to lay bare the complexities of these relationships but in her drive to expose the ruin that industrial pollution inflicted on their bodies. Frazier likely grew up drinking carcinogenic tap water and breathing in metals, asbestos and various chemicals known to cause respiratory disorders and autoimmune diseases. She was often seriously ill as an adolescent but wasn’t diagnosed with lupus until college. The disease, which causes the immune system to attack the body’s own organs and tissues, became another subject within the series — Frazier didn’t flinch from capturing herself enduring agonizing onslaughts of pain. Her mother was often in surgery, and Grandma Ruby died of pancreatic cancer in 2009. Frazier photographed them battling their own illnesses, as well as the protests that erupted when, in 2010, the medical group that owned Braddock’s only hospital shut it down and later razed the building. Frazier’s intimate knowledge of suffering and keen awareness of her own mortality suffuse the series with a somber poetry, but “The Notion of Family” is not elegiac. In its passionate call for justice, its focus is the unwritten future as much as the past.

Today, the series has been canonized by critics and curators, but when Frazier showed the images she made with her mother — both as an undergrad and then as an M.F.A. candidate at Syracuse — her classmates balked. DuBois remembers the first time Frazier pinned her prints to the wall for a critique in one of his graduate seminars. “Oh, man, I had to shut it down,” he said. The “very white neoliberal knee-jerk response” from the other students was that Frazier was exploiting her mother by creating images of her drinking and using drugs. “It got very intense,” said DuBois, “and I actually turned to the students, all of whom were white, and said, ‘You have no idea what you’re talking about.’” Black professors were also critical of the work. “ ‘The world doesn’t need to see another image of a person, poor or of color, having a substance abuse problem,’” Frazier remembered them saying. “But the method in which me and my mother were making them was transcending all of that.”

After receiving her M.F.A. in 2007, Frazier taught photography at Rutgers University and became a curator at the school’s art gallery. She entered the theory-intensive Whitney Independent Study program in 2010, around the time that works from “The Notion of Family” began appearing in prominent group exhibitions in New York, including the [*Whitney Biennial in 2012*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/). Publishers took note (Frazier released “The Notion of Family” [*as a book*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/) with Aperture in 2014) and so did the MacArthur Foundation, which awarded her one of its fellowships the year after; by then she was teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The series didn’t spare Frazier from the trauma, but, she said, “it certainly allowed me to live another day.”

FRAZIER OFTEN describes her camera as a compass that leads her into dark valleys and allows her to find the light. In 2016, she traveled to Flint, Mich., a once-prosperous General Motors manufacturing hub that has been struggling since the 1970s. By the time officials switched the local water supply from Detroit to the Flint River as a cost-cutting measure in 2014, about 40 percent of the remaining residents, most of whom were Black, were living below the poverty line. The tap water turned brown; people broke out in rashes and their hair fell out in clumps. The river had been contaminated by sewage and industrial pollutants over the past two centuries, and tests revealed that people were drinking, bathing in and cooking with water that periodically contained E. coli and, in some cases, concentrations of lead 26 times higher than the federal limit. (In January, nine state and local officials were indicted for their alleged roles in the crisis, [*including the ex-Michigan governor Rick Snyder*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), who was charged with two counts of willful neglect of duty; all have pleaded not guilty.)

Frazier had been following the story when [*Elle magazine*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/) invited her to create a photo essay about the crisis. She agreed, provided that she could focus on a family of three generations of women. The editors found [*Amber Hasan*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), a writer and hip-hop artist, who declined but put Frazier in touch with her best friend, Shea Cobb, an artist and writer. Both women were wary. Press coverage of Flint had tended to skew toward the lurid or maudlin (“ ‘Oh, poor Flint, it’s so impoverished, it’s basically a hellhole,’” said Hasan).

But Frazier won their trust by sharing stories of her own upbringing, and explaining that the works would be a collaboration. She then spent the next five months in Flint capturing the fullness of Cobb’s life — documenting her recording music, laughing with Hasan and spending time at home with her 9-year-old daughter, Zion, and mother, Ms. Renée. What emerged were not the harrowing photographs of a broken community one might expect. Instead, Frazier captures moments of joy — Cobb and Zion smiling at each other, nose to nose, in a booth at Zion’s favorite restaurant, and at a cousin’s wedding. “LaToya depicts Flint as just people,” said Hasan. “These are your grandparents, these are your co-workers, these are your relatives, these are regular people. Yes, circumstances are horrible, but even in that, people have real lives, they have real experiences.” The crisis is subtly present in some images — a gallon jug of clean water looms beside the bed where Zion is doing homework in one photograph, but the confidence with which the young girl, pencil in hand, returns our gaze suggests that she will be the author of her own fate.

Frazier is not a photojournalist. Even when she shoots on assignment, she never claims to be objective, nor does she subscribe to the ethical code that bars members of the press from compensating subjects and sources — when she photographs someone in economic peril, she often positions herself as a surrogate family member. Every photograph she takes is a rebuke to the media’s representations of Braddock that she experienced as a little girl. “I’m angry about being told that I was nothing, that I was less than human, that my life wasn’t worth saving,” she said. “I’m definitely crusading against that in every single image and portrait that I make.”

The photo essay came out in Elle in August 2016, but Frazier kept shooting. The second part of the 170-work series portrays Cobb and Zion in a markedly different setting — tending horses in Mississippi, where they moved to temporarily escape the crisis. When they returned to Flint in 2017, the water was still undrinkable, so Frazier mounted a campaign, designing flags stating the number of days Flint residents had been living with lead exposure that flew atop art organizations from Nebraska to North Carolina, and helped fund Cobb and Hasan’s artist collective, the Sister Tour, helping them travel, perform and speak about the crisis across the country — creating a platform in each of those cities for other women artists to share their work as well.

By then, Hasan had come up with her own creative solution to the problem. While doing relief work in Puerto Rico, she had met the developer of an atmospheric water generator, a machine that pulls moisture from the air. She pitched the idea of bringing it to Flint to city officials, but says they showed little interest. She called Frazier. In just a month, the generator arrived — Frazier donated all of her proceeds from her first solo show at a commercial gallery in New York and secured a matching grant from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. The machine is still there, operated by the community, producing up to 2,000 gallons of free water every day when temperatures are above 40 degrees. The third act of Frazier’s forthcoming book on Flint opens with a vivid color photograph of Cobb, Hasan and their children running through streams of water from a hose hooked up to the generator. What would have been be a typical summertime scene anywhere else signaled a new era in Flint.

JUST AFTER THANKSGIVING in 2018, General Motors executives visited the company’s plant in Lordstown, Ohio, and told the union leadership that they were done making the Chevrolet Cruze. “They didn’t really explain it,” said Timothy O’Hara, the former vice president of Local 1112. “They just got up and went out and told the entire membership who had gathered in that part of the plant.” It was a moment he doubts he will ever forget. “You know, the looks on their faces — some of them actually became physically sick. There was a lot of crying.”

A few months later, Frazier was hurtling above the G.M. complex in a helicopter, scanning a sea of identical cars for the very last one to come off the line. Down on the ground, the person pointing out the right car was Mindy Miller, an 11-year veteran of the Auto Warehousing Company whose job was to inspect and park the thousands of Cruzes that came out of the plant. She worked in the blazing summer heat, when plastic seat liners that had been cooking in the sun for days gave her blisters through her clothes, and in subzero cold snaps. That day in March, Miller used her lunch break to make cardboard and paper signs memorializing the last Cruze, and she and her crew held them up as Frazier flew overhead.

Miller would get to know Frazier fairly well — the artist had been traveling to Lordstown every week since that first meeting at the union hall, and she kept coming even after production stopped, visiting workers in their homes. The series marked a dramatic leap in scale for the artist. After focusing on her own family and then embedding herself with Cobb’s, she was suddenly photographing dozens of people at a time. Workers told her about the spouses, partners, elderly parents and children they had to leave behind to keep their jobs. Transfers were based on seniority and the needs of another — in some cases, distant — plant, and initially some married couples were reassigned to separate locations. One man forced to accept a position at a remote plant had never been away from his wife for more than three days and was dreading not being able to see his children at night. “And they did everything right,” said Frazier, visibly upset. “They did what the contract said, they kept their word. They worked overtime, they worked so hard and they still had everything ripped from underneath them and had their family destroyed.”

Frazier spoke to men and women of all ages, queer employees and people of color who counter “what people think an autoworker looks like,” she said. The series represents a conscious attempt to unravel the widespread opinion that these plants are filled with “racist, blue-collar white men.” She hopes the series, which includes 67 photographs, will also put an end to another pervasive notion — that she is an artist only concerned with race. Frazier’s work, like that of many young African-American artists, is often narrowly construed in terms of correcting the absence of Black representation in the Western canon. “I’m really sensitive about people saying that I’m a Black artist making work about being Black,” she said. “No, I’m not. I’m an American artist making work about America and the crisis in this country.” The true extent of Frazier’s vision is what makes her book about the Chevy plant’s demise, which has been more than two years in the making, such a landmark contribution. It deftly telescopes between her intimate portraits and interviews with the workers and an assiduously researched historical timeline of organized labor bolstered by wide-ranging conversations with diverse thinkers — a playwright, a documentary filmmaker and a political economist among them. Her project is among the most lucid, shrewdly compelling arguments for national solidarity in recent memory.

WHEN SHE’S NOT traveling for work, Frazier lives alone in the South Loop neighborhood of Chicago. She seldom dates, texts or uses social media. “I just think life is so short,” she said. “Why spend it on distractions when you could ... make this place better than it was when you arrived? I don’t see any other reason to get up every morning.” Romantic companionship seems fundamentally incompatible with her ability to work. To be in a relationship is to “intentionally occupy yourself and distract yourself with other people’s stuff,” and that makes it impossible to realize your true purpose, she said. Hers is to serve others through her art. “I can’t really do that if I’m living, you know, in a very status quo kind of way.”

She finds peace in forging relationships with the people she photographs. They “all kind of fill in these wounds, these gaps for me,” she said. Still, when Frazier came home after spending time with dozens of couples and families in Ohio — people who live for their spouses, partners and children — she found herself wondering what was wrong with her. “I started getting down on myself, like, ‘What is your problem? Why can’t you get married and have children?’ You know, there are times where it gets to me,” she said. Frazier lives her life as a cause — but that doesn’t mean she doesn’t get lonely or depressed.

In those moments, she turns to [*James Baldwin*](https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/latoya-ruby-fraziers-notion-of-family/), who reminds her why she does what she does at the expense of almost everything else: “Societies never know it, but the war of an artist with his society is a lover’s war,” he writes in “The Creative Process,” an essay from 1962. “And he does at his best what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to himself and with that revelation to make freedom real.” To that end, Frazier said that she wants to establish a “museum of workers’ thoughts,” an institution aimed at fostering solidarity among ***working-class*** people around the world, where she would teach and maintain her archives. The museum would be the nucleus of Frazier’s ultimate vision — a new school of thought “that can actually maybe transcend race, class, gender, citizenship, sexuality and religion. Maybe I could see it happening before I die,” she said. “Maybe I could help plant that seed.”

PHOTOS: LaToya Ruby Frazier in her Chicago studio, photographed on Dec. 28, 2020.; Below: “Momme” (2008). Right: “Christina Defelice, UAW Local 1112, (Transition Center Customer Service Representative, 11 years in at GM Lordstown Complex Trim Shop), with a photograph of her father Jerry L. Canter and fellow scheduled clerks Frank Powers, Charles Steiner, Charles Walters, Al Basco, Jim Nichols, Mike Dobransky, and Rendal Stout, inside UAW Local 1112 Reuther Scandy Alli union hall, Lordstown, OH, 2019” (2019). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LATOYA RUBY FRAZIER, “CHRISTINA DEFELICE, UAW LOCAL 1112, (TRANSITION CENTER CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE, 11 YEARS IN AT GM LORDSTOWN COMPLEX TRIM SHOP), WITH A PHOTOGRAPH OF HER FATHER JERRY L. CANTER AND FELLOW SCHEDULED CLERKS FRANK POWERS, CHARLES STEINER, CHARLES WALTERS, AL BASCO, JIM NICHOLS, MIKE DOBRANSKY, AND RENDAL STOUT, INSIDE UAW LOCAL 1112 REUTHER SCANDY ALLI UNION HALL, LORDSTOWN, OH, 2019,” 2019, GELATIN SILVER PRINT, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GLADSTONE GALLERY, NEW YORK AND BRUSSELS); “Zion, Her Mother Shea, and Her Grandfather Mr. Doug Smiley Riding on Their Tennessee Walking Horses, Mares, PT (PT’s Miss One of a Kind), Dolly (Secretly) and Blue (Blues Royal Threat), Newton, Mississippi, from the series Flint is Family, Part II” (2017). (PHOTOGRAPH BY “ZION, HER MOTHER SHEA, AND HER GRANDFATHER MR. DOUG SMILEY RIDING ON THEIR TENNESSEE WALKING HORSES, MARES, PT (PT’S MISS ONE OF A KIND), DOLLY (SECRETLY) AND BLUE (BLUES ROYAL THREAT), NEWTON, MISSISSIPPI, FROM THE SERIES FLINT IS FAMILY, PART II,” 2017, GELATIN SILVER PRINT, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GLADSTONE GALLERY, NEW YORK AND BRUSSELS) Left: “Mindy Miller, Iron Workers Union Local 851, (11 years in at Auto Warehousing Company (AWC)), standing in her grandmother’s living room with her mother and grandmother, Lezlie and Marlene Miller, Niles, OH, 2019” (2019). Above: “Zion doing her math homework from the International Academy of Flint college preparatory Charter School (est. 1999)” (2016-17). from top: latoya Ruby Frazier, “Zion doing her math homework from the International Academy of Flint college preparatory Charter School (est. 1999),” 2016-17, Gelatin silver print, Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels; latoya Ruby Frazier, “Mindy Miller, Iron Workers Union Local 851, (11 years in at Auto Warehousing Company (AWC)), standing in her grandmother’s living room with her mother and grandmother, Lezlie and Marlene Miller, Niles, OH, 2019,” 2019, Gelatin silver print, Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels Portrait by Naima Green

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[***Modi Lost in Delhi. It Doesn’t Matter.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y68-K6Y1-JBG3-623B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

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**Highlight:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party have ensured that no political parties speak about equal citizenship and political rights of the country’s Muslims.

**Body**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party have ensured that no political parties speak about equal citizenship and political rights of the country’s Muslims.

NEW DELHI — On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party suffered a major defeat in elections for the Delhi state legislature. Amit Shah, the prime minister’s confidante and the country’s home minister, led a highly divisive and sectarian campaign foregrounding Hindu nationalism and demonizing the city’s Muslims, and tried to paint the opposition Aam Aadmi Party and its leaders as treasonous.

Yet out of Delhi’s 70 seats, Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah’s B.J.P. won a mere eight seats, and the A.A.P., led by Arvind Kejriwal, who has been the chief minister of Delhi since 2015, won 62.

Mr. Kejriwal, an anti-graft activist turned politician, focused the electoral campaign of his party on his record of governance — the significant improvement he made to the delivery of services in public hospitals, the quality of education and infrastructure in schools, and the cost of electricity in Delhi.

Delhi chose Mr. Kejriwal for his performance as chief minister. While the B.J.P. plastered Mr. Modi’s face across the city, it did not offer any candidates for the Delhi state government who were more impressive or convincing than Mr. Kejriwal and his team.

Mr. Modi and his party might have lost an election but they won the ideological battle by setting the terms of electoral politics: For electoral success in India, it is no longer acceptable to speak about equal citizenship and political rights of India’s Muslims or speak out against the violence and hostility they encounter.

The election in Delhi was held while India has been witnessing continuous protests against a citizenship law passed by Mr. Modi’s government in December that [*makes religion the basis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html) for citizenship. The new law discriminates against Muslims and advances the Hindu nationalist agenda of reshaping India into a majoritarian Hindu nation.

Mr. Shah, the home minister, had insisted the citizenship law would be followed by a National Register of Citizens, or N.R.C., which would require citizens to submit a set of documents to prove they are Indians. India’s Muslims and liberals worried that the citizenship register would become a tool to exclude or threaten to exclude Indian Muslims from citizenship.

Over the past two months, protests against the citizenship law and the impending N.R.C. spread across the country, from university campuses to poor Muslim neighborhoods, from distant border states to starry avenues of Bollywood.

On Dec. 15, the police in Delhi, which reports to Mr. Modi’s government, violently attacked students at Jamia Millia Islamia, a university with a large number of Muslim students. After the police assault, [*women from Shaheen Bagh, a* ***working-class****, mostly Muslim*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html)neighborhood adjacent to university, gathered in protest against the citizenship law and blocked a major road passing through the area. A tent was set up on the road and the protest quickly took on the air of a defiant carnival.

The numbers swelled and every kind of Indian opposed to the citizenship law gathered at Shaheen Bagh in solidarity. Two bitter winter months have passed; the women continue their protest despite the cold and the attacks by Hindu nationalist activists.

Throughout the Delhi election campaign, Mr. Modi’s party targeted Shaheen Bagh and sought to frighten the city’s Hindus by emphasizing the Muslim-ness of the protesters. Islamophobic rhetoric has been normalized in Mr. Modi’s India, but the Delhi campaign intensified it. Mr. Shah, who is also the president of the B.J.P., set the tone when he [*asked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html) his supporters to push the button against the B.J.P. electoral symbol on the electronic voting machines so hard that the (mostly Muslim) protesters in Shaheen Bagh would “feel the current.”

At a Delhi election rally, Anurag Thakur, Mr. Shah’s colleague and India’s minister of state for finance, [*raised a sinister slogan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html): “These traitors of the nation! Shoot them!” A few days later, two Hindu nationalist activists opened fire on students and protesters at Jamia Millia Islamia and in Shaheen Bagh.

Parvesh Varma, a member of the Parliament from Mr. Modi’s party, sought to whip up Hindu fears by describing the Shaheen Bagh protesters as murderers and rapists: “[*They will enter your houses*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html), rape your sisters and daughters, and kill them. There is time today. Modi Ji and Amit Shah won’t come to save you tomorrow.” Other leaders from the party   [*likened*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html) Shaheen Bagh to Pakistan and framed the Delhi election as a contest between India and Pakistan.

Mr. Kejriwal spoke [*against the citizenship law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html), calling it a distraction from Mr. Modi’s failure on the economy, but assiduously avoided confronting the Hindu nationalist rhetoric during the elections and ignored the attacks on Muslims.

When the police [*entered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html) Jamia Milia Islamia and attacked the students, Mr. Kejriwal stayed silent for several days. When asked about the protests in Delhi, he   [*declared*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html) that he would have cleared the road through Shaheen Bagh in two hours if the police in Delhi, which reports to the federal government, were under his control.

To emphasize his being a Hindu, Mr. Kejriwal publicly sang Hindu religious prayers and visited a temple soon after his victory speech. Essentially, he worked around the boundaries set by the Hindu nationalists and embraced a softer version of their politics.

The Delhi election suggests that India has entered an era where the ideological terms and the language of politics are set by the Hindu nationalists. To be electorally competitive, political parties will need to adhere to some variant of the Hindu nationalism and jingoism exemplified by Mr. Modi.

The “Modi consensus” has ensured that India’s Muslims are not only politically powerless but also politically invisible. Seventy-three years after independence, India’s Muslims are still fighting for equal citizenship. We are now putting our lives on the line, not to gain parity in jobs and education but to hold on to legal equality.

The protests against the new citizenship law have the air of a final cry to salvage our dignity before we are made second-class citizens, or worse, noncitizens.

In an election, while most citizens vote for material benefits and aspirations, India’s Muslims are reduced to voting for their security. Despite Mr. Kejriwal and his A.A.P.’s sidestepping the issues concerning Muslims, Delhi’s Muslims [*overwhelmingly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html) backed his party because it is not actively hostile to them.

To interpret defeat of Mr. Modi’s party in Delhi with his project of Hindu majoritarianism would be a grave misreading of the verdict. In a recent [*survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html), four-fifths of Delhi’s voters favored Mr. Modi and three-fourths of Delhi’s voters expressed satisfaction with his federal government.

It is unclear whether Mr. Kejriwal’s model of good governance and service delivery while ignoring the contentious sectarian and militant nationalist positions of the Hindu nationalists can be replicated outside the relatively small, urban state of Delhi.

Since its inception, the Hindu nationalist movement, of which the B.J.P. is the electoral branch, had a single goal: Hindu supremacy. There are no politicians who have the gumption to challenge Mr. Modi and his B.J.P. on that central vision. Mr. Modi and his party might lose the occasional election but they have won the ideological war.

Asim Ali is a writer and researcher working for the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/opinion/india-citizenship-bill-muslims.html).

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PHOTO: Muslim women protested against India’s new citizenship law in Mumbai last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Satyabrata Tripathy/Hindustan Times, via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Focus on Character Spurred Winner's Successful Bid***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6181-7KR1-DXY4-X3SC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Joseph R. Biden Jr. campaigned as a sober and conventional presence, concerned about the ''soul of the country.'' He correctly judged the character of the country, and benefited from President Trump's missteps.

On a January evening in 2019, Joseph R. Biden Jr. placed a call to the mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, a personal friend and political ally who had just announced he would not pursue the Democratic nomination for president.

During their conversation, Mr. Garcetti recalled, Mr. Biden did not exactly say he had decided to mount his own campaign. The former vice president confided that if he did run, he expected President Trump to ''come after my family'' in an ''ugly'' election.

But Mr. Biden also said he felt pulled by a sense of moral duty.

''He said, back then, 'I really am concerned about the soul of this country,''' Mr. Garcetti said.

Twenty-one months and a week later, Mr. Biden stands triumphant in a campaign he waged on just those terms: as a patriotic crusade to reclaim the American government from a president he considered a poisonous figure. The language he used in that call with Mr. Garcetti became the watchwords of a candidacy designed to marshal a broad coalition of voters against Mr. Trump and his reactionary politics.

It was not the most inspirational campaign in recent times, nor the most daring, nor the most agile. His candidacy did not stir an Obama-like youth movement or a Trump-like cult of personality: There were no prominent reports of Biden supporters branding themselves with ''Joe'' tattoos and lionizing him in florid murals -- or even holding boat parades in his honor. Mr. Biden campaigned as a sober and conventional presence, rather than as an uplifting herald of change. For much of the general election, his candidacy was not an exercise in vigorous creativity, but rather a case study in discipline and restraint.

In the end, voters did what Mr. Biden asked of them and not much more: They repudiated Mr. Trump, while offering few other rewards to Mr. Biden's party. And by a popular vote margin of four million and counting, Americans made Mr. Biden only the third man since the Second World War to topple a duly elected president after just one term.

Throughout his campaign, Mr. Biden faced persistent doubts about his political acuity and the relevance, in the year 2020, of a set of union-hall-meets-cloakroom political instincts developed mainly in the previous century.

But if Mr. Biden made numerous errors along the way, none of them mattered more in this election than the essential rightness of how he judged the character of his party, his country and his opponent. This account of his candidacy, based on interviews with four dozen advisers, supporters, elected officials and friends, reveals how fully Mr. Biden's campaign flowed from his own worldview and political intuition.

During the primaries, Mr. Biden rebuffed pressure to move to the left, believing his party would embrace his pragmatism as its best chance to beat Mr. Trump. In the general election, Mr. Biden made Mr. Trump's erratic conduct and mismanagement of the coronavirus pandemic his overwhelming themes, shunning countless other issues as needless distractions.

While some Democrats urged him to compete in a wider array of battlegrounds, Mr. Biden put the Great Lakes states at the center of his electoral map, trusting that with an appeal to the political middle he could rebuild the so-called Blue Wall and block Mr. Trump's path to a second term.

Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Biden believed that no issue would figure larger in voters' minds than Mr. Trump's presence in the Oval Office. And if he could make the election an up-or-down vote on an out-of-control president, he believed he could win.

On that score, he was right. As voters sized up Mr. Biden as a potential president, his familiar flaws and foibles -- the antiquated vocabulary and penchant for embellishment, his nostalgic yarns about segregationist senators and a defensiveness that led him, in one case, to challenge a voter to a push-up contest -- paled against the conduct of an incumbent sowing racial division, threatening to deploy troops in American cities and floating the idea of injecting disinfectant as a coronavirus treatment.

Anita Dunn, one of Mr. Biden's closest advisers, said the campaign had been propelled all along by the candidate himself, and his unwavering theme and strategy.

''It was his campaign,'' Ms. Dunn said. ''It was less consultant-driven than any presidential campaign in modern history.''

Still, at the outset, Mr. Biden's political theory of the case struck even some of his loyal allies as misguided in an era of intense ideological polarization.

Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania recalled a meeting he had with the former vice president in March of 2019, shortly before Mr. Biden entered the race. As Mr. Biden sketched out his approach, Mr. Casey, a Democrat, was not fully convinced.

''He was walking through what became his broader-based theme, about the soul of the country,'' Mr. Casey said. ''I was worried at the time that it wasn't hard-hitting enough.''

But Mr. Biden, he said, ''was prescient in his ability, even in the primaries when almost nobody else was doing it, to say, 'We have to bring the country back together.'''

A Crisis Candidacy

Mr. Casey was not the only Democrat skeptical of Mr. Biden's underlying theme. While many voters found Mr. Trump distasteful, or worse, it is difficult to unseat an incumbent president and Mr. Trump had the benefit of a nation in relative peace and steady prosperity. Mr. Biden's primary opponents, who argued that a message of normalcy and steady experience might not be enough to win, seemed to have a point.

Then, just as Mr. Biden was seizing a clear upper hand in the Democratic nomination fight, the coronavirus pandemic struck. In a matter of days, public campaigning froze and a mood of fear and gloom set in across the country.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a close ally of Mr. Biden, said it was not immediately obvious that the Trump administration would effectively forfeit the issue of public health to Mr. Biden. The White House, Ms. Whitmer said, ''really could have risen to the occasion.''

But as Mr. Trump dismissed the threat of the pandemic, and railed against governors like Ms. Whitmer for locking down their states, Mr. Biden moved to assert himself as an alternative leader. He began to sketch his own approach to addressing the disease, and to show voters how he might operate in Mr. Trump's place.

From the confines of his lakeside home in Wilmington, Del., he received frequent briefings about the pandemic and the economic damage it was inflicting, drafted policy plans and reached out to state and city leaders to gather information.

''He was calling to say, 'How are things going in Michigan? What do you need?''' Ms. Whitmer said.

What Mr. Biden was not doing, to the dismay of some in his party, was traveling the country and campaigning in person. For months, he scarcely left the immediate vicinity of his home: At 77, he was in an age group especially vulnerable to the virus, and his advisers felt he could undermine his own public-health recommendations if he was seen as racing back onto the campaign trail. And more than a few political donors and Democratic advocacy groups second-guessed the Biden campaign's decision to forego a robust get-out-the-vote operation in the field because of safety concerns.

Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League, said Mr. Biden had seemed at first to pay a price for his caution. Allies of the Biden campaign had tried to nudge the former vice president into public view, he said, paraphrasing the plea: ''People need to see you.''

But in his own conversations with the Biden team, Mr. Morial said, they were emphatic that Mr. Biden felt he could not ''say one thing and do another'' where public health was concerned -- a judgment that Mr. Morial came to share.

Mr. Biden's first major trip outside Delaware was not for a traditional campaign trip but to confront another crisis: the national reckoning over police brutality after the killing of George Floyd. Flying to Houston to visit the Floyd family, Mr. Biden sat for two hours as he listened to the grieving family and told them that while he had never experienced loss quite like theirs, he knew what it meant to lose a child and felt their pain, according to the Rev. Al Sharpton, who was present. When racial-justice protests turned disorderly in Atlanta, Mr. Biden reached out to the city's mayor, Keisha Lance Bottoms, to offer support and private counsel. The former vice president, Ms. Bottoms said, was both encouraging and contemplative, telling her how the spiraling demonstrations evoked, for him, the riots in Wilmington in the late 1960s, which led to an extended occupation of the city by the National Guard.

It was a study in the personal empathy, and the hunger to connect with other people, that defined Mr. Biden as a candidate from the start. Throughout the race he invoked his own family's history of tragedy, and never more so than in confronting the immense pain and loss of the coronavirus pandemic.

''He is able to personalize these big issues,'' Ms. Bottoms said. ''He really does have a sensitivity and a personal lens for many of these challenges that we're facing.''

Mr. Biden also recognized that his opponent lacked that impulse.

While Democrats worried that Mr. Biden was taking an overly passive approach to the race, Mr. Trump seemed almost to go out of his way to reinforce the appeal of his challenger's prudence: There was Mr. Trump's tear gas-shrouded photo op in Lafayette Park, intended as a show of strength, that came off instead as pure brutishness. There was his indoor rally in Tulsa, Okla., planned as an energetic return to the campaign trail, that instead became a low-energy coronavirus risk zone.

Still, as the country's mood of emergency deepened, Mr. Biden confided to allies that he was already feeling the weight of the challenges that would lie ahead if he won.

Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois said she told Mr. Biden in a conversation earlier this year that the political moment seemed to cry out for a candidate with formidable governing experience. According to Ms. Duckworth's recollection, Mr. Biden responded, ''Tammy, I need people around me that understand that, and that we need to hit the ground running.''

Mr. Biden reacted in a similar fashion last Monday in Cleveland, when Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio told Mr. Biden he would soon have the chance to be ''one of the great presidents of my lifetime.''

''He grabbed my shoulder,'' Mr. Brown said, ''pulled me in as much as you can when you're wearing a mask and said: 'I really need you to help me.'''

Mr. Biden also expressed pointed anxiety after delivering a pair of speeches about national unity and healing at Gettysburg, Pa., and Warm Springs, Ga. -- two landmarks associated with the crisis presidencies of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt.

If Mr. Biden found those backdrops politically resonant, he suggested to an adviser that he was less comfortable with the implied comparison between himself and those men. Mr. Biden had a difficult time, he said, seeing himself as the next Lincoln or Roosevelt.

Party Unity, of a Kind

The pandemic alone might not have shifted the political landscape in Mr. Biden's favor had he not managed a feat the previous Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, could not: persuading Democrats to lock arms with him after a bruising primary.

Mr. Biden, however, had advantages that Mrs. Clinton did not, starting with a genial relationship with his chief opponent, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

As the Democratic contest neared its end, Mr. Biden quickly took steps to accommodate his former rivals on the left. Days after Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts ended her campaign in early March, Mr. Biden called to tell her he was adopting one of her key proposals on bankruptcy reform. And when Mr. Sanders withdrew from the race, Mr. Biden agreed to create a set of policy task forces to formulate a shared governing agenda.

Representative Kathy Castor of Florida, a Democrat who sat on Mr. Biden's climate task force, said the difference from 2016 was stark: ''That was just so divisive back then, from the Democratic convention in Philadelphia through the election,'' she said. ''You can't have Democrats fighting Democrats.''

But Mr. Biden did not budge on the overall ideological thrust of his campaign. On the contrary, he and his close advisers felt vindicated in their assessment of the Democratic Party as a center-left coalition, rather than one of the activist left. Though he added a handful of progressive policy hands to his campaign staff, Mr. Biden's inner circle was dominated by relative centrists for whom the Sanders ethos of democratic socialism held little appeal.

Perhaps most prominent among those advisers was Valerie Biden Owens, Mr. Biden's sister and longtime counselor, who stressed during internal deliberations that the campaign should be careful about attacking the wealthy as a political tactic. After all, Ms. Owens argued, many ***working-class*** people aspire to be rich.

''The Democratic Party is not what people may think it is on Twitter,'' said Representative Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania, a Biden supporter from day one who recalled telling the former vice president as much last year. ''It's still ***working-class*** African-Americans, whites and Latinos. And he was always true to that.''

Over the summer, Mr. Biden chose a running mate who he hoped would reconcile the competing pressures on his candidacy: to excite his own party without creating new vulnerabilities that Republicans might be able to exploit. He settled on Senator Kamala Harris of California, completing his ticket with a choice that was at once groundbreaking and cautious -- a younger woman of color who largely shared his own pragmatic political instincts.

He wound up with a message and policy agenda that left Mr. Trump with only limited avenues for attack, and benefited from the president's lack of interest in learning details. When Mr. Trump sensed vulnerabilities in the Democratic platform, he never devised a critique deeper than one-liner jibes seemingly made for Fox News: His attacks on Mr. Biden's climate plans, for instance, included claims that Democrats would force buildings to have tiny windows.

If Mr. Biden's approach held up throughout the campaign, it left enormous unanswered questions for him to confront later on. In some cases, Mr. Biden and his advisers deliberately opted to suppress rather than resolve Democratic disagreements until after the election.

The most prominent example was Mr. Biden's evasive response to Justice Amy Coney Barrett's elevation to the Supreme Court. As other Democrats raised a cry of support for overhauling the federal judiciary, Mr. Biden spent weeks refusing to state his own position, eventually proposing a commission to study judicial reforms as a temporary salve.

The rush to seat Justice Barrett opened his eyes more to the hardball tactics of today's Senate Republicans, said one adviser. But in private, Mr. Biden has continued to express unease about trying to expand the high court, and he is still more intrigued by broader judicial reforms than simply adding justices.

One lawmaker said Steve Ricchetti, a former chief of staff to Mr. Biden, had been candid last summer about the campaign's dilatory approach to the party's internal divisions. Asked privately how Mr. Biden intended to handle the left, Mr. Ricchetti acknowledged that it would be a challenge over the long term.

For the moment, he said, getting through Nov. 3 was the only goal.

The Blue Wall and the Blue Line

The most perilous moment of the race for Mr. Biden may have come in late August, when a season of racial-justice protests had given way to spasms of vandalism and arson in a handful of politically important states. In Wisconsin, after the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, by a police officer in Kenosha, rioting erupted in the suburban city -- and Mr. Trump went on the attack.

At the Republican nominating convention, the president and his allies pounded Mr. Biden for a week with false or overstated attacks, linking him both to outright criminals and to left-wing activists who had taken up ''defund the police'' as a slogan. Mr. Biden had disavowed the idea, but Republicans persisted.

The onslaught posed a distinctive challenge to Mr. Biden, threatening to weaken his coalition of racial minorities, young liberals and moderate whites. Mr. Trump began a scare campaign aimed in part at white women, telling them he would ''save your suburbs'' from what he portrayed as looting mobs that Mr. Biden would not control.

Like other liberals of his generation, Mr. Biden saw danger in the Kenosha riots. Recalling the riots in American cities after the assassinations of the 1960s, he telephoned an adviser, saying he wanted to denounce the violence and asking a question: What had Robert F. Kennedy said to cool tempers in the aftermath of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s murder?

Mr. Biden flew to Pittsburgh the following Monday to head off Mr. Trump's attacks: In a 24-minute speech, he reaffirmed his support for police reform while sternly denouncing civil unrest. ''Looting,'' he said, ''is not protesting.''

''We need justice in America. We need safety in America,'' Mr. Biden said.

The Biden campaign turned a clip from the speech into a television ad and ran it at saturation levels across the electoral map, countering Mr. Trump's claims that a Democratic administration would unleash violent anarchy.

''Joe has always been someone who was able to hold two thoughts together at the same time about law enforcement and racial justice,'' said Senator Chris Coons of Delaware.

And once again, Mr. Biden benefited from his opponent's impulse toward incitement and division. At the very moment Democrats feared voters might see Mr. Trump as a fearless steward of public safety, the president also spoke out in defense of people sowing chaos on the right.

Mr. Trump would do so again in his first debate with Mr. Biden, marring his law-and-order message by declining to denounce an extremist group on the far right.

Counting to 270

That moment after Kenosha was all the more important to Mr. Biden because of its resonance across the Midwest, the region he prized above all others. It was the band of states stretching from Minnesota across to Pennsylvania, Mr. Biden believed, that was likeliest to make him the next president.

His top lieutenants shared that assessment.

During a marathon Zoom session in May, after the campaign's first major round of polling in the general election, Mr. Biden and his high command spent hours poring over the electoral map. By the end, they had hammered out their priorities: They would focus on three Great Lakes states Mr. Trump flipped in 2016 -- Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania -- plus Arizona, Florida and North Carolina. The campaign was skeptical of its chances in Florida and saw two other Sun Belt states, Georgia and Texas, as intriguing -- but difficult and expensive to compete in.

When Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris returned to the campaign trail, that map guided their activities and their advertising strategy. They lunged at a few longer-shot targets, sending Ms. Harris on a last-minute trip to Texas, while Mr. Biden returned to Ohio, where polls showed him being competitive. Neither state wound up being close on election night.

More fruitful was an aggressive late play for Georgia, a rapidly diversifying state where suburban voters appeared to be swinging hard toward Democrats. In October, Mr. Biden's pollster, John Anzalone, determined that the former vice president had a better chance to win there than in North Carolina and even Florida, and Mr. Biden embarked on his trip to Atlanta and Warm Springs. Ms. Harris visited the state repeatedly, and on the eve of the election the campaign decided to send former President Barack Obama to Georgia rather than North Carolina to make one last push there.

As the results began coming in on Tuesday, a tense mood took hold across much of the Biden campaign. In the first states to report, Florida and North Carolina, Mr. Trump was faring several points better than Democratic polling had forecast, and considerably ahead of most surveys conducted by the media.

The Biden campaign publicly projected composure, in contrast to Mr. Trump's erratic behavior on Twitter and during late-night remarks from the East Room. Greg Schultz, Mr. Biden's former campaign manager during the Democratic primaries, held a call with key supporters to offer reassurance, insisting that the early returns in the suburbs of Ohio were a good omen for the nearby swing states. But to some agitated listeners it was not a convincing presentation.

Mr. Biden's inner circle grew increasingly unnerved as the night wore on and it became clear that the president was running stronger than expected. Jill Biden, former Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and an array of Biden advisers telephoned Democrats around the country to learn more about the vote count and whether Mr. Biden was in danger of losing.

Within a matter of hours, Mr. Biden's fortunes had improved as the big cities of the North reported their votes. It would take until Saturday, when Pennsylvania was called in his favor, to confirm that Mr. Biden had won more than the 270 Electoral College votes required to claim the presidency. The Blue Wall was standing again for Democrats, and Mr. Biden could also prevail in the once-red states of Arizona and Georgia.

For all the Democratic jubilation at Mr. Trump's demise, Mr. Biden may not entirely share that feeling of pure delight. Rahm Emanuel, who served as Mr. Obama's chief of staff during the Great Recession, said he warned Mr. Biden recently that his reward for winning would be fleeting.

''You're the dog that caught the car,'' Mr. Emanuel said, alluding to what awaited Mr. Biden in the Oval Office.

The man who would soon be president-elect responded: ''Ain't that the truth.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden-president.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/joe-biden-president.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Sunday arriving for Mass at St. Joseph on the Brandywine in Wilmington, Del. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGELA WEISS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A1)

POLICY: By the time Senator Bernie Sanders exited the race, he had reshaped his party's agenda.

OUTREACH: Mr. Biden on a visit to the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Wilmington, Del., in June. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

BATTLEGROUNDS: To win, Mr. Biden had to reclaim states that Mr. Trump flipped in 2016. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

THE PANDEMIC: Mr. Biden's campaign events showed a respect for health guidelines. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK MAKELA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P8)

VICTORY: Joseph R. Biden Jr. ran as a pragmatist, believing that voters would see him as the best hope for change. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P8-P9)

A RECKONING: Protests erupted in Minneapolis, above, after the police killing of George Floyd. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

RUNNING MATE: Mr. Biden selected Senator Kamala Harris, a one-time rival, to join his ticket. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SYLVIA JARRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

OTTUMWA, IOWA: Mr. Biden used speeches about national unity and healing on the campaign trail. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

ELECTION DAY: A rally in Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania's 20 Electoral College votes clinched victory. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P9)

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2020

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[***Democrats Get the Attention, but Trump Aims to Put New Hampshire in Play***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YV5-G9R1-DXY4-X3H3-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Maggie Haberman and Annie Karni

**Highlight:** The president, who lost the state by a few thousand votes in 2016, now has the support of the Republican establishment. But not all Republicans are convinced.

**Body**

The president, who lost the state by a few thousand votes in 2016, now has the support of the Republican establishment. But not all Republicans are convinced.

MANCHESTER, N.H. — In 2016, Donald J. Trump came within a few thousand votes of winning New Hampshire in the general election. This time around, fueled by a stockpile of donations, his campaign is looking at New Hampshire and its four electoral votes as a key target in its efforts to expand the map.

There are some factors working in his favor. Instead of a feud with one of the Republican Party’s few female senators as well as a former governor, the president has the state party apparatus backing him. And his advisers think the policies he has implemented fit the contours of the state.

But securing victory in a state that has been won by a Democrat in every presidential election since 2000 will be a test of both the president’s durability and his political operation.

Mr. Trump’s allies say the issues are with him. The unemployment rate in the state was 2.6 percent in October 2019, lower than the national figure. Mr. Trump has highlighted his administration’s efforts to stem the opioid crisis in a state that continues to rank among the top five in opioid-related deaths.

The president’s new North American trade deal, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, affects New Hampshire businesses importing timber, syrup and dairy from Canada, campaign officials said. Officials also pointed to efforts by the Interior Department to eliminate the Seamounts Marine National Monument, located off the Atlantic Coast, as a move that appeals to New Hampshire voters because it could open up previously protected areas to commercial uses like fishing.

Corey Lewandowski, Mr. Trump’s first 2016 campaign manager and a New Hampshire resident who considered running for the Senate seat held by the Democrat Jeanne Shaheen, said that those factors, “coupled with the fact that the president should have won last time,” work in his favor — an apparent reference to the relatively little party support Mr. Trump had in his losing battle with Hillary Clinton.

Yet if the New Hampshire Republican Party now belongs to the president, it has also seen a significant decline in enrollment.

“New Hampshire is going to be a challenge for him to win in November,” said Jennifer Horn, the former New Hampshire Republican chairman and a staunch critic of Mr. Trump. “A week ago, we had [*more than 20,000 fewer registered Republicans*](https://sos.nh.gov/NamesHistory.aspx) than there were Election Day in 2016.”

Ms. Horn noted that Republican candidates lost large, consistently red areas in the [*2018 midterm elections*](https://sos.nh.gov/NamesHistory.aspx), and that the same thing could happen here to Mr. Trump. While other state Republicans played down concerns about the drop in party members on the voter rolls as the natural ebb and flow that happens in a state with same-day voter registration, Ms. Horn said 20,000 was “way outside the norm.”

And the state’s demographics reflect the type of place where Mr. Trump will face challenges: concentrations of ***working-class*** whites, but multitudes of college-educated voters, who polls show have been abandoning the Republican Party.

“We’ve had great success in the municipal elections, and of course we had the historic wins in 2018,” said Ray Buckley, the state Democratic chairman. “There’s a lot of energy on the ground here. We’ve built a year-round organization.”

Aware of some of the challenges ahead, the Trump campaign appears eager to get a head start.

While Pete Buttigieg was trying to emerge from the Democratic field and Joseph R. Biden Jr. was trying to stay in it, Mr. Trump turned up in Manchester for a rally Monday night and Trump surrogates fanned out Tuesday to diners and polling sites throughout the state, even though he faces only token opposition in the Republican primary.

Their mission: talk up Mr. Trump’s policies, distract attention from Democrats and set the stage for the general election.

“We’re trying to fly the Trump flag when all the action is on the other side,” said Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who strolled into Bedford High School, just outside Manchester, to greet voters on Tuesday morning. “If the economy stays good, I think he’s very much in play here.”

Senator Rick Scott of Florida was on hand outside Manchester on Tuesday morning to paint Democrats with the brush of “socialism.” Donald Trump Jr., the president’s eldest son, spent the day at diners and high schools campaigning for his father. Representatives Steve Scalise of Louisiana, Mark Meadows of North Carolina and Greg Pence of Indiana, among others, stayed behind after Mr. Trump’s rally on Monday night and made diner visits and talked with local news media.

Two supporters who were scheduled to campaign on the ground for him — Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky and Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida — hitched a ride home Monday night on Air Force One instead, to deal with legislative matters in Washington or attend the transfer of remains for [*two soldiers killed*](https://sos.nh.gov/NamesHistory.aspx) over the weekend in Afghanistan. Taking their place were prominent New Hampshire Republicans, a change from four years ago.

Gov. Chris Sununu bound into a local high school, where he purchased a box of Krispy Kreme doughnuts from a student bake sale and stayed on message.

“The Trump tax cuts here worked,” he said. “The U.S.M.C.A., very powerful, for a lot of our businesses that trade with our friends to the north. The regulatory reform streamlined the process.” He also credited the administration with investing $50 million in the state to battle the opioid crisis.

The last time Mr. Trump was running, John H. Sununu, the current governor’s father and a former governor himself, questioned Mr. Trump’s history of business losses and [*said his coarse language*](https://sos.nh.gov/NamesHistory.aspx) was “demeaning of the office he’s seeking.”

Trump campaign officials said they blamed the president’s 2016 loss in large part on his feud with Kelly Ayotte, a senator at the time who was locked in a close re-election race and tried to thread the needle by saying she would vote for Mr. Trump but not endorse him. Ms. Ayotte [*lost her seat*](https://sos.nh.gov/NamesHistory.aspx), and Mr. Trump   [*lost the state*](https://sos.nh.gov/NamesHistory.aspx), an outcome one campaign official described as a political murder-suicide.

Monday found Ms. Ayotte campaigning for the president at a “Cops for Trump” event with Ivanka Trump and Vice President Mike Pence. Reached on the phone on Tuesday, Ms. Ayotte hung up on a reporter. “I’m busy. I have to go,” she said when asked to comment on the state of the race in New Hampshire.

But the show of Republican force appeared to be having its desired effect of sparking fears among Democratic voters about the strength of their own candidates.

Mark Goodridge, 75, of Bedford, said he was voting for Mr. Biden. But he said he was anxious that he might lose to Mr. Trump.

“You see the Trump signs out there? Did you see how many are out there?” he asked, pointing to the pop-up stand of Trump campaign T-shirts and gear set up outside the school’s entrance.

His wife, Margaret, 76, chimed in. “I think it depends on who the Democrats pick,” she said. “If we get the right candidate … ” Her voice trailed off, before she added, “Which is kind of a worry.”

PHOTO: President Trump at a rally in Manchester, N.H., on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2020

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[***There’s an Exodus From the ‘Star Cities,’ and I Have Good News and Bad News; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62N8-26H1-DXY4-X4PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

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**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** Everyone is arguing over what the future holds in store, but there may be a surprise silver lining for Democrats in urban exodus.

**Body**

When it comes to the fate of big cities in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are two sets of overlapping economic and political consequences, but they are not necessarily what you might expect.

[*Declining tax*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) [*revenues*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), business closures, spiking rates of violent crime and an exodus to smaller communities have left major urban centers anxious about surviving the pandemic’s aftermath and returning to a new normal.

But all is not lost.

In a paper published earlier this month, “[*America’s Post-Pandemic Geography*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), two urbanists who come from very [*different*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) political perspectives, [*Richard Florida*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), a professor at the University of Toronto, and [*Joel Kotkin*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), a professor at Chapman University, argue:

Any shift away from superstar cities may augur a long-overdue and much-needed geographic recalibration of America’s innovation economy. High-tech industries [*have come to be massively concentrated*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) — some would say overconcentrated — in coastal elite cities and tech hubs. The San Francisco Bay Area and the Acela Corridor (spanning Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C.) have accounted for about three-quarters of all venture-capital investment in high-tech start-ups. In the decade and a half leading up to the pandemic, more than 90 percent of employment growth in America’s innovation economy was concentrated in just five major coastal metros: San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, San Diego, and Boston, according to the [*Brookings Institution*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/).

In addition, Florida and Kotkin write:

The current shift to remote work makes geographic rebalancing of these industries more feasible, and a number of leading big tech companies have openly embraced it. Such a rebalancing might help not only smaller cities develop more robust economies but also take some pressure off the housing and real-estate markets of superstar cities and tech hubs, making them more affordable.

In an email, Florida argued that a key motivating force driving many of the recent departures from big cities was the desire to be away from the pandemic, as well as from pandemic restraints imposed by local governments:

More affluent people, especially risk-oriented entrepreneurial types are fleeing to less restrictive more open environments, where they choose to undertake their own risks and, if they have kids, to send them to school.

There is also political fallout from the nation’s changing demography.

[*Jonathan Rodden*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), a political scientist at Stanford and the author of “[*Why Cities Lose*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/): The Deep Roots of the Urban-Rural Political Divide,” explained in an email how the geographic dispersion of Democratic voters may help slowly shift Republican and competitive districts in a leftward direction:

Even before 2020, there was already a strong correlation between net county-level in-migration and increasing Democratic vote share. In 2020, this relationship was incredibly strong. All around the country, counties that experienced in-migration saw increases in Democratic vote share — in some cases very large increases — and places experiencing out-migration saw increases in the Republican vote share. These in-migration counties that trended Democratic were mostly suburban, and the out-migration counties that moved toward the Republicans were both urban core and rural counties.

For decades, Rodden continued,

Democrats have been excessively concentrated in urban centers, which makes it difficult for them to transform their votes into commensurate legislative seats. But as cities lose population, most of the growing suburban counties are either red counties that are trending purple, or purple counties that are trending blue, and very few are overwhelmingly Democratic.

[*Democratic suburban gains*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) were already evident in the 2018 and 2020 elections in states like Georgia, Arizona, Texas and North Carolina.

At the same time, the movement of Democratic voters from urban centers is very likely to moderate the agenda-setting strength of progressive urban voters. This process will lessen an ideological problem that plagued Democratic congressional candidates.

In “Why Cities Lose,” Rodden wrote:

Voters in the urban core congressional districts are ideologically quite distinct from the rest of the country, and quite far away from the median district. And the most extremely conservative rural districts are actually not very far away from the pivotal districts around the median.

Rodden continues:

In most U.S. states then, urban districts are far more liberal than the rest of the state. As a result, Democrats face a difficult challenge in trying to manage their statewide party reputation. If it comes to be dominated by urban incumbents, they will find it hard to compete in the pivotal districts.

In his email, Rodden argued that because Republicans control congressional redistricting in many more states than Democrats do, Democrats may not make immediate gains in the House as a result of these population shifts. But, he noted, as these trends continue, districts gerrymandered at the beginning of the decade may shift in a more progressive direction over time:

Republican map-drawers will be working with a rapidly moving target, and the task of making projections for elections 6 or 8 years into the future in suburban and exurban areas might be difficult. The future political orientation of suburban areas depends, in part, on choices that will be made by both parties in the years ahead. Gerrymandering takes very little effort when your opponents are already geographically packed. As they spread out and mingle with your supporters, the job becomes more challenging.

[*John Austin*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), director of the Michigan Economic Center, pointed out in an email that “even before the pandemic, there were a growing number of exceptions to the seemingly inexorable march of a tech and knowledge economy to consolidate in handfuls of superstar global cities.” He cited as especially attractive those smaller cities with research universities, including Iowa City, Iowa; Ann Arbor, Mich.; State College, Pa.; and South Bend, Ind.

“Many techies realize they can flee the costs, congestion and craziness of the coasts (like the Bay Area),” Austin said,

and find a lot of people like them and robust culture and diverse community in the Nashvilles scattered across the county. This kind of tech-talent immigration only happens to places these folks perceive to be a place with lots of people like them and a rich culture mix — coastal techies now know Phoenix and Boulder fit the bill — but this is also a huge opportunity for places like Madison and Ann Arbor and the Marquettes and the Ashevilles, which do have a rich and diverse talent base, tech-scene, food and music and all that.

Austin believes that the movement of high-tech workers to smaller, redder states will benefit the Democratic Party.

As these areas gain knowledge workers, Austin wrote, they will see local politics

evolve to be more progressive, and better inoculated against the appeal of right wing populist demagogues like Trump. Local residents will become more optimistic and forward looking, not responding to the siren song of nationalism, nativism and pullback from the international order. Newcomers leaven the polity. This is clearly what we see in places like Grand Rapids in West Michigan and other smaller tier former manufacturing centers in the Midwest.

Once a rock-ribbed Republican county, Grand Rapids’ [*Kent County voted*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) for Biden over Trump 51.9 percent to 45 percent.

In their March 2021 paper, “[*From L.A. to Boise*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/): How Migration Has Changed During the Covid-19 Pandemic,” [*Peter Haslag*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) and [*Daniel Weagley*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), professors at Vanderbilt and Georgia Tech, identified the highest percentage of movers from one state to another, topped by California residents going to Texas, then New York to Florida and Illinois to Florida.

The geographic trends are striking. Of the top 20, 19 were from blue states to red states.

Last year, Manhattan’s population fell by 20,337, the largest drop in 30 years, according to data compiled by [*William Frey*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), a Brookings senior fellow.

Over the three decades from 1990 to 2020, Frey found that in large metropolitan counties, the population of inner and outer suburbs grew twice as much, at 38.7 million, as that of center cities, at 18.8 million, as shown in the accompanying graphic.

Four scholars from N.Y.U. and Columbia — [*Arpit Gupta*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), [*Vrinda Mittal*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), [*Jonas Peeters*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) and [*Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) — studied real estate sales and rental trends in their April 2021 paper, “[*Flattening the Curve*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/): Pandemic-Induced Revaluation of Urban Real Estate,” to determine population shifts before and during the pandemic.

They found a Covid-driven reversal in the trend toward ever “more concentrated economic activity in a handful of dense urban areas” with the shifts “related to practices around working from home, suggesting that they may persist to the extent that employers allow remote working practices beyond the pandemic.”

While the ability to work remotely gives workers access to “the larger and more elastic housing stock at the periphery of cities, thereby alleviating rent burden,” Gupta and his co-authors write,

the results also point to potential problems for local government finances in the wake of the pandemic. Urban centers may confront dwindling populations and lower tax revenue from property and sales in the short and medium run. More dispersed economic activity may offer greater opportunities for areas previously left behind, but potentially at the cost of agglomeration economies built in urban areas.

In an email, Van Nieuwerburgh elaborated. “There are serious headwinds for our ‘gateway’ cities like N.Y.C., S.F., D.C., Boston,” he wrote, noting that he could “imagine how work from home may lead to a 20 percent reduction in demand for downtown office space.” This, in turn, “is a big story because banks have lent billions against office buildings, and for small and medium-sized banks (and maybe even for some big ones) this exposure is material.”

Who will the winners and losers be?

Van Nieuwerburgh’s answer:

Winners: the low-tax cities in the south and west (like Austin, Atlanta, Orlando, Miami); losers: the high-tax cities with high downtown office vacancy rates.

I asked Gupta a series of follow-up questions and he replied by email that “cities with a lot of working from home, and with high prices — Seattle, S.F., N.Y.C. — are going to be the most affected” and there will be “increasing migration of people from blue states to red and purple ones, which would make states like Georgia even more competitive.” He added: “Suburban areas in the vicinity of large cities, and already fast-growing Sunbelt and Mountain West cities, seem like the biggest winners. Urban cores and the Midwest seem like some of the losers.”

[*Nicholas Bloom*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), an economist at Stanford, has a decidedly pessimistic outlook. He told the [*City Journal*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) in an April 2020 interview, “I fear that the prominence of the city, and particularly city centers, will decline.”

In recent decades, he continued,

the city has flourished, so that now central New York and San Francisco are the most expensive places in the U.S. to live. I worry that this has ended for two reasons. First, the pandemic has made us much more aware of the need to reduce density — particularly indoor density. That means avoiding the subway, elevators, shared offices, and communal living. Second, working from home is here to stay, and with it, the need to live close to the office will diminish. I doubt that many firms will allow people to work from home for five days a week, but two or three days a week will be common. And many of us will wonder: if we need to be in the office for only half the week, why not live further out, where housing is cheaper?

In an April 2021 paper, “[*Why Working From Home Will Stick*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/),” Bloom and two colleagues, [*Jose Maria Barrero*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), a professor at Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, and [*Steven J. Davis*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), a professor at the University of Chicago, argue that the Covid pandemic has revolutionized work, with remote employees quadrupling from roughly 5 percent to roughly 20 percent of the work force. The consequences will be felt everywhere, especially in big cities, they write: “The shift to WFH will also have highly uneven geographic effects, diminishing the fortunes of cities like San Francisco with high rates of inward commuting.” The shift to working from home “will lower expenditures on meals, entertainment, personal services, and shopping in major cities by 5 to 10 percent of prepandemic overall spending.”

In a detailed set of analyses for New York City and San Francisco, with San Francisco data appearing in parentheses, Bloom and his colleagues report from a series of monthly surveys they conducted that the result is a 13 percent drop in consumer spending in New York and 4.6 percent drop in San Francisco.

The net benefits of the shift will, in turn, “flow mainly to the highly educated and well paid,” according to the four authors, and “will yield larger benefits (as a percent of earnings) for men, the college-educated, those with children and persons with greater earnings.” The earnings relationship, they note, “is very steep.”

[*Patrick Sharkey*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/), a professor of sociology at Princeton, pointed to an additional threat to urban life: the [*surge in violent crime*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/):

The very idea of cities as places where collective life is prioritized, where people come together in shared spaces like parks, playgrounds, sidewalks, front stoops, subways, cafes, stadiums and theaters, begins to break down when public spaces carry the threat of violence.

There is, Sharkey continued,

strong evidence that rising violence contributed to out-migration from central cities in the era of extreme urban violence from the late 1960s through the 1980s; and, alternatively, that the decline in violence from the early 1990s to the mid-2010s brought people back into central cities.

If violence keeps rising (in New York, for example, shootings [*rose 95 percent*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) over 2020) and if government fails to intervene, Sharkey warned, “those who have the resources to leave central cities will do so.”

What can we anticipate?

The lack of consensus on this question is reflected in individual essays that Florida and Kotkin wrote.

Florida, ever the optimist, [*wrote*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) in June 2020:

Not only are cities on the upswing, we are in the early stages of a new wave of urban policy innovation, which is occurring from the bottom up in cities, our true laboratories of democracy. Even before the current crises, cities were beginning to address the mounting challenges of racial and class division, inequality, police reform and worsening housing burdens.

Kotkin, ever the pessimist, [*wrote in March 2021*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/):

Today’s urban promise is, however, vastly different — not only in New York, but San Francisco and Los Angeles, London and Paris. No longer cities of aspiration, they are increasingly defined by an almost feudal hierarchy: the rich live well, protected by private security and served by local coffee shops and trendy clubs. Meanwhile, the ***working class*** struggles to pay rent, possesses no demonstrable path to a better life and, as a result, often migrates elsewhere. Crime rates are spiking and homelessness, once an exception, is increasingly widespread. Those very streets once said to be “paved with gold” are now filled with discarded needles, excrement and graffiti.

Take your pick.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/09/24/how-much-is-covid-19-hurting-state-and-local-revenues/).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY George Etheredge for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Pence and Harris Vie for Wisconsin as Trump Vents From the White House***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60SN-K8N1-JBG3-605J-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The unofficial Labor Day kickoff to the fall campaign centered on Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, two pivotal states for both the president and Joseph R. Biden Jr.

**Body**

The unofficial Labor Day kickoff to the fall campaign centered on Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, two pivotal states for both the president and Joseph R. Biden Jr.

LA CROSSE, Wis. — For a few hours, the unofficial Labor Day start to the fall presidential campaign centered around Wisconsin, as Vice President Mike Pence tried to poach Democrats in this Mississippi River town and Senator Kamala Harris sought to rally the Democratic base in Milwaukee.

But their dueling events at opposite ends of this increasingly pivotal state — as well as Joseph R. Biden’s visit to another battleground, Pennsylvania — were soon overwhelmed by a force as strong as any current: President Trump’s thirst for attention. ​

The only member of the two tickets not to be on the campaign trail Monday, Mr. Trump abruptly called a White House news conference and then used it to air a range of personal and political grievances. He called his opponents names — Mr. Biden was a “stupid person” and Ms. Harris was “not a competent person.” Yet more notable than his usual partisan insults was his extraordinary attack on the country’s senior military officials.

Defending himself for a fifth straight day [*following a report in The Atlantic*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/trump-americans-who-died-at-war-are-losers-and-suckers/615997/) that he ridiculed America’s war dead, Mr. Trump suggested the accusations came from Pentagon leaders, whom he described as war profiteers.

“They want to do nothing but fight wars so that all of those wonderful companies that make the bombs, that make the planes, that make everything else, stay happy,” Mr. Trump said of the officers he commands, making no mention of his own choice for defense secretary, Mark T. Esper, who was an executive at the defense contractor Raytheon.

The broadside, coming after current and retired officers have been notably quiet about claims that the president described those killed in action as “losers,” only added more fuel to an explosive story line that many Republicans want Mr. Trump to put behind him.

For the purposes of the campaign, Mr. Trump’s preoccupation with the Atlantic article illustrated the limited value of the presidential bully pulpit in the hands of a candidate unwilling to drive a focused message.

Monday, after all, was poised to showcase a showdown between Mr. Pence and Ms. Harris, who were appearing together for the first time in the same state on the same day.

The vice president, joined by Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia, was hoping to appeal to the white ***working-class*** voters along the state’s western border who supported Democrats for a generation before helping tip the state to Mr. Trump by less than a percentage point in 2016.

Standing before a group of employees at a regional utility company, Mr. Pence trumpeted the administration’s work on behalf of dairy farmers, claimed credit for the state’s booming economy before the coronavirus crisis and repeatedly attacked Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris by name.

Noting that Ms. Harris was one of only 10 senators to oppose the renegotiated North American free trade pact, because it did not do enough to address climate change, the vice president argued that she had put a “radical environmental agenda ahead of Wisconsin dairy and ahead of Wisconsin power.”

Though the company they spoke at employs some union members, neither Mr. Pence nor Mr. Scalia alluded to organized labor in their remarks, a reflection of their roots on the right but a notable decision given Mr. Trump’s strength in some union households.

Mr. Pence used the start of his speech to claim that Mr. Biden would perpetuate “policies that have literally led to violence in our major American cities,” reprising the Republican attack line that Democrats would preside over a dangerous, lawless nation.

Mr. Pence also scorned Mr. Biden for not criticizing Democratic mayors or mentioning the far-left group Antifa by name in his condemnations of violence.

While he acknowledged that the use of force by law enforcement should be “thoroughly investigated,” Mr. Pence did not refer to the police shooting of Jacob Blake, instead focusing on the violent aftermath of the shooting in Kenosha, Wis., much as Mr. Trump did in his visit there last week.

In his own trip there last week, Mr. Biden met with the Blake family, [*as Ms. Harris did*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/trump-americans-who-died-at-war-are-losers-and-suckers/615997/) Monday upon arriving in Milwaukee.

She also met with union workers as well as Black business owners and pastors in the city, where Democratic turnout dipped four years ago and aided Mr. Trump’s victory.

“We have to get this done, I need your help in Milwaukee,” Ms. Harris told supporters lined up to greet her on the sidewalk, encouraging them to participate in early voting.

Even before the events in Kenosha, the state’s evenly divided politics and Mr. Trump’s need to keep his 2016 map largely intact were already thrusting Wisconsin to the center of this year’s race.

After Hillary Clinton memorably failed to campaign here four years ago, Mr. Biden last week chose Wisconsin as his first Midwestern campaign stop after the Democratic convention, and he has assured local party leaders that he will return regularly.

Desperate to keep Wisconsin in their column, local Republicans this summer sought to put the rapper Kanye West on the state’s ballot in hopes he could drain votes from Mr. Biden and make it easier for the president to win with less than a majority, as Mr. Trump did four years ago. But they were late filing paperwork for Mr. West and are now in court appealing the decision to keep him off the ballot.

More recently, as Mr. Pence demonstrated Monday, Republicans have tried to elevate law-and-order issues to make up ground against Mr. Biden in Wisconsin.

The former vice president has responded by airing a commercial, here and in other swing states, that features footage from a speech he delivered last week in Pittsburgh, in which he pointedly denounced violent protests.

There’s no evidence yet that the effort to portray Mr. Biden as soft on crime is cutting into his advantage: He has enjoyed a steady lead in Wisconsin polls for months, including those taken in the aftermath of the Kenosha unrest.

Comparing this election with the one in 2016, when third-party candidates captured more than 6 percent of the vote [*in Wisconsin*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/trump-americans-who-died-at-war-are-losers-and-suckers/615997/) and an unusually large number of voters said they were undecided in final days of the election, Charles Franklin, a Marquette University pollster, said the current race was far more stable.

“You’ve got a smaller third-party share and a smaller pool of people still to break so that makes it less uncertain going into the last 60 days,” said Mr. Franklin, whose surveys show about half as many undecided voters as he found four years ago.

Mr. Trump’s overall margin in Wisconsin four years ago was less than 23,000 votes, lower than the total number of votes cast for third-party candidates in Milwaukee County alone that year.

Still, the 2016 results and a similarly narrow win in 2018 by the Democratic governor, Tony Evers, make clear that Wisconsin is poised to have the sort of knife’s-edge race that characterized presidential elections in the state before former President Barack Obama’s two sizable victories.

A victory by Mr. Biden here would be a significant blow to Mr. Trump’s Electoral College calculus. If the president were to hold every other state he captured in 2016, he’d need to win at least one of three crucial swing states to claim re-election: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. With his campaign increasingly concerned about Michigan, where it has cut its advertising, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania loom even larger.

Not coincidentally, Pennsylvania is where Mr. Biden was on Labor Day.

His day reflected the traditional spirit of the holiday in Democratic politics, minus the parade routes and union-hall gatherings where Mr. Biden has been a fixture for decades. They were canceled this year because of the pandemic.

At [*a stop*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/trump-americans-who-died-at-war-are-losers-and-suckers/615997/) in Lancaster, Pa., Mr. Biden promised that he would be “the best friend labor has ever had in the White House” and criticized Mr. Trump for treating the stock market as representative of the whole economy.

Later in the day, at a virtual event with Richard Trumka, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. president, in Harrisburg, Mr. Biden attacked the president for presiding over the huge job losses during the pandemic and promised that his administration would “put people to work right away” with a large-scale infrastructure program. Union members, he said, “deserve a president who fights like the devil for you.”

But Mr. Biden, too, returned to the subject of Mr. Trump’s respect for the military — “none of the veterans you know are losers,” he said — and accused the president of failing to appreciate not only soldiers but also a larger community of workers who believe in self-sacrifice.

“He’ll never understand you,” Mr. Biden told the online audience of union members, adding, “He’ll never understand our cops, our firefighters.”

Turning more personal, he used an interview with a Pennsylvania television station to rebut Mr. Trump’s claims that was on the decline. “Watch how I run up ramps and how he stumbles down ramps, OK?” Mr. Biden said.

At his news conference, Mr. Trump leveled attacks of his own against Mr. Biden, often in scattershot terms.

And instead of focusing on Friday’s jobs report, which showed unemployment falling, Mr. Trump vented about other topics.

He complained about mail-in ballots in the upcoming presidential election, lamented that there was “no retribution” by local authorities against acts of rioting, and litigated his past comments about American troops after assailing Pentagon leaders.

Repeating his past denials of The Atlantic’s report, Mr. Trump said only “an animal” would make the comments attributed to him. But he also reiterated his low opinion of John McCain, former prisoner of war and Republican senator who died in 2018.

“I was never a fan of John McCain,” the president said, accusing him of supporting “endless wars” and circulating “the fake dirty [*dossier*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/trump-americans-who-died-at-war-are-losers-and-suckers/615997/)” about Mr. Trump.

“Am I supposed to say, what a wonderful guy?” the president asked.

PHOTOS: Ron Graham, a descendant of Creek enslaved people, is fighting for his tribal citizenship rights in Oklahoma. Above, Mr. Graham’s ancestor Theodore Graham, center, with his youngest sibling, Rowena, in a photograph from around 1912. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RON GRAHAM; CHRIS CREESE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***How Joe Biden Won the Presidency***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617S-9331-DXY4-X1RK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Joseph R. Biden Jr. campaigned as a sober and conventional presence, concerned about the “soul of the country.” He correctly judged the character of the country, and benefited from President Trump’s missteps.

**Body**

Joseph R. Biden Jr. campaigned as a sober and conventional presence, concerned about the “soul of the country.” He correctly judged the character of the country, and benefited from President Trump’s missteps.

On a January evening in 2019, [*Joseph R. Biden Jr*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) [*.*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) placed a call to the mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, a personal friend and political ally who had just announced he would not pursue the Democratic nomination for president.

During their conversation, Mr. Garcetti recalled, [*Mr. Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) did not exactly say he had decided to mount his own campaign. The former vice president confided that if he did run, he expected President Trump to “come after my family” in an “ugly” election.

But [*Mr. Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) also said he felt pulled by a sense of moral duty.

“He said, back then, ‘I really am concerned about the soul of this country,’” Mr. Garcetti said.

Twenty-one months and a week later, Mr. Biden stands triumphant in a campaign he waged on just those terms: as a patriotic crusade to reclaim the American government from a president he considered a poisonous figure. The language he used in that call with Mr. Garcetti became the watchwords of a candidacy designed to marshal a broad coalition of voters against Mr. Trump and his reactionary politics.

It was not the most inspirational campaign in recent times, nor the most daring, nor the most agile. His candidacy did not stir an Obama-like youth movement or a Trump-like cult of personality: There were no prominent reports of Biden supporters branding themselves with “Joe” tattoos and lionizing him in florid murals — or even holding boat parades in his honor. Mr. Biden campaigned as a sober and conventional presence, rather than as an uplifting herald of change. For much of the general election, his candidacy was not an exercise in vigorous creativity, but rather a case study in discipline and restraint.

In the end, voters did what Mr. Biden asked of them and not much more: They repudiated Mr. Trump, while offering few other rewards to Mr. Biden’s party. And by a popular vote margin of four million and counting, Americans made Mr. Biden only the third man since the Second World War to topple a duly elected president after just one term.

Throughout his campaign, Mr. Biden faced persistent doubts about his political acuity and the relevance, in the year 2020, of a set of union-hall-meets-cloakroom political instincts developed mainly in the previous century.

But if Mr. Biden made numerous errors along the way, none of them mattered more in this election than the essential rightness of how he judged the character of his party, his country and his opponent. This account of his candidacy, based on interviews with four dozen advisers, supporters, elected officials and friends, reveals how fully Mr. Biden’s campaign flowed from his own worldview and political intuition.

During the primaries, Mr. Biden rebuffed pressure to move to the left, believing his party would embrace his pragmatism as its best chance to beat Mr. Trump. In the general election, Mr. Biden made Mr. Trump’s erratic conduct and mismanagement of the coronavirus pandemic his overwhelming themes, shunning countless other issues as needless distractions.

While some Democrats urged him to compete in a wider array of battlegrounds, Mr. Biden put the Great Lakes states at the center of his electoral map, trusting that with an appeal to the political middle he could rebuild the so-called Blue Wall and block Mr. Trump’s path to a second term.

Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Biden believed that no issue would figure larger in voters’ minds than Mr. Trump’s presence in the Oval Office. And if he could make the election an up-or-down vote on an out-of-control president, he believed he could win.

On that score, he was right. As voters sized up Mr. Biden as a potential president, his familiar flaws and foibles — the antiquated vocabulary and penchant for embellishment, his nostalgic yarns about segregationist senators and a defensiveness that led him, in one case, to challenge a voter to a push-up contest — paled against the conduct of an incumbent sowing racial division, threatening to deploy troops in American cities and floating the idea of injecting disinfectant as a coronavirus treatment.

Anita Dunn, one of Mr. Biden’s closest advisers, said the campaign had been propelled all along by the candidate himself, and his unwavering theme and strategy.

“It was his campaign,” Ms. Dunn said. “It was less consultant-driven than any presidential campaign in modern history.”

Still, at the outset, Mr. Biden’s political theory of the case struck even some of his loyal allies as misguided in an era of intense ideological polarization.

Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania recalled a meeting he had with the former vice president in March of 2019, shortly before Mr. Biden entered the race. As Mr. Biden sketched out his approach, Mr. Casey, a Democrat, was not fully convinced.

“He was walking through what became his broader-based theme, about the soul of the country,” Mr. Casey said. “I was worried at the time that it wasn’t hard-hitting enough.”

But Mr. Biden, he said, “was prescient in his ability, even in the primaries when almost nobody else was doing it, to say, ‘We have to bring the country back together.’”

A Crisis Candidacy

Mr. Casey was not the only Democrat skeptical of Mr. Biden’s underlying theme. While many voters found Mr. Trump distasteful, or worse, it is difficult to unseat an incumbent president and Mr. Trump had the benefit of a nation in relative peace and steady prosperity. Mr. Biden’s primary opponents, who argued that a message of normalcy and steady experience might not be enough to win, seemed to have a point.

Then, just as Mr. Biden was seizing a clear upper hand in the Democratic nomination fight, the coronavirus pandemic struck. In a matter of days, public campaigning froze and a mood of fear and gloom set in across the country.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a close ally of Mr. Biden, said it was not immediately obvious that the Trump administration would effectively forfeit the issue of public health to Mr. Biden. The White House, Ms. Whitmer said, “really could have risen to the occasion.”

But as Mr. Trump dismissed the threat of the pandemic, and railed against governors like Ms. Whitmer for locking down their states, Mr. Biden moved to assert himself as an alternative leader. He began to sketch his own approach to addressing the disease, and to show voters how he might operate in Mr. Trump’s place.

From the confines of his lakeside home in Wilmington, Del., he received frequent briefings about the pandemic and the economic damage it was inflicting, drafted policy plans and reached out to state and city leaders to gather information.

“He was calling to say, ‘How are things going in Michigan? What do you need?’” Ms. Whitmer said.

What Mr. Biden was not doing, to the dismay of some in his party, was traveling the country and campaigning in person. For months, he scarcely left the immediate vicinity of his home: At 77, he was in an age group especially vulnerable to the virus, and his advisers felt he could undermine his own public-health recommendations if he was seen as racing back onto the campaign trail. And more than a few political donors and Democratic advocacy groups second-guessed the Biden campaign’s decision to forgo a robust get-out-the-vote operation in the field because of safety concerns.

Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League, said Mr. Biden had seemed at first to pay a price for his caution. Allies of the Biden campaign had tried to nudge the former vice president into public view, he said, paraphrasing the plea: “People need to see you.”

But in his own conversations with the Biden team, Mr. Morial said, they were emphatic that Mr. Biden felt he could not “say one thing and do another” where public health was concerned — a judgment that Mr. Morial came to share.

Mr. Biden’s first major trip outside Delaware was not for a traditional campaign trip but to confront another crisis: the national reckoning over police brutality after the killing of George Floyd. Flying to Houston to visit the Floyd family, Mr. Biden sat for two hours as he listened to the grieving family and told them that while he had never experienced loss quite like theirs, he knew what it meant to lose a child and felt their pain, according to the Rev. Al Sharpton, who was present. When racial-justice protests turned disorderly in Atlanta, Mr. Biden reached out to the city’s mayor, Keisha Lance Bottoms, to offer support and private counsel. The former vice president, Ms. Bottoms said, was both encouraging and contemplative, telling her how the spiraling demonstrations evoked, for him, the riots in Wilmington in the late 1960s, which led to an extended occupation of the city by the National Guard.

It was a study in the personal empathy, and the hunger to connect with other people, that defined Mr. Biden as a candidate from the start. Throughout the race he invoked his own family’s history of tragedy, and never more so than in confronting the immense pain and loss of the coronavirus pandemic.

“He is able to personalize these big issues,” Ms. Bottoms said. “He really does have a sensitivity and a personal lens for many of these challenges that we’re facing.”

Mr. Biden also recognized that his opponent lacked that impulse.

While Democrats worried that Mr. Biden was taking an overly passive approach to the race, Mr. Trump seemed almost to go out of his way to reinforce the appeal of his challenger’s prudence: There was Mr. Trump’s tear gas-shrouded photo op in Lafayette Park, intended as a show of strength, that came off instead as pure brutishness. There was his indoor rally in Tulsa, Okla., planned as an energetic return to the campaign trail, that instead became a low-energy coronavirus risk zone.

Still, as the country’s mood of emergency deepened, Mr. Biden confided to allies that he was already feeling the weight of the challenges that would lie ahead if he won.

Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois said she told Mr. Biden in a conversation earlier this year that the political moment seemed to cry out for a candidate with formidable governing experience. According to Ms. Duckworth’s recollection, Mr. Biden responded, “Tammy, I need people around me that understand that, and that we need to hit the ground running.”

Mr. Biden reacted in a similar fashion last Monday in Cleveland, when Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio told Mr. Biden he would soon have the chance to be “one of the great presidents of my lifetime.”

“He grabbed my shoulder,” Mr. Brown said, “pulled me in as much as you can when you’re wearing a mask and said: ‘I really need you to help me.’”

Mr. Biden also expressed pointed anxiety after delivering a pair of speeches about national unity and healing at Gettysburg, Pa., and Warm Springs, Ga. — two landmarks associated with the crisis presidencies of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt.

If Mr. Biden found those backdrops politically resonant, he suggested to an adviser that he was less comfortable with the implied comparison between himself and those men. Mr. Biden had a difficult time, he said, seeing himself as the next Lincoln or Roosevelt.

Party Unity, of a Kind

The pandemic alone might not have shifted the political landscape in Mr. Biden’s favor had he not managed a feat the previous Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, could not: persuading Democrats to lock arms with him after a bruising primary.

Mr. Biden, however, had advantages that Mrs. Clinton did not, starting with a genial relationship with his chief opponent, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

As the Democratic contest neared its end, Mr. Biden quickly took steps to accommodate his former rivals on the left. Days after Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts ended her campaign in early March, Mr. Biden called to tell her he was adopting one of her key proposals on bankruptcy reform. And when Mr. Sanders withdrew from the race, Mr. Biden agreed to create a set of policy task forces to formulate a shared governing agenda.

Representative Kathy Castor of Florida, a Democrat who sat on Mr. Biden’s climate task force, said the difference from 2016 was stark: “That was just so divisive back then, from the Democratic convention in Philadelphia through the election,” she said. “You can’t have Democrats fighting Democrats.”

But Mr. Biden did not budge on the overall ideological thrust of his campaign. On the contrary, he and his close advisers felt vindicated in their assessment of the Democratic Party as a center-left coalition, rather than one of the activist left. Though he added a handful of progressive policy hands to his campaign staff, Mr. Biden’s inner circle was dominated by relative centrists for whom the Sanders ethos of democratic socialism held little appeal.

Perhaps most prominent among those advisers was Valerie Biden Owens, Mr. Biden’s sister and longtime counselor, who stressed during internal deliberations that the campaign should be careful about attacking the wealthy as a political tactic. After all, Ms. Owens argued, many ***working-class*** people aspire to be rich.

“The Democratic Party is not what people may think it is on Twitter,” said Representative Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania, a Biden supporter from day one who recalled telling the former vice president as much last year. “It’s still ***working-class*** African-Americans, whites and Latinos. And he was always true to that.”

Over the summer, Mr. Biden chose a running mate who he hoped would reconcile the competing pressures on his candidacy: to excite his own party without creating new vulnerabilities that Republicans might be able to exploit. He settled on Senator Kamala Harris of California, completing his ticket with a choice that was at once groundbreaking and cautious — a younger woman of color who largely shared his own pragmatic political instincts.

He wound up with a message and policy agenda that left Mr. Trump with only limited avenues for attack, and benefited from the president’s lack of interest in learning details. When Mr. Trump sensed vulnerabilities in the Democratic platform, he never devised a critique deeper than one-liner jibes seemingly made for Fox News: His attacks on Mr. Biden’s climate plans, for instance, included claims that Democrats would force buildings to have tiny windows.

If Mr. Biden’s approach held up throughout the campaign, it left enormous unanswered questions for him to confront later on. In some cases, Mr. Biden and his advisers deliberately opted to suppress rather than resolve Democratic disagreements until after the election.

The most prominent example was Mr. Biden’s evasive response to Justice Amy Coney Barrett’s elevation to the Supreme Court. As other Democrats raised a cry of support for overhauling the federal judiciary, Mr. Biden spent weeks refusing to state his own position, eventually proposing a commission to study judicial reforms as a temporary salve.

The rush to seat Justice Barrett opened his eyes more to the hardball tactics of today’s Senate Republicans, said one adviser. But in private, Mr. Biden has continued to express unease about trying to expand the high court, and he is still more intrigued by broader judicial reforms than simply adding justices.

One lawmaker said Steve Ricchetti, a former chief of staff to Mr. Biden, had been candid last summer about the campaign’s dilatory approach to the party’s internal divisions. Asked privately how Mr. Biden intended to handle the left, Mr. Ricchetti acknowledged that it would be a challenge over the long term.

For the moment, he said, getting through Nov. 3 was the only goal.

The Blue Wall and the Blue Line

The most perilous moment of the race for Mr. Biden may have come in late August, when a season of racial-justice protests had given way to spasms of vandalism and arson in a handful of politically important states. In Wisconsin, after the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, by a police officer in Kenosha, rioting erupted in the suburban city — and Mr. Trump went on the attack.

At the Republican nominating convention, the president and his allies pounded Mr. Biden for a week with false or overstated attacks, linking him both to outright criminals and to left-wing activists who had taken up “defund the police” as a slogan. Mr. Biden had disavowed the idea, but Republicans persisted.

The onslaught posed a distinctive challenge to Mr. Biden, threatening to weaken his coalition of racial minorities, young liberals and moderate whites. Mr. Trump began a scare campaign aimed in part at white women, telling them he would “save your suburbs” from what he portrayed as looting mobs that Mr. Biden would not control.

Like other liberals of his generation, Mr. Biden saw danger in the Kenosha riots. Recalling the riots in American cities after the assassinations of the 1960s, he telephoned an adviser, saying he wanted to denounce the violence and asking a question: What had Robert F. Kennedy said to cool tempers in the aftermath of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s murder?

Mr. Biden flew to Pittsburgh the following Monday to head off Mr. Trump’s attacks: In a 24-minute speech, he reaffirmed his support for police reform while sternly denouncing civil unrest. “Looting,” he said, “is not protesting.”

“We need justice in America. We need safety in America,” Mr. Biden said.

The Biden campaign turned a clip from the speech into a television ad and ran it at saturation levels across the electoral map, countering Mr. Trump’s claims that a Democratic administration would unleash violent anarchy.

“Joe has always been someone who was able to hold two thoughts together at the same time about law enforcement and racial justice,” said Senator Chris Coons of Delaware.

And once again, Mr. Biden benefited from his opponent’s impulse toward incitement and division. At the very moment Democrats feared voters might see Mr. Trump as a fearless steward of public safety, the president also spoke out in defense of people sowing chaos on the right.

Mr. Trump would do so again in his first debate with Mr. Biden, marring his law-and-order message by declining to denounce an extremist group on the far right.

Counting to 270

That moment after Kenosha was all the more important to Mr. Biden because of its resonance across the Midwest, the region he prized above all others. It was the band of states stretching from Minnesota across to Pennsylvania, Mr. Biden believed, that was likeliest to make him the next president.

His top lieutenants shared that assessment.

During a marathon Zoom session in May, after the campaign’s first major round of polling in the general election, Mr. Biden and his high command spent hours poring over the electoral map. By the end, they had hammered out their priorities: They would focus on three Great Lakes states Mr. Trump flipped in 2016 — Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania — plus Arizona, Florida and North Carolina. The campaign was skeptical of its chances in Florida and saw two other Sun Belt states, Georgia and Texas, as intriguing — but difficult and expensive to compete in.

When Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris returned to the campaign trail, that map guided their activities and their advertising strategy. They lunged at a few longer-shot targets, sending Ms. Harris on a last-minute trip to Texas, while Mr. Biden returned to Ohio, where polls showed him being competitive. Neither state wound up being close on election night.

More fruitful was an aggressive late play for Georgia, a rapidly diversifying state where suburban voters appeared to be swinging hard toward Democrats. In October, Mr. Biden’s pollster, John Anzalone, determined that the former vice president had a better chance to win there than in North Carolina and even Florida, and Mr. Biden embarked on his trip to Atlanta and Warm Springs. Ms. Harris visited the state repeatedly, and on the eve of the election the campaign decided to send former President Barack Obama to Georgia rather than North Carolina to make one last push there.

As the results began coming in on Tuesday, a tense mood took hold across much of the Biden campaign. In the first states to report, Florida and North Carolina, Mr. Trump was faring several points better than Democratic polling had forecast, and considerably ahead of most surveys conducted by the media.

The [*Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/joe-biden) campaign publicly projected composure, in contrast to Mr. Trump’s erratic behavior on Twitter and during late-night remarks from the East Room. Greg Schultz, Mr. Biden’s former campaign manager during the Democratic primaries, held a call with key supporters to offer reassurance, insisting that the early returns in the suburbs of Ohio were a good omen for the nearby swing states. But to some agitated listeners it was not a convincing presentation.

Mr. Biden’s inner circle grew increasingly unnerved as the night wore on and it became clear that the president was running stronger than expected. Jill Biden, former Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and an array of Biden advisers telephoned Democrats around the country to learn more about the vote count and whether Mr. Biden was in danger of losing.

Within a matter of hours, Mr. Biden’s fortunes had improved as the big cities of the North reported their votes. It would take until Saturday, when Pennsylvania was called in his favor, to confirm that Mr. Biden had won more than the 270 Electoral College votes required to claim the presidency. The Blue Wall was standing again for Democrats, and Mr. Biden could also prevail in the once-red states of Arizona and Georgia.

For all the Democratic jubilation at Mr. Trump’s demise, Mr. Biden may not entirely share that feeling of pure delight. Rahm Emanuel, who served as Mr. Obama’s chief of staff during the Great Recession, said he warned Mr. Biden recently that his reward for winning would be fleeting.

“You’re the dog that caught the car,” Mr. Emanuel said, alluding to what awaited Mr. Biden in the Oval Office.

The man who would soon be president-elect responded: “Ain’t that the truth.”

PHOTOS: President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Sunday arriving for Mass at St. Joseph on the Brandywine in Wilmington, Del. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGELA WEISS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) (A1); POLICY: By the time Senator Bernie Sanders exited the race, he had reshaped his party’s agenda.; OUTREACH: Mr. Biden on a visit to the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Wilmington, Del., in June. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES); BATTLEGROUNDS: To win, Mr. Biden had to reclaim states that Mr. Trump flipped in 2016. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES); THE PANDEMIC: Mr. Biden’s campaign events showed a respect for health guidelines. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK MAKELA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P8); VICTORY: Joseph R. Biden Jr. ran as a pragmatist, believing that voters would see him as the best hope for change. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P8-P9); A RECKONING: Protests erupted in Minneapolis, above, after the police killing of George Floyd. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); RUNNING MATE: Mr. Biden selected Senator Kamala Harris, a one-time rival, to join his ticket. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SYLVIA JARRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); OTTUMWA, IOWA: Mr. Biden used speeches about national unity and healing on the campaign trail. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); ELECTION DAY: A rally in Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania’s 20 Electoral College votes clinched victory. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P9)

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2021

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[***Pressure Builds to Reinvestigate the Killing of Malcolm X***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y5M-4MF1-JBG3-626S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 9, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1215 words

**Byline:** By John Leland

**Body**

Fifty-five years later, the case may be reopened.

For more than half a century, scholars have maintained that prosecutors convicted the wrong men in the assassination of Malcolm X.

Now, 55 years after that bloody afternoon in February 1965, the Manhattan district attorney's office is reviewing whether to reinvestigate the murder.

Some new evidence comes from a six-part documentary called ''Who Killed Malcolm X?,'' streaming on Netflix Feb. 7, which posits that two of the men convicted could not have been at the scene that day.

Instead it points the finger at four members of a Nation of Islam mosque in Newark, N.J., depicting their involvement as an open secret in their city. One even appeared in a 2010 campaign ad for then-Newark mayor Cory Booker.

''What got us hooked,'' said Rachel Dretzin, a director of the documentary along with Phil Bertelsen, ''was the notion that the likely shotgun assassin of Malcolm X was living in plain sight in Newark, and that many people knew of his involvement, and he was uninvestigated, unprosecuted, unquestioned.''

The case has long tempted scholars, who see a conspiracy hidden in unreleased government documents. A detective on the case, Anthony V. Bouza, wrote flatly a few years ago, ''The investigation was botched.''

Yet it has never sparked the widespread obsessive interest of the Kennedy assassination or the equally brazen killing of Tupac Shakur. Attempts to reopen the case -- to uncover the possible roles of the F.B.I., New York Police Department and the Nation of Islam leadership, including Louis Farrakhan -- have gotten nowhere.

''The vast majority of white opinion at that time was that this was black-on-black crime, and maybe black-extremist-on-black-extremist crime,'' said David Garrow, a Pulitzer Prize-winning civil rights historian. ''And there was for decades a consensus in black communities that we are not going to pick up that rock to see what's underneath it.''

At the time Malcolm spoke at the Audubon Ballroom on Feb. 21, 1965, he was a marked man -- spied on by the F.B.I. and the police, denounced as a traitor by the Nation leadership, viscerally hated and beloved. Mr. Farrakhan declared him ''worthy of death.'' A week before his assassination, his home in Queens was firebombed while he and his wife and four daughters slept inside.

Seconds after Malcolm stepped to the lectern, gunfire rang out, then pandemonium.

Talmadge Hayer, a member of the Nation of Islam from a New Jersey mosque, was arrested fleeing the ballroom, with a clip from a handgun used in the killing. Later the police arrested two men from Malcolm's former Harlem mosque, Norman 3X Butler and Thomas 15X Johnson, both known as enforcers.

At trial, Mr. Hayer, who later became Mujahid Abdul Halim, admitted his guilt but said the other two men were innocent. All three men were convicted and received life sentences. Mr. Johnson, who became Khalil Islam, died in 2009; Mr. Butler, who is now Muhammad Abdul Aziz, was granted parole in 1985 and still maintains his innocence.

In the late 1970s, Mr. Halim filed affidavits naming four members of the Newark mosque as his partners in the crime. The civil rights lawyer William Kunstler moved to reopen the case but was denied.

Since then, the legwork has fallen to biographers and independent researchers, including a Washington, D.C., tour guide named Abdur-Rahman Muhammad, the central figure in the new documentary series.

''It bothered me that no one cared about it,'' Mr. Muhammad said. ''I didn't get paid to do any of this. I've sold cars. I'm just a ***working-class*** guy.''

Mr. Muhammad in 2010 uncovered the identity of one of the supposed assassins named in Mr. Hayer's affidavit, William Bradley, who had changed his name to Almustafa Shabazz and was married to a prominent Newark activist. It was Mr. Bradley's shotgun blast, researchers contend, that killed Malcolm.

Mr. Shabazz, who died in 2018, denied any involvement in the murder, and lived in plain sight. ''I knew him well,'' Cory Booker says in the documentary, adding that he was not aware of Mr. Shabazz's past identity.

Mr. Muhammad published Mr. Shabazz's name and photograph on his blog in 2010, and then shared his research with Manning Marable, who was working on his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, ''Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention.'' Mr. Muhammad believes that the other three men named in Mr. Hayer's affidavits are dead.

After the book came out, Alvin Sykes, a Kansas City activist who helped persuade the F.B.I. and Justice Department to create a cold case unit for civil rights-era killings, lobbied federal prosecutors to reinvestigate Malcolm's murder. The department declined. When Mr. Shabazz died, the last remaining loose end was Mr. Aziz, the former Norman 3X Butler, now 81, who served 20 years for a crime he insists he did not commit.

Lawyers for Mr. Aziz now hope the Manhattan district attorney will clear his name. A spokesman for Cyrus R. Vance Jr., the D.A., said in a statement that the preliminary review ''will inform the office regarding what further investigative steps may be undertaken.'' One of the prosecutors conducting the review, Peter Casolaro, played a vital role in throwing out the convictions of the five men wrongfully imprisoned for raping a jogger in Central Park in 1989.

Mr. Aziz, who declined an interview request, has said he could not have been at the Audubon that day because security would have blocked his entry, and that anyway, he was nearly immobile from a police beating a short while before. In the documentary he expresses little hope for the process. ''I just don't believe in these people,'' he says. ''I got 20 years of my life to show that I shouldn't believe in them.''

Not all are convinced. Karl Evanzz, author of ''The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X,'' cited film footage that he said shows Mr. Aziz at the Audubon, and dismissed Mr. Muhammad's research as unreliable.

David Shanies, who with the Innocence Project is representing Mr. Aziz, said only that the lawyers looked forward to working cooperatively with prosecutors ''to see that justice is done.'' Their case includes F.B.I. documents that were never shared with local police or prosecutors. Barry Scheck of the Innocence Project said that based on this evidence, ''We are troubled that the conviction was not vacated in 1978,'' when Mr. Hayer filed his affidavits.

If the district attorney stands by the conviction, the lawyers can move to argue it in State Supreme Court.

But even if Mr. Aziz prevails, it will not settle questions about the larger forces that many think contributed to Malcolm's death -- the law enforcement agencies that spied on him but failed to protect him, the Nation leaders who called tacitly for his head. That part of the story, along with volumes of unreleased F.B.I. files, may never fully surface.

''When you're dealing with a complex crime, and you simplify it to five members of the Nation of Islam walking into a ballroom, you don't give people the context they need,'' said Zak Kondo, author of ''Conspiracys: Unravelling the Assassination of Malcolm X.''

''A whole generation went to their graves knowing important information that people like me will never know,'' he said. ''That's the most frustrating part.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/nyregion/malcolm-x-assassination-case-reopened.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/nyregion/malcolm-x-assassination-case-reopened.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: At right, Malcolm X in 1963. He was assassinated on Feb. 21, 1965. A documentary called ''Who Killed Malcolm X?'' is now streaming on Netflix. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMANN ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MB1)

From top: Malcolm X was shot in 1965

Muhammad Abdul Aziz, left, convicted in the killing, was paroled in 1985, and Abdur-Rahman Muhammad, right, researched the murder

and Malcolm's Queens home was bombed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETTMANN ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

ARK MEDIA

STANLEY WOLFSON/WORLD TELEGRAM & SUN, VIA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS) (MB4)

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2020

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[***Rhode Island Is Taking Lead With a Model for 'Testing, Testing, Testing'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YSN-F6R1-JBG3-650H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 29, 2020 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1404 words

**Byline:** By Michael Powell

**Body**

The state has seen a rise in cases of the coronavirus, in part, experts say, because it is testing more than many states.

Rhode Island gives the appearance of a state where the coronavirus is a fire raging, the average number of daily infections more than quadrupling since the start of this month.

The reality is more complicated and encouraging, as state health workers have tested more residents per capita in Rhode Island than in any other state, leading them to discover many infections that might have gone overlooked elsewhere.

Extensive testing is seen as an essential tool, experts say, as states contemplate restarting public life, and search for ways to keep a handle on the virus's path and signs of new outbreaks in the days and weeks that follow. Five percent of Rhode Island's residents have undergone a test, compared with about 1 percent of people in states like Texas and Georgia, where reopening efforts are taking shape.

''Rhode Island is shining a light into the dark in a way that very few other states are doing,'' said Mark Lurie, a professor of epidemiology at Brown University in Providence. Rhode Island has been conducting an average of 283 tests per 100,000 residents a day, compared with 79 tests per 100,000 people in the United States over all.

To be sure, Rhode Island's relatively small population -- just over a million people -- makes it easier to carry out testing on a high percentage of residents, but the state's focus has grown intense.

''All I hear is testing, testing, testing,'' said Dr. Ashish Jha, who is director of Harvard's Global Health Institute and is helping Rhode Island's government. ''The bottom line is that there is no magic formula and the federal government is too often absent. But there are common lessons from states that have done a good job.''

On Monday, Gov. Gina Raimondo said that she intended in two weeks to begin the painstaking process of reopening Rhode Island's economy, depending on how the situation looks in the coming days. ''It's not going to be a flick of the switch,'' she said, cautioning that an uptick in hospitalizations could force her to delay. ''It's going to be slow, pinpointed, gradual.''

And all decisions going forward, Ms. Raimondo said, will rest on a foundation of testing and more testing, and tracing infections.

For the moment Rhode Island, the nation's smallest state, walks an uncertain path. The mayors of its densely packed and polyglot cities speak of rising rates of infection. Last week, health officials announced that workers at Taylor Farms New England, which packs salads and produce for supermarkets in North Kingstown, had tested positive for the virus. By Sunday, 133 cases had been reported in connection with the facility.

Statewide, hospitalizations appear to have peaked a week ago at 277, and have dropped slightly.

Deaths from the virus reached a daily peak of 19 in Rhode Island earlier this month, according to a New York Times tally, and fell to as low as five on one day last week. By Monday, 7,708 people in Rhode Island were reported to have tested positive for the virus and 233 people had died.

In its accomplishments and struggles, Rhode Island represents much that is confounding about confronting this virus. Like most of the governors in the Northeast, Ms. Raimondo was reluctant to issue a shelter-in-place order in mid-March, hoping that social distancing and the careful tracking of routes of infection might forestall a crushing shutdown of the economy.

She soon reversed herself, closing parks and tartly advising people crowding beaches and backyards to ''knock it off.'' On March 28, she ordered all but essential businesses and employees to shelter in place, saying: ''This is going to get very real very fast for all of us.''

A week later, Ms. Raimondo and Nicole Alexander-Scott, her health commissioner, made a concerted effort to ramp up testing after Rhode Island had trailed some other New England states on that front. State officials across the nation have struggled to acquire and administer large numbers of tests, two steps considered essential in stopping the spread of the virus and reopening economies. Rhode Island officials said they were uncertain about what the testing regimen would cost, as they were pulling it together quickly from private-sector donations, including CVS Pharmacy, and federal stimulus dollars.

In recent weeks, Ms. Raimondo, who has a background as a data-driven venture capitalist, has regularly urged residents to keep a journal of all people they encounter each day, in case they test positive for the virus and health workers need to track down their contacts. Amid the crisis, Ms. Raimondo's approval rating has risen to 80 percent, in one survey, from scraping by last fall with 36 percent.

''She's a no-baloney technocrat,'' said Ross Cheit, a professor in Brown University's public policy program. ''She's not charming but she's really smart, and that's made her really popular now.''

Of late, state and local officials have turned their focus on testing to Pawtucket and Central Falls -- dense, ***working-class*** cities nestled along the Seekonk River. These cities have multigenerational immigrant families, from Central America, Cape Verde and a dozen African nations, and many live tightly packed.

In Pawtucket, a city of 70,000 people, 570 residents have tested positive, second only to Providence, the state's largest city.

''We have police going old-school, cruising around with their microphones going, telling them to distance, to wash hands and that free testing is available,'' Mayor Donald R. Grebien of Pawtucket said.

The two cities now have platoons of workers trying to contact all residents, and in their native languages. The object is to persuade those who are symptomatic to get tested. To this end, they have placed a testing site in the middle of both cities, an approach that is critical because nearly one-fifth of residents do not have cars. Testing is free with a referral, and anyone who needs a lift to the site can get one. Providence also added a walk-up testing center last week.

Once a resident has tested positive, officials begin the painstaking task of trying to trace whom the person came in contact with. ''It's been a herculean effort,'' Ms. Raimondo said in a briefing. ''It's very labor intensive.''

Rhode Island is one of the few states to attempt such widespread testing and tracing. New York City until recently confined most of its testing to those who showed up at hospitals, the sickest of the sick. Perhaps as a result, Rhode Island's test results show infections near evenly distributed by age, without a tilt toward the oldest and sickest that is seen in most cities.

Ahead for the state is figuring out how to merge its elaborate testing program with a plan to reopen.

Ms. Raimondo and other officials have taken pains to make clear that the first months back will not resemble anything like pre-virus life. Retail stores could open for pickup of preordered items; restaurants with outdoor seating might soon be allowed to experiment. Each decision will entail a speculative, precarious calculus as the state tries to avoid new outbreaks. ''We're about to enter a whole new era of work,'' she said.

To some extent, the many unionized city employees who have worked through the shutdown, in offices and on bridges and roads, have pioneered this new way of work life: They wear masks and gloves and have their temperature taken every day. Working hours are staggered, and meals are solitary affairs.

''We police it pretty tight,'' said Michael Sabitoni, president of the Rhode Island Building & Construction Trades Council, which represents 16 unions. ''This is not the old life.''

In the weeks ahead, other states may look to Rhode Island for signs of how extensive testing can affect reopenings and whether it helps slow new outbreaks. Systematic testing, Dr. Lurie said, should allow officials to monitor the virus's path in the weeks ahead -- to see who is sick, and to react quickly to close a factory, a school or an office building if a new outbreak emerges.

''If you open too quickly and get a surge of infections, you lose the trust of the public who you've locked away for a month,'' he said. ''Staying closed a little longer is epidemically a wiser decision. Rhode Island has a chance to get it right.''

Keith Collins and Alex Schwartz contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/28/us/coronavirus-rhode-island.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/28/us/coronavirus-rhode-island.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A walk-up testing site in Providence. Rhode Island is the No. 1 state in virus testing per capita. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID GOLDMAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Dance Is in Ashes. Time to Arise.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:614V-DG41-JBG3-628C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 25, 2020 Sunday

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**Length:** 1741 words

**Byline:** By Gia Kourlas

**Body**

It's a scary time for body-based art. What will survive after the pandemic? As dance artists fight the old ways, a new empowerment is in the air.

When the coronavirus pandemic started, the first thing I did was panic. I didn't want to bum anyone out, but it didn't take me long to leap to a certain conclusion: With theaters and studios shutting down, the dance world would be devastated. What would come out of the ashes?

For a while I thought that the answer had to do with digital dance and how it might develop into something exciting. (That could still happen! It has its moments! People are trying!) But soon I started to obsess about the radical dance movement of the 1930s. Back then, protests and social justice were part of the fabric of modern dance as it met the moment of the Great Depression and the rise of authoritarianism. ''The Dance Is a Weapon.'' That was the title of the first recital of the New Dance Group, a socially minded collective formed in 1932.

For me, that period of dance haunts the time we're living in -- the pandemic, the election, the uprisings against racial injustice -- like a good, progressive ghost. It reminds us that dance is about what's happening in the world as much as it's about the poetry of bodies on a stage. This art form that I love is undernourished and undervalued, full of inequity among forms and an uneven balance of power among funders, presenters, choreographers and -- always last, though hopefully not for long -- dancers.

But instead of staying silent, the dance world is becoming more vocal by addressing issues -- amplified by the pandemic -- that have plagued it for years. It's because the show can't go on that there is finally time to deal with the bigger picture, especially issues of inequity.

In New York, it's no big mystery why the dancers who have been able to perform and work together in bubbles outside of the city predominantly come from ballet. Compared with other forms, ballet -- the rich uncle on the dance family tree -- is where much of the money and institutional power reside.

While ballet is certainly worthy, dance is bigger than any one form. (And with theaters closed and no opening day in sight, ballet is struggling, too.) It might seem that freelance artists working in more experimental circles don't carry as much weight as those whose dance home is Lincoln Center, where American Ballet Theater and New York City Ballet perform. But they tend to be the ones imagining new ways to explore the body and the intricacies of movement.

These freelance artists don't belong to unions; they don't have health insurance. No institutions have their back. They are dangling in the wind, in part, because of the kind of dance they champion.

It's bad out there, and it's going to get worse. With most performances halted, the part of dance that happens behind the scenes is increasingly difficult, if not impossible. It's a social art form -- ideas don't just incubate in studios. They come from conversations after class, or bumping into someone on the street, or in bars or at restaurants. And there's something about watching a dance with others that completes the work; I've been lucky to see a few performances in outdoor settings, but after the initial euphoria of watching live dance -- with an audience -- much of it seemed generic, business as usual. Yes, dancers need to move, but how? Under what circumstances can they carry urgency and weight?

At the same time, there is some urgency and friction developing around a dancer's place in the world, around funding, around agency and around the structural racism of institutions. And alongside the rise of the movements for equality, like Black Lives Matter, it feels like this is a new era of the dance artist as activist -- someone who links the injustices raging in the world with issues in dance.

At the start of the pandemic when performances -- and commissions -- were canceled, two choreographers, Emily Johnson and Miguel Gutierrez, spoke out. ''In NONE of the cancellation emails does anyone mention a partial payment of the fee or acknowledge the commitment and the economic implication of losing the income,'' Mr. Gutierrez wrote in an Instagram post. ''These are challenging times for everyone, but I want to remind all the presenters, universities, summer dance festivals, etc. (I'm speaking for many here) ... THIS IS MY FULL TIME JOB.''

Earlier this summer, a group initiated ''Creating New Futures: Working Guidelines for Ethics & Equity in Presenting Dance & Performance,'' an in-progress, collectively written document. Now in its first phase and at nearly 200 pages, the document is inspiring and rambling, insistent and hopeful. In it are galvanizing words by novelist and activist Arundhati Roy in The Financial Times who, in April, wrote, ''Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew.''

How can the culture of dance and performance be imagined anew? The group is searching for more transparency in funding as well as a more democratic distribution of what money there is. At the moment, that feels tenuous: Most institutions seem to be on the edge of an abyss, too. But this is the time to dream big and, from their insider perspectives, to come up with a plan and to acknowledge the truth about dance's ecosystem.

Activism emerges in other ways, too: One obvious but important thing is to just keep dance alive. In early October, Dance Rising Collective, a new organization of artists and administrators, held Dancing Rising: N.Y.C., a two-night event in which dancers performed at outdoor locations across the city. The same weekend, in solidarity with Dance Rising, Wide Awakes Dance Corps joined a citywide procession to offer ''Soul Train of a Nation,'' at Washington Square Park at the invitation of Lift Every Vote. The idea was to encourage voting and ''collective joy and resistance!,'' as its organizer the choreographer Leslie Cuyjet wrote in an Instagram post.

At the moment, the idea of collective resistance applies more to ideas than to actual dances, unlike the Depression era, which produced stark, tense works -- things like ''Steps in the Street,'' Martha Graham's 1936 response to fascism. Back then it was mainly women, just a decade or so after being granted the vote, who led the way: Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Sophie Maslow, Helen Tamiris and many more. Now it's people of color -- who make up so much of the dance world -- who are leading the way.

At the New Dance Group, the aim was ''developing and creating group and mass dances expressive of the ***working class*** and its revolutionary upsurge.'' The improvisatory practice of mass dance -- with its simple and direct movement -- was geared to untrained performers. A radical wave in the '60s and '70s -- starting with Judson Dance Theater, the experimental collective that ushered in postmodern dance -- came at another time of social unrest: the civil rights movement and the protests against the Vietnam War. Those practitioners, too, welcomed the untrained, unmannered body, even though they were extremely trained.

How will today's dances reflect our times? Until performances begin again, it's hard to say, but the digital world may offer some clues. At least for me, when something transcends the screen, it seems to have originated from a deep, internal place where there are no mirrors in a studio: It's made of equal parts corporeal control and grit or the all-consuming fortitude that comes from holding nothing back. That's not to imply it needs to be aggressively physical, only true. One thing dance can do is to turn what seems ordinary into art.

Dance is experiential. The coronavirus has reminded me that body-based art -- the kind that doesn't have to express meaning through words -- is a way in which to see the world more clearly. That's why even some digital programming can feel immediate. Jodi Melnick and Malcolm Low's ''Malcolm and Jodi in 12 parts'' for the Works & Process series at the Guggenheim Museum runs at just over five minutes, but this mesmerizing display of two people -- one large, the other small -- moving in tandem and in support of each other as their bodies ripple alongside the natural world is incandescent, encapsulating the fragility and the alienation of the moment.

Recently I was sucked into the much longer Metropolitan Museum of Art collaboration between the visual artist Lee Mingwei and the choreographer Bill T. Jones. In the seemingly simple act of sweeping rice with a broom over several hours, the cast, representing different parts of the dance and performance world -- a drag artist, a ballet dancer, a voguer, a street performer -- was able to clearly demonstrate the power that artists have when they come together.

Mr. Jones's casting shows us what the dance world could look like. It also illustrates the power of the group, which feels relevant when reading the growing number of voices behind ''Creating New Futures'' and its quest, in Ms. Roy's words, to forge ''a gateway between one world and the next.'' What do organizations like Dance Rising Collective and Wide Awakes Dance Corps have in common? Bodies joining forces.

Who knows when dance will come back? It will probably be one of the last art forms to return fully. Dance, the most neglected member of the performing arts, always seems to come in last. (This drives me crazy.) And who knows, maybe the damage caused by the pandemic -- rents are falling at least, though not nearly enough -- will create possibilities for the next dance movement. It's at times of unrest that change finally becomes impossible to ignore.

And all of it takes me back to the '30s, when class struggle and modern dance were intertwined. In ''Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942,'' Ellen Graff writes, ''The movement, artistic and social, was about power and where power started was in the dancers' own bodies.''

There are many questions in the air, but the idea of the collective body has weight -- we've seen how bodies can affect change. Yet a big one still remains: Can dance, or any art form really, be truly be equal? Dance is not a democratic art. But it can be better. And as tenuous as life is, this moment, this movement feels powerful. It's been a dark few months, and more are yet to come, but dance is stepping back into the spotlight. And it feels bright, potent and strong -- like a weapon.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/22/arts/dance/dance-future-pandemic.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/22/arts/dance/dance-future-pandemic.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, members of the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1937. Above left, a rehearsal for Miguel Gutierrez's ''This Bridge Called My Ass'' at the Chocolate Factory in 2018. Above right, a Wide Awakes Dance Corps event this month. Below, I-Ling Liu in Lee Mingwei and Bill T. Jones's ''Our Labyrinth'' at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in September. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT FRASER, VIA MARTHA GRAHAM RESOURCES

NINA WESTERVELT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MAJESTY ROYALE

STEPHANIE BERGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** A voice in my head makes the case to re-elect the president.

**Body**

A voice in my head makes the case to re-elect the president.

Last Sunday this section was turned over to essays making the case against the re-election of Donald Trump. I read all of the pieces, and found more than a few points with which I disagreed. But my commitment to contrarianism only goes so far: Fundamentally I agree with my colleagues that Trump should not be …

Heyyyyyy — you aren’t even going to let me make a case here?

Excuse me?

Oh, you know who I am. You let me slip out during the Covington Catholic [*controversy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html), remember, when the media that puts on kid gloves around Hunter Biden decided a random teenager with a smile they didn’t like was the face of white supremacy. Well, I’m back.

Ah, sure — you’re my right-wing id. And let me guess — you want to make the case that I should vote for Trump? I figured the coronavirus experience had shamed you into silence.

Shame is what you should feel, sellout. Look, I get that you’re a lost cause. But someone needs to tell you that you’re going to miss Trump when he’s gone.

Am I indeed? All right, go ahead, make the case.

I mean, it’s not particularly complicated. I read your columns about the Republicans, even your [*long-ago book*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) (and I saw its sales figures, so I know I’m in exclusive company), and all these years you’ve wanted — what? A populist G.O.P. that helps working families, something like that, with a more restrained foreign policy than the Bush era and a pro-life, religious core? Do I have that right?

You do.

That’s what Donald Trump has given you, you bloody ingrate, to the extent you ever get what you want in politics.

Oh, you mean the economic populism of a corporate tax cut and an “infrastructure week” that’s just a running joke.

No, I mean that Trump did two big things that no other president would have done together. He actually [*cut immigration rates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) and he backed a looser monetary policy.

You mean he ran an inhumane family separation policy and he appointed a bunch of hard-money cranks to the Federal Reserve.

The inhumane policy was abandoned quickly, and the cranks weren’t actually confirmed. I’m talking about results, not problems with particular appointees or policies. Why do you think the economy ran hot for so long, and [*low-wage workers did a lot better*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) under Trump than under Obama? Loose money, tight borders. A Democrat might have given you one; Ted Cruz might have given you the other. Only Trump could deliver both.

The inhumane policy is still having [*awful consequences*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html), and Jerome Powell deserves more credit for loose money than Trump’s jawboning.

Obama signed off on plenty of inhumane policies — [*those detention centers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) went up on his watch, remember, and he had [*record deportations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html), too. And, yeah, Powell deserves credit, but who appointed him? The economy under Trump was the best for the ***working class*** in two decades. And kicking him out means we go back to mass low-skilled immigration, back to wage stagnation …

Most economists think immigration’s effects on wages are pretty minimal.

Most economists these days have liberal biases that make them elevate [*weird case studies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) over simple common sense. Look, we just ran the policy experiment! Tighter borders, higher wages. You won’t talk me out of this.

I thought you were the one talking me out of my …

… your anti-Trump pieties, yeah, I am. Because then there’s foreign policy. No new wars! The Islamic State routed! At least the beginning of a withdrawal from Afghanistan! A bunch of Arab-Israeli peace agreements that would have won a normal president the Nobel Peace Prize!

No new wars except the ones we almost stumbled into with North Korea and Iran, and the ones percolating in regions where the United States has abdicated its superpower role. A non-withdrawal from Afghanistan because Trump can’t execute on his own positions.

“Percolating” is a word people use to describe things that aren’t actually that bad. Trump almost went to war with Iran, yeah, but in the end he left John Bolton at the altar. Put the Democrats back in and we’ll get the kind of “humanitarian” interventions and “fund-the-moderate-jihadists” gambits that ravaged Libya and made the Syrian situation worse.

Biden had a decent Obama-era record of opposing unwise escalations.

Personnel is policy, man! All the liberal hawks are coming back! You’ll see. And speaking of personnel, there’s nowhere you’re more ungrateful than the Supreme Court, where Trump has given you exactly what you wanted …

[*Neil Gorsuch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html), culture-war hall monitor?

Come on, no Republican president would have done better. Your big complaint was choosing Brett Kavanaugh over Amy Coney Barrett, and you’re getting Barrett, too.

And I support her elevation …

… but not the president who put her there. Oh, your hands are so clean!

Better than wading in corruption and demagogy and mass death, yeah. Can I offer some comebacks?

That wasn’t one?

I mean, it was a distillation. There are some ways that Trump has been better than I feared, and things he’s done that I wholeheartedly support. But he’s also the most corrupt American president of modern times: The liberals are wrong to see him as a dictator, but that doesn’t make his [*web of self-enrichment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) and pardons for cronies and Ukrainian abuses a good thing. He’s a bigot and an aggressive liar, he winks at violence, and he’s exacerbated one of his party’s worst tendencies, its obsession with the minor threat of voter fraud and its eagerness to throw up impediments to voting. What he’s given to cultural conservatives with the courts, he’s taken by making us seem like hypocrites and making embarrassments like Jerry Falwell Jr. the face of conservative Christendom. He’s radicalized young people and empowered some truly [*terrible tendencies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) on the left that will reshape American institutions deep into Amy Coney Barrett’s old age. And I haven’t even gotten to the coronavirus.

We’ll get to it. But you know, because [*you’ve written about it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html), that there was self-enrichment in Washington long before Trump. It was just laundered through respectable channels rather than the Trump hotels. I’ll concede that Trump is more naked about it, more impeachable. But sometimes you have to vote for the corrupt candidate when the policy stakes are more important.

And the birther candidate.

And the — look, Trump says racially offensive stuff, but he’s going to win [*more minority votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) than he did last time, more than Mitt Romney did. You [*write skeptically*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) about white liberals who have become more “anti-racist” than African-Americans, but you’re doing the same weird thing: If Trump is expanding the G.O.P.’s appeal to minorities, who are you to say he’s too racist?

He’s benefiting from larger trends toward class and gender polarization, and he’s emphatically not expanding the G.O.P.’s appeal overall —

Right, because wimps like you won’t support him! All this stuff about how he’s “radicalized” people and hurt religious witness — that’s just self-serving intuition, with no hard data behind it. It’s a convenient excuse.

No more convenient than you ignoring all the Americans who have died from a pandemic on Trump’s utterly incompetent watch.

You yourself have written that Trump [*can’t be held responsible*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) for all those deaths. You said our response had a lot in common with Europe’s — and look at their case numbers lately. You were right!

I also said that we were modestly worse in ways that can be attributed to Trump’s terrible crisis management, which is not improving as we head deeper into the fall. So that “modestly” could add up to 60,000, 70,000, 80,000 dead. That’s the worst excess-death fiasco for an American president since the Vietnam War.

And Joe Biden could repeal the Hyde Amendment, fund abortion with public money, and preside over an [*extra 60,000 abortions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/opinion/covington-catholic-march-for-life.html) every single year.

Which is why I want Republicans to hold their position in the Senate and prevent that from happening — and I’m not the one dragging them downward, Trump is!

You know, liberals always say that pro-lifers don’t really think that fetuses are human beings, and you’re proving them right. You think pandemic deaths are worse than the possibility of hundreds of thousands more abortions. Your concern for the unborn is fake news.

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I’m sorry to see you revert to fearmongering.

And I’m sorry that you can’t look at this situation the way a lot of Trump supporters did in 2016, when they conceded they were gambling, putting an unfit figure in the White House, because the stakes with the Supreme Court were so high. Well, guess what — you won the judicial part of the gamble, and in the pandemic you also got a taste of what can go wrong when you play dice with the presidency. So why not just take your high court winnings and walk away from the table, instead of going double or nothing hoping that the next disaster isn’t worse?

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You’re giving yourself —

The last word, yes. Talk to you on the other side.

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The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Ross Douthat

**Body**

A voice in my head makes the case to re-elect the president.

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I mean, it's not particularly complicated. I read your columns about the Republicans, even your long-ago book (and I saw its sales figures, so I know I'm in exclusive company), and all these years you've wanted -- what? A populist G.O.P. that helps working families, something like that, with a more restrained foreign policy than the Bush era and a pro-life, religious core? Do I have that right?

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**Graphic**

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**Byline:** John Leland

**Highlight:** Fifty-five years later, the case may be reopened.

**Body**

Fifty-five years later, the case may be reopened.

For more than half a century, scholars have maintained that prosecutors convicted the wrong men in the [*assassination of Malcolm X*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/17/nyregion/malcolm-x-killing-exonerated.html).

Now, 55 years after that bloody afternoon in February 1965, the Manhattan district attorney’s office is reviewing whether to reinvestigate the murder.

Some new evidence comes from a six-part [*documentary*](http://www.ark-media.net/current-projects/tag/Who+Killed+Malcolm+X%3F)called “Who Killed Malcolm X?,” streaming on Netflix Feb. 7, which posits that two of the men convicted could not have been at the scene that day.

Instead it points the finger at four members of a Nation of Islam mosque in Newark, N.J., depicting their involvement as an open secret in their city. One even appeared in a 2010 campaign ad for then-Newark mayor Cory Booker.

“What got us hooked,” said Rachel Dretzin, a director of the documentary along with Phil Bertelsen, “was the notion that the likely shotgun assassin of Malcolm X was living in plain sight in Newark, and that many people knew of his involvement, and he was uninvestigated, unprosecuted, unquestioned.”

The case has long tempted scholars, who see a conspiracy hidden in unreleased government documents. A detective on the case, Anthony V. Bouza, [*wrote*](http://www.theragblog.com/books-tony-bouza-manning-marables-malcolm-x/) flatly a few years ago, “The investigation was botched.”

Yet it has never sparked the widespread obsessive interest of the Kennedy assassination or the equally brazen killing of Tupac Shakur. Attempts to reopen the case — to uncover the possible roles of the F.B.I., New York Police Department and the Nation of Islam leadership, including Louis Farrakhan — have gotten nowhere.

“The vast majority of white opinion at that time was that this was black-on-black crime, and maybe black-extremist-on-black-extremist crime,” said David Garrow, a Pulitzer Prize-winning civil rights historian. “And there was for decades a consensus in black communities that we are not going to pick up that rock to see what’s underneath it.”

At the time Malcolm spoke at the Audubon Ballroom on Feb. 21, 1965, he was a marked man — spied on by the F.B.I. and the police, denounced as a traitor by the Nation leadership, viscerally hated and beloved. Mr. Farrakhan declared him “worthy of death.” A week before his assassination, his home in Queens was firebombed while he and his wife and four daughters slept inside.

Seconds after Malcolm stepped to the lectern, gunfire rang out, then pandemonium.

Talmadge Hayer, a member of the Nation of Islam from a New Jersey mosque, was arrested fleeing the ballroom, with a clip from a handgun used in the killing. Later the police arrested two men from Malcolm’s former Harlem mosque, Norman 3X Butler and Thomas 15X Johnson, both known as enforcers.

At trial, Mr. Hayer, who later became Mujahid Abdul Halim, admitted his guilt but said the other two men were innocent. All three men were convicted and received life sentences. Mr. Johnson, who became Khalil Islam, died in 2009; Mr. Butler, who is now Muhammad Abdul Aziz, was granted parole in 1985 and still maintains his innocence.

In the late 1970s, Mr. Halim filed affidavits naming four members of the Newark mosque as his partners in the crime. The civil rights lawyer William Kunstler moved to reopen the case but was denied.

Since then, the legwork has fallen to biographers and independent researchers, including a Washington, D.C., tour guide named Abdur-Rahman Muhammad, the central figure in the new documentary series.

“It bothered me that no one cared about it,” Mr. Muhammad said. “I didn’t get paid to do any of this. I’ve sold cars. I’m just a ***working-class*** guy.”

Mr. Muhammad in 2010 [*uncovered the identity*](https://singularvoice.wordpress.com/2010/04/22/for-the-first-time-in-history-the-face-of-william-bradley-shotgun-assassin-of-malcolm-x-el-hajj-malik-el-shabazz/) of one of the supposed assassins named in Mr. Hayer’s affidavit, William Bradley, who had changed his name to Almustafa Shabazz and was married to a prominent Newark activist. It was Mr. Bradley’s shotgun blast, researchers contend, that killed Malcolm.

Mr. Shabazz, who died in 2018, denied any involvement in the murder, and lived in plain sight. “I knew him well,” Cory Booker says in the documentary, adding that he was not aware of Mr. Shabazz’s past identity.

Mr. Muhammad published Mr. Shabazz’s name and photograph on [*his blog*](https://singularvoice.wordpress.com/2010/04/22/for-the-first-time-in-history-the-face-of-william-bradley-shotgun-assassin-of-malcolm-x-el-hajj-malik-el-shabazz/) in 2010, and then shared his research with Manning Marable, who was working on his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, [*“Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/08/books/malcolm-x-a-life-of-reinvention-by-manning-marable-review.html) Mr. Muhammad believes that the other three men named in Mr. Hayer’s affidavits are dead.

After the book came out, Alvin Sykes, a Kansas City activist who helped persuade the F.B.I. and Justice Department to create a cold case unit for civil rights-era killings,[*lobbied federal prosecutors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/23/nyregion/biography-helps-renew-calls-to-investigate-malcolm-x-assassination.html?_r=2) to reinvestigate Malcolm’s murder. The department declined. When Mr. Shabazz died, the last remaining loose end was Mr. Aziz, the former Norman 3X Butler, now 81, who served 20 years for a crime he insists he did not commit.

Lawyers for Mr. Aziz now hope the Manhattan district attorney will clear his name. A spokesman for Cyrus R. Vance Jr., the D.A., said in a statement that the preliminary review “will inform the office regarding what further investigative steps may be undertaken.” One of the prosecutors conducting the review, Peter Casolaro, played a vital role in throwing out the convictions of the five men wrongfully imprisoned for raping a jogger in Central Park in 1989.

Mr. Aziz, who declined an interview request, has said he could not have been at the Audubon that day because security would have blocked his entry, and that anyway, he was nearly immobile from a police beating a short while before. In the documentary he expresses little hope for the process. “I just don’t believe in these people,” he says. “I got 20 years of my life to show that I shouldn’t believe in them.”

Not all are convinced. Karl Evanzz, author of “The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X,” cited film footage that he said shows Mr. Aziz at the Audubon, and dismissed Mr. Muhammad’s research as unreliable.

David Shanies, who with the Innocence Project is representing Mr. Aziz, said only that the lawyers looked forward to working cooperatively with prosecutors “to see that justice is done.” Their case includes F.B.I. documents that were never shared with local police or prosecutors. Barry Scheck of the Innocence Project said that based on this evidence, “We are troubled that the conviction was not vacated in 1978,” when Mr. Hayer filed his affidavits.

If the district attorney stands by the conviction, the lawyers can move to argue it in State Supreme Court.

But even if Mr. Aziz prevails, it will not settle questions about the larger forces that many think contributed to Malcolm’s death — the law enforcement agencies that spied on him but failed to protect him, the Nation leaders who called tacitly for his head. That part of the story, along with volumes of unreleased F.B.I. files, may never fully surface.

“When you’re dealing with a complex crime, and you simplify it to five members of the Nation of Islam walking into a ballroom, you don’t give people the context they need,” said Zak Kondo, author of “Conspiracys: Unravelling the Assassination of Malcolm X.”

“A whole generation went to their graves knowing important information that people like me will never know,” he said. “That’s the most frustrating part.”

PHOTOS: At right, Malcolm X in 1963. He was assassinated on Feb. 21, 1965. A documentary called “Who Killed Malcolm X?” is now streaming on Netflix. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMANN ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MB1); From top: Malcolm X was shot in 1965; Muhammad Abdul Aziz, left, convicted in the killing, was paroled in 1985, and Abdur-Rahman Muhammad, right, researched the murder; and Malcolm’s Queens home was bombed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETTMANN ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES; ARK MEDIA; STANLEY WOLFSON/WORLD TELEGRAM &amp; SUN, VIA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS) (MB4)

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Art Galleries Warily Reopen In South Korea***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YSN-F6R1-JBG3-64XF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1327 words

**Byline:** By Su-Hyun Lee and Brett Sokol

**Body**

Art galleries remain shuttered around the world but in South Korea, they reopen -- with contact tracing and masks. Welcome to the post-Covid-19 world.

SEOUL -- ''I wouldn't say things are totally back to normal,'' explained Passion Lim, taking in the scene on Thursday at the opening for Billy Childish paintings at the Lehmann Maupin gallery. ''But it's a start,'' he added.

Indeed, if you ignored the face masks on about half the attending crowd, it might have been opening night at a blue-chip art gallery anywhere -- anywhere before the coronavirus pandemic, that is. Now, as a steady stream of Mercedes sedans pulled up to the valet, disgorging their fashion-forward passengers, South Korea's return to business as usual seemed almost surreal.

Elsewhere around the world, art galleries and museums remain shuttered, hemorrhaging staff and plaintively asking, What will it take to reopen? And just as crucially, What will this new art world look like? Seoul, a dense metropolis with a population of nearly 10 million but only two coronavirus deaths to date, is offering one possible answer.

Mr. Lim had already been to three other gallery openings the previous night in the art-centric Samcheong-dong neighborhood. Having worked from home since February, he was now embracing flexible shelter-in-place guidelines with a vengeance. Social distancing edicts remain in place until May 5, with major museums closed until May 7 and the resumption of school still on hold. But people are starting to refill Seoul's streets -- some skittish, others bounding down the sidewalks.

''It doesn't make me feel uncomfortable being around people because I trust the government's response to the virus,'' Mr. Lim said as he made his way through the crowd of about 50 inside the gallery's two-story, 3,200-square-foot space. He pointed to South Korean policies that have come to be seen as an international model: government-supplied N95-grade masks for everyone, comprehensive testing, thorough contact tracing of the infected, and immediate isolation of anyone exposed to an infected person.

Here at Lehmann Maupin, a gallery attendant dutifully took down the name, address and phone number of everyone who came through the front door -- just in case someone at the opening later found out they had been exposed to the virus. Yet with the daily national infection rate having fallen to single digits, Mr. Lim appeared downright blasé about any remaining risks. His mask was pulled down below his chin; others in the crowd offhandedly explained that their masks were in their cars.

Mr. Lim was far more concerned that his full name might appear in a newspaper article about wealthy art collectors. Given his China-focused technology business, he was wary of attracting attention from Beijing. (Passion is the first name Mr. Lim uses online when chatting about culture.) ''Now is actually a good time to see if you can buy art,'' he continued, ''because collectors around the world having a hard time have put forward quite good art pieces into the market at cheap prices.''

Back in New York City, Lehmann Maupin's co-founder, Rachel Lehmann, said she was painfully aware of the market dynamic. The gallery's Hong Kong branch had reopened, but its flagship Manhattan locations had been closed since March 13. With sales there reduced to a crawl, she said she had been forced to institute salary cuts and furloughs among its 36 staffers. Still, having worked as an art dealer for several decades and weathered a string of recessions, she took the long view: This too shall pass.

''It's what I have seen happening in 2008, and after 9/11, and even earlier, at the end of the '70s in Europe,'' she said. In fact, Asia was already rebounding. Her Seoul branch, which opened in 2017, already accounted for 20 to 25 percent of Lehmann Maupin's total revenue before the pandemic. Now, after an initial pause, many of Seoul's moneyed collectors have re-entered the fray.

Ms. Lehmann noted that Korea-based artists like Lee Bul and Su Se Ok had long been represented by her gallery in New York. But establishing a more public footprint reflected the growing number of Korean contemporary art collectors. The similarly high-powered Pace and Perrotin galleries, based in New York and Paris, had also recently opened Seoul branches -- as had the scrappier Los Angeles-based Various Small Fires. All are now competing for Korea's art dollars with the country's homegrown galleries.

Accordingly, Ms. Lehmann said, she selected Billy Childish for this angst-ridden moment. ''The people I'm talking with are looking for something really real, really true, not fabricated,'' she explained, describing a newfound hunger for emotionally resonant work which could serve as a ''survival kit.''

Mr. Childish's canvases, with forceful brushwork evoking the psychologically loaded landscapes of Vincent van Gogh, and his no less expressive portraiture nodding to Edvard Munch, certainly fit that bill. By last Friday afternoon, according to the gallery, four of the seven Childish paintings at the Seoul opening had already sold for approximately $24,000 to $33,000 each, to three buyers in South Korea and one who lives in the United States. (Mr. Childish's record at auction is $56,250 at Christie's in 2018, according to Artnet.)

No one is more surprised by Mr. Childish's art world trajectory than Mr. Childish himself. ''It was an overnight success that only took 40 years,'' the 60-year-old artist said playfully. Speaking by phone from his home in Rochester, England, he recalled being expelled from London's prestigious Saint Martins School of Art in 1980 (when he still went by his birth name, Steven Hamper). Insisting on the need for classical figuration over abstraction, decrying conceptualism, and arguing for a ***working-class***-centered radicalism in lieu of the identity politics then entering art theory, he had picked bitter fights with instructors and fellow students alike.

''I was told my attitude, and the way I talked to other artists, and my opinion about art would mean I would never get anywhere in the art world,'' he remembered with obvious relish. Though he never stopped painting, Mr. Childish became better known as a singer and guitarist with groups like Thee Headcoats, leading The New York Times to crown him ''the reigning world champion of garage rock'' in 1998.

Mr. Childish also never stopped publicly railing against the gatekeepers of the contemporary art world, whether leading guerrilla-theater-styled protests outside the Tate Modern or crashing (and being physically ejected from) the museum's Turner Prize celebration. Yet over the past decade he has oddly found himself feted by some of these same figures. ''I just got lucky because people I knew 30 years ago came into some sort of position of power,'' he said, referring to longtime supporters such as the curator Matthew Higgs and the Berlin dealer Tim Neuger. Nonetheless, he's skeptical it augurs any broader back-to-basics art world shift. The only post-coronavirus change, he mused, might simply be a mass desire to look at artwork without having to sit in front of a screen.

That was certainly the spirit back at the Lehmann Maupin opening. ''You have to see the paintings with your own eyes, especially if you are a collector like me,'' insisted Soh Ji-hye, 31, who works in marketing. She was echoed by another young visitor, Park Jung-mi, 29, a retail saleswoman, who said she'd been cooped up since January. ''But tonight I went out of my way to get out of the house,'' she said. ''Seeing the paintings directly is so different from seeing them online.''

''Online sales? Not that effective,'' said the gallery's senior director, Son Emma, for whom the virus is increasingly in the rear-view mirror. As the last stragglers left, Ms. Son was already thinking ahead to managing new crises. She glanced down at her phone. ''The exchange rate is not that bad,'' she offered, brightening.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/27/arts/design/seoul-art-world-virus-gallery.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/27/arts/design/seoul-art-world-virus-gallery.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Lehmann Maupin gallery in Seoul, South Korea, is showing Billy Childish's works. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WOOHAE CHO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

From top: The Lehmann Maupin gallery in South Korea, reopened last week

visitors provided personal information for contact tracing purposes

and an exhibition of Billy Childish's works included ''midnight sun/frozen lake'' (2017). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY WOOHAE CHO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BILLY CHILDISH AND LEHMANN MAUPIN, NEW YORK, HONG KONG AND SEOUL) (C2)

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Which Democratic Candidate Is for You?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y4H-W0R1-JBG3-645M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1360 words

**Byline:** By Sydney Ember, Lazaro Gamio, Lauren Leatherby and Sarah Almukhtar

**Body**

Primary season is about to begin -- and there are still so many Democratic candidates in the race. Unsure who matches with some of your views and priorities? To make it a little easier, we stacked up the eight most viable contenders and tried to determine how they would respond to a mix of questions. Take our handy quiz and see which candidate could be your match. For each question, check the box if you agree. SYDNEY EMBER and LAZARO GAMIO

So, Whom Should You Choose?

Joseph R. Biden Jr.

The last few years may have had you pining for President Obama -- and what better way to restore his agenda and approach to governing to the White House than to elect his vice president, Joseph R. Biden Jr.? Mr. Biden, 77, has touted his experience, particularly in the realm of foreign policy, and pledged to try to work with Republicans to pass a bipartisan agenda that is less revolutionary than palatable.

Mr. Biden embraces fixes to the health care system and the addition of a public option rather than a full-scale overhaul. He has also proposed tuition-free community college for up to two years, but does not support tuition-free four-year public colleges.

Mr. Biden offers a reset of sorts, but some of his detractors fault him for refusing to offer anything bigger. That's O.K. with you, though -- let's all just make an effort to get along again so we can stop worrying that American policy, foreign and domestic, is being conducted by tweet. In a ''battle for the soul of America,'' who wouldn't prefer Middle Class Joe as their commander in chief?

Michael R. Bloomberg

You like big bucks, and you cannot lie! A latecomer to the Democratic primary campaign, Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York, offers bottomless resources in his effort to win the Democratic nomination and retake the White House. And who better to go toe to toe with President Trump than a New York billionaire?

A Democrat-turned-Republican-turned-independent-turned-Democrat, Mr. Bloomberg is defined less by ideology than many of his rivals are. He advocates core liberal causes, including gun control and battling climate change, but he is also a businessman who favors pragmatism. At 77, he is one of the oldest candidates in the race.

Mr. Bloomberg is self-funding his campaign and is not accepting campaign contributions. His strategy for winning the primary includes bypassing the first four early nominating states and spending tens of millions of dollars on advertising in Super Tuesday states.

Pete Buttigieg

Pete Buttigieg says he wants you to imagine the first day the sun comes up and Mr. Trump is no longer the president of the United States. Can you see it? Do you want change -- but maybe not too much change? Then Mr. Buttigieg, the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Ind., is your kind of candidate. With his emphasis on American values, patriotism and unity, Mr. Buttigieg is running a campaign that is more thematic than heavy on policy details.

But in this divisive age, his Midwestern centrism, intelligence and plain-spokenness -- not to mention the military experience -- may have convinced you that he just might be able to mend some of the country's ills. He was one of the first candidates to declare himself open to expanding the size of the Supreme Court. If elected, Mr. Buttigieg would be the youngest and first openly gay president.

Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar has pitched herself as a Midwestern moderate, with the experience and record of electability that give her an advantage against Mr. Trump. For Democrats who worry the party is tacking too far left, Ms. Klobuchar is a viable, plain-spoken alternative to Joseph R. Biden Jr., Pete Buttigieg and Michael R. Bloomberg.

A three-term senator from Minnesota, Ms. Klobuchar, 59, has built her campaign on the argument that she can win in a battleground region. She often touts her legislative record in the Senate and her ability to reach across the aisle to get things done. She is vocally opposed to some of the most-discussed liberal policy ideas, including tuition-free public colleges and ''Medicare for all.'' If you care more about fixing the country's crumbling infrastructure than fighting over liberal purity tests, to say nothing of electing the first female president, then Ms. Klobuchar may be right for you.

Bernie Sanders

With an anti-establishment message that has remained largely unchanged for five decades, Bernie Sanders, the independent senator from Vermont, wants nothing less than a political revolution -- and you probably do, too! A democratic socialist, Mr. Sanders, 78, is the lion of the liberal left and a champion of the ***working class***, pushing for agenda items that have now become standard in the Democratic Party: raising the minimum wage to $15 an hour, making public colleges tuition-free and eliminating the influence of big money in politics. His signature issue, ''Medicare for all,'' is a total reimagining of the health care system in America.

You probably already know Mr. Sanders, who has inspired an intensely loyal fan base, but he can be a polarizing figure. Some voters still resent his run in 2016 against Hillary Clinton and blame the division his campaign helped sow for the election of Mr. Trump. But for those who support Mr. Sanders, he can do no wrong: He is authentic and honest and the only candidate who can excite enough voters to defeat Mr. Trump in November. If he wins, he would be the oldest president ever elected.

Tom Steyer

Tom Steyer is a billionaire former hedge fund investor and impeachment crusader who casts himself as a populist outsider with pockets deep enough to defeat Mr. Trump. Effectively his own super PAC, he has promised to spend at least $100 million of his personal fortune on his presidential bid and has already spent millions on television advertising -- which may be how you got to know him. Mr. Steyer has called for decriminalizing border crossing and expanding the Supreme Court. He has embraced a wealth tax and has called for emergency action to address climate change.

Unlike Mr. Bloomberg, Mr. Steyer, 62, is not running as a moderate. So if you are a progressive who is open to nominating a rich businessman who can challenge Mr. Trump on economic matters, you might consider Mr. Steyer.

Elizabeth Warren

One thing is clear: You agree with Elizabeth Warren that it's time for ''big, structural change.'' With her plan for (almost) everything, and her goal of maneuvering within the system to tilt power toward working people and away from corporations and the moneyed elite, Ms. Warren, 70, the senator from Massachusetts, wants wholesale change in a way that may be less alienating than the all-out ''political revolution'' of Bernie Sanders. She has embraced ''Medicare for all,'' a wealth tax and tuition-free public colleges.

One of Ms. Warren's favorite words is ''fight,'' and she is ready for one. But she has struggled to assure voters that she can and would defeat Mr. Trump, which has given some Democrats pause. That doesn't bother you so much -- you're ready to elect the first female president.

Andrew Yang

Andrew Yang is an entrepreneur and former tech executive with zero political experience, but that may make him perfect for you. An outsider who has taken on unusual political topics such as robots, Mr. Yang, 45, is known for proposing that the federal government give each American adult a monthly check for $1,000, regardless of income or employment status. He calls these payments the Freedom Dividend. A big part of his message is also warning against the perils of automation.

Though he began his campaign in relative obscurity, he has taken off -- thanks in part to Twitter -- and is now raising money to rival many of his better-known opponents. Should he be elected, he would be the first Asian-American president.

If you like Mr. Yang, there's a chance you liked Bernie Sanders in 2016. Like Mr. Sanders, Mr. Yang is running as an insurgent with a loyal following of supporters who are sick of Washington, and there is overlap between their supporters. Sound like you? Then put on your MATH hat and get ready to join the ''Yang Gang.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/03/us/04candidate-quiz.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/03/us/04candidate-quiz.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Could Dance Be a Weapon All Over Again?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6145-Y4F1-DXY4-X4X5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ARTS; dance

**Length:** 1810 words

**Byline:** Gia Kourlas

**Highlight:** It’s a scary time for body-based art. What will survive after the pandemic? As dance artists fight the old ways, a new empowerment is in the air.

**Body**

It’s a scary time for body-based art. What will survive after the pandemic? As dance artists fight the old ways, a new empowerment is in the air.

When the coronavirus pandemic started, the first thing I did was panic. I didn’t want to bum anyone out, but it didn’t take me long to leap to a certain conclusion: With theaters and studios shutting down, the dance world would be devastated. What would come out of the ashes?

For a while I thought that the answer had to do with digital dance and how it might develop into something exciting. (That could still happen! It has its moments! People are trying!) But soon I started to obsess about the radical dance movement of the 1930s. Back then, protests and social justice were part of the fabric of modern dance as it met the moment of the Great Depression and the rise of authoritarianism. “The Dance Is a Weapon.” That was the title of the first recital of the New Dance Group, a socially minded collective formed in 1932.

For me, that period of dance haunts the time we’re living in — the pandemic, the election, the uprisings against racial injustice — like a good, progressive ghost. It reminds us that dance is about what’s happening in the world as much as it’s about the poetry of bodies on a stage. This art form that I love is undernourished and undervalued, full of inequity among forms and an uneven balance of power among funders, presenters, choreographers and — always last, though hopefully not for long — dancers.

But instead of staying silent, the dance world is becoming more vocal by addressing issues — amplified by the pandemic — that have plagued it for years. It’s because the show can’t go on that there is finally time to deal with the bigger picture, especially issues of inequity.

In New York, it’s no big mystery why the dancers who have been able to perform and work together in bubbles outside of the city predominantly come from ballet. Compared with other forms, ballet — the rich uncle on the dance family tree — is where much of the money and institutional power reside.

While ballet is certainly worthy, dance is bigger than any one form. (And with theaters closed and no opening day in sight, ballet is struggling, too.) It might seem that freelance artists working in more experimental circles don’t carry as much weight as those whose dance home is Lincoln Center, where American Ballet Theater and New York City Ballet perform. But they tend to be the ones imagining new ways to explore the body and the intricacies of movement.

These freelance artists don’t belong to unions; they don’t have health insurance. No institutions have their back. They are dangling in the wind, in part, because of the kind of dance they champion.

It’s bad out there, and it’s going to get worse. With most performances halted, the part of dance that happens behind the scenes is increasingly difficult, if not impossible. It’s a social art form — ideas don’t just incubate in studios. They come from conversations after class, or bumping into someone on the street, or in bars or at restaurants. And there’s something about watching a dance with others that completes the work; I’ve been lucky to see a few performances in outdoor settings, but after the initial euphoria of watching live dance — with an audience — much of it seemed generic, business as usual. Yes, dancers need to move, but how? Under what circumstances can they carry urgency and weight?

At the same time, there is some urgency and friction developing around a dancer’s place in the world, around funding, around agency and around the structural racism of institutions. And alongside the rise of the movements for equality, like Black Lives Matter, it feels like this is a new era of the dance artist as activist — someone who links the injustices raging in the world with issues in dance.

At the start of the pandemic when performances — and commissions — were canceled, two choreographers, Emily Johnson and Miguel Gutierrez, spoke out. “In NONE of the cancellation emails does anyone mention a partial payment of the fee or acknowledge the commitment and the economic implication of losing the income,” Mr. Gutierrez wrote in an Instagram post. “These are challenging times for everyone, but I want to remind all the presenters, universities, summer dance festivals, etc. (I’m speaking for many here) … THIS IS MY FULL TIME JOB.”

Earlier this summer, a group initiated “Creating New Futures: Working Guidelines for Ethics &amp; Equity in Presenting Dance &amp; Performance,” an in-progress, collectively written document. Now in its [*first phase and at nearly 200 pages*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B6bbiFTBP1UAvt9qFchr7nLUndh7zorA), the document is inspiring and rambling, insistent and hopeful. In it are galvanizing words by novelist and activist Arundhati Roy, who in April wrote in The Financial Times, “[*Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew.”*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B6bbiFTBP1UAvt9qFchr7nLUndh7zorA)

How can the culture of dance and performance be imagined anew? The group is searching for more transparency in funding as well as a more democratic distribution of what money there is. At the moment, that feels tenuous: Most institutions seem to be on the edge of an abyss, too. But this is the time to dream big and, from their insider perspectives, to come up with a plan and to acknowledge the truth about dance’s ecosystem.

Activism emerges in other ways, too: One obvious but important thing is to just keep dance alive. In early October, Dance Rising Collective, a new organization of artists and administrators, held Dancing Rising: N.Y.C., a two-night event in which dancers performed at outdoor locations across the city. The same weekend, in solidarity with Dance Rising, [*Wide Awakes Dance Corps*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B6bbiFTBP1UAvt9qFchr7nLUndh7zorA) joined a citywide procession to offer “Soul Train of a Nation,” at Washington Square Park at the invitation of Lift Every Vote. The idea was to encourage voting and “collective joy and resistance!,” as its organizer the choreographer Leslie Cuyjet wrote in an Instagram post.

At the moment, the idea of collective resistance applies more to ideas than to actual dances, unlike the Depression era, which produced stark, tense works — things like [*“Steps in the Street,”*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B6bbiFTBP1UAvt9qFchr7nLUndh7zorA) Martha Graham’s 1936 response to fascism. Back then it was mainly women, just a decade or so after being granted the vote, who led the way: Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Sophie Maslow, Helen Tamiris and many more. Now it’s people of color — who make up so much of the dance world — who are leading the way.

At the New Dance Group, the aim was “developing and creating group and mass dances expressive of the ***working class*** and its revolutionary upsurge.” The improvisatory practice of mass dance — with its simple and direct movement — was geared to untrained performers. A radical wave in the ’60s and ’70s — starting with Judson Dance Theater, the experimental collective that ushered in postmodern dance — came at another time of social unrest: the civil rights movement and the protests against the Vietnam War. Those practitioners, too, welcomed the untrained, unmannered body, even though they were extremely trained.

How will today’s dances reflect our times? Until performances begin again, it’s hard to say, but the digital world may offer some clues. At least for me, when something transcends the screen, it seems to have originated from a deep, internal place where there are no mirrors in a studio: It’s made of equal parts corporeal control and grit or the all-consuming fortitude that comes from holding nothing back. That’s not to imply it needs to be aggressively physical, only true. One thing dance can do is to turn what seems ordinary into art.

Dance is experiential. The coronavirus has reminded me that body-based art — the kind that doesn’t have to express meaning through words — is a way in which to see the world more clearly. That’s why even some digital programming can feel immediate. Jodi Melnick and Malcolm Low’s [*“Malcolm and Jodi in 12 parts”*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B6bbiFTBP1UAvt9qFchr7nLUndh7zorA) for the Works &amp; Process series at the Guggenheim Museum runs at just over five minutes, but this mesmerizing display of two people — one large, the other small — moving in tandem and in support of each other as their bodies ripple alongside the natural world is incandescent, encapsulating the fragility and the alienation of the moment.

Recently I was sucked into the much longer Metropolitan Museum of Art collaboration between [*the visual artist Lee Mingwei and the choreographer Bill T. Jones*](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B6bbiFTBP1UAvt9qFchr7nLUndh7zorA). In the seemingly simple act of sweeping rice with a broom over several hours, the cast, representing different parts of the dance and performance world — a drag artist, a ballet dancer, a voguer, a street performer — was able to clearly demonstrate the power that artists have when they come together.

Mr. Jones’s casting shows us what the dance world could look like. It also illustrates the power of the group, which feels relevant when reading the growing number of voices behind “Creating New Futures” and its quest, in Ms. Roy’s words, to forge “a gateway between one world and the next.” What do organizations like Dance Rising Collective and Wide Awakes Dance Corps have in common? Bodies joining forces.

Who knows when dance will come back? It will probably be one of the last art forms to return fully. Dance, the most neglected member of the performing arts, always seems to come in last. (This drives me crazy.) And who knows, maybe the damage caused by the pandemic — rents are falling at least, though not nearly enough — will create possibilities for the next dance movement. It’s at times of unrest that change finally becomes impossible to ignore.

And all of it takes me back to the ’30s, when class struggle and modern dance were intertwined. In “Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942,” Ellen Graff writes, “The movement, artistic and social, was about power and where power started was in the dancers’ own bodies.”

There are many questions in the air, but the idea of the collective body has weight — we’ve seen how bodies can affect change. Yet a big one still remains: Can dance, or any art form really, be truly be equal? Dance is not a democratic art. But it can be better. And as tenuous as life is, this moment, this movement feels powerful. It’s been a dark few months, and more are yet to come, but dance is stepping back into the spotlight. And it feels bright, potent and strong — like a weapon.

PHOTOS: Top, members of the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1937. Above left, a rehearsal for Miguel Gutierrez’s “This Bridge Called My Ass” at the Chocolate Factory in 2018. Above right, a Wide Awakes Dance Corps event this month. Below, I-Ling Liu in Lee Mingwei and Bill T. Jones’s “Our Labyrinth” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in September. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT FRASER, VIA MARTHA GRAHAM RESOURCES; NINA WESTERVELT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MAJESTY ROYALE; STEPHANIE BERGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 28, 2020

**End of Document**



[***In Seoul, the Art World Gets Back to Business***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YS8-WWM1-JBG3-62J3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1398 words

**Byline:** Su-Hyun Lee and Brett Sokol

**Highlight:** Art galleries remain shuttered around the world but in South Korea, they reopen — with contact tracing and masks. Welcome to the post-Covid-19 world.

**Body**

Art galleries remain shuttered around the world but in South Korea, they reopen — with contact tracing and masks. Welcome to the post-Covid-19 world.

SEOUL — “I wouldn’t say things are totally back to normal,” explained Passion Lim, taking in the scene on Thursday at the opening for [*Billy Childish paintings*](https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/artists/billy-childish) at the Lehmann Maupin gallery. “But it’s a start,” he added.

Indeed, if you ignored the face masks on about half the attending crowd, it might have been opening night at a blue-chip art gallery anywhere — anywhere before the coronavirus pandemic, that is. Now, as a steady stream of Mercedes sedans pulled up to the valet, disgorging their fashion-forward passengers, South Korea’s return to business as usual seemed almost surreal.

Elsewhere around the world, art galleries and museums remain shuttered, hemorrhaging staff and plaintively asking, What will it take to reopen? And just as crucially, What will this new art world look like? Seoul, a dense metropolis with a population of nearly 10 million but only two coronavirus deaths to date, is offering one possible answer.

Mr. Lim had already been to three other gallery openings the previous night in the art-centric Samcheong-dong neighborhood. Having worked from home since February, he was now embracing flexible shelter-in-place guidelines with a vengeance. Social distancing edicts remain in place until May 5, with major museums closed until May 7 and the resumption of school still on hold. But people are starting to refill Seoul’s streets — some skittish, others bounding down the sidewalks.

“It doesn’t make me feel uncomfortable being around people because I trust the government’s response to the virus,” Mr. Lim said as he made his way through the crowd of about 50 inside the gallery’s two-story, 3,200-square-foot space. He pointed to South Korean [*policies*](https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/04/24/world/asia/24reuters-health-coronavirus-southkorea.html) that have come to be [*seen as an international model*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/world/asia/daegu-south-korea-coronavirus.html): government-supplied N95-grade masks for everyone, comprehensive testing, thorough contact tracing of the infected, and immediate isolation of anyone exposed to an infected person.

Here at Lehmann Maupin, a gallery attendant dutifully took down the name, address and phone number of everyone who came through the front door — just in case someone at the opening later found out they had been exposed to the virus. Yet with the daily national infection rate having fallen to single digits, Mr. Lim appeared downright blasé about any remaining risks. His mask was pulled down below his chin; others in the crowd offhandedly explained that their masks were in their cars.

Mr. Lim was far more concerned that his full name might appear in a newspaper article about wealthy art collectors. Given his China-focused technology business, he was wary of attracting attention from Beijing. (Passion is the first name Mr. Lim uses online when chatting about culture.) “Now is actually a good time to see if you can buy art,” he continued, “because collectors around the world having a hard time have put forward quite good art pieces into the market at cheap prices.”

Back in New York City, Lehmann Maupin’s co-founder, Rachel Lehmann, said she was painfully aware of the [*market*](https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/gagosian-furloughs-coronavirus-1202684184/) [*dynamic*](https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/pace-gallery-coronavirus-furloughs-1202683566/). The gallery’s Hong Kong branch had reopened, but its flagship Manhattan locations had been closed since March 13. With sales there reduced to a crawl, she said she had been forced to institute salary cuts and furloughs among its 36 staffers. Still, having worked as an art dealer for several decades and weathered a string of recessions, she took the long view: This too shall pass.

“It’s what I have seen happening in 2008, and after 9/11, and even earlier, at the end of the ’70s in Europe,” she said. In fact, Asia was already rebounding. Her Seoul branch, which opened in 2017, already accounted for 20 to 25 percent of Lehmann Maupin’s total revenue before the pandemic. Now, after an initial pause, many of Seoul’s moneyed collectors have re-entered the fray.

Ms. Lehmann noted that Korea-based artists like [*Lee Bul*](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/may/28/cyborgs-gorgeous-art-lee-bul-south-korean-artist-seoul) and [*Su Se Ok*](https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/exhibitions/suh-se-ok/installation-views) had long been represented by her gallery in New York. But establishing a more public footprint reflected the [*growing number*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/17/travel/a-curator-discusses-art-in-seoul-south-korea.html) of Korean contemporary art collectors. The similarly high-powered Pace and Perrotin galleries, based in New York and Paris, had also recently opened Seoul branches — as had the scrappier Los Angeles-based [*Various Small Fires*](http://www.vsf.la/). All are now competing for Korea’s art dollars with the country’s homegrown galleries.

Accordingly, Ms. Lehmann said, she selected Billy Childish for this angst-ridden moment. “The people I’m talking with are looking for something really real, really true, not fabricated,” she explained, describing a newfound hunger for emotionally resonant work which could serve as a “survival kit.”

Mr. Childish’s canvases, with forceful brushwork evoking the psychologically loaded landscapes of Vincent van Gogh, and his no less expressive portraiture nodding to [*Edvard Munch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/30/arts/design/edvard-munch-met-breuer-scandinavia-house-review.html), certainly fit that bill. By last Friday afternoon, according to the gallery, four of the seven Childish paintings at the Seoul opening had already sold for approximately $24,000 to $33,000 each, to three buyers in South Korea and one who lives in the United States. (Mr. Childish’s record at auction is $56,250 at Christie’s in 2018, according to Artnet.)

No one is more surprised by Mr. Childish’s art world trajectory than Mr. Childish himself. “It was an overnight success that only took 40 years,” the 60-year-old artist said playfully. Speaking by phone from his home in Rochester, England, he recalled being expelled from London’s prestigious Saint Martins School of Art in 1980 (when he still went by his birth name, Steven Hamper). Insisting on the need for classical figuration over abstraction, decrying conceptualism, and arguing for a ***working-class***-centered radicalism in lieu of the identity politics then entering art theory, he had picked bitter fights with instructors and fellow students alike.

“I was told my attitude, and the way I talked to other artists, and my opinion about art would mean I would never get anywhere in the art world,” he remembered with obvious relish. Though he never stopped painting, Mr. Childish became better known as a singer and guitarist with groups like [*Thee Headcoats*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4mnVxPWQ8s), leading The New York Times to crown him “[*the reigning world champion of garage rock”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/07/14/arts/pop-review-at-ease-amid-pandemonium.html) in 1998.

Mr. Childish also never stopped publicly railing against the gatekeepers of the contemporary art world, whether leading guerrilla-theater-styled [*protests*](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/jul/13/national-art-hate-week-billy-childish) outside the Tate Modern or [*crashing*](https://www.stuckism.com/realturner.html) (and being physically ejected from) the museum’s Turner Prize celebration. Yet over the past decade he has oddly found himself feted by some of these same figures. “I just got lucky because people I knew 30 years ago came into some sort of position of power,” he said, referring to longtime supporters such as the curator [*Matthew Higgs*](https://www.whitecolumns.org/text.html?type=staff_board)and the Berlin dealer [*Tim Neuger*](https://artreview.com/power_100/tim_neuger_burkhard_riemschneider/). Nonetheless, he’s skeptical it augurs any broader back-to-basics art world [*shift*](https://www.theartnewspaper.com/analysis/art-market-coronavirus-system-change). The only post-coronavirus change, he mused, might simply be a mass desire to look at artwork without having to sit in front of a screen.

That was certainly the spirit back at the Lehmann Maupin opening. “You have to see the paintings with your own eyes, especially if you are a collector like me,” insisted Soh Ji-hye, 31, who works in marketing. She was echoed by another young visitor, Park Jung-mi, 29, a retail saleswoman, who said she’d been cooped up since January. “But tonight I went out of my way to get out of the house,” she said. “Seeing the paintings directly is so different from seeing them online.”

“Online sales? Not that effective,” said the gallery’s senior director, Son Emma, for whom the virus is increasingly in the rear-view mirror. As the last stragglers left, Ms. Son was already thinking ahead to managing new crises. She glanced down at her phone. “The exchange rate is not that bad,” she offered, brightening.

PHOTOS: The Lehmann Maupin gallery in Seoul, South Korea, is showing Billy Childish’s works. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WOOHAE CHO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); From top: The Lehmann Maupin gallery in South Korea, reopened last week; visitors provided personal information for contact tracing purposes; and an exhibition of Billy Childish’s works included “midnight sun/frozen lake” (2017). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY WOOHAE CHO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; BILLY CHILDISH AND LEHMANN MAUPIN, NEW YORK, HONG KONG AND SEOUL) (C2)

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Property Tax Overhaul: Winners and Losers; New York Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y49-TW71-DXY4-X0SR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 3, 2020 Monday 05:50 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1238 words

**Byline:** Azi Paybarah

**Highlight:** Owners of multimillion-dollar homes in Brooklyn and Manhattan would see higher bills. Parts of Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx would see lower bills.

**Body**

[Want to get New York Today by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday).]

It’s Monday.

Weather: Expect a sunny day, with a high in the mid-50s.

Alternate-side parking: In effect until Feb. 12 (Lincoln’s Birthday).

“The inequities have gotten worse and worse, and we intend to look at the whole question of property taxes.”

[*That was Ruth W. Messinger, the Manhattan borough president*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday) in 1990, voicing a concern then that was shared by many elected officials in the city. David N. Dinkins was the mayor, and top officials in his administration said property tax reform was a high priority.

But little, if anything, happened.

Now, there is a new effort to revamp the city’s property tax code.

Currently, people who own multimillion-dollar brownstones in Brooklyn and high-rise co-ops by Central Park often pay less in taxes than ***working-class*** homeowners in the South Bronx, relative to the value of their properties.

Under the new plan, that could change. The new system would raise the same amount of tax revenue for the city, but it would redistribute who paid what.

The plan was developed by a high-level city commission empowered by the mayor and City Council speaker. It could affect 90 percent of homeowners in the city.

[[*Tax system favoring Central Park co-ops and Brooklyn brownstones could end*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday).]

Like earlier efforts, this plan might go nowhere, given concerns of residents whose property taxes could increase. It must be approved by the governor, mayor, City Council and State Legislature. Expect a lot of lobbying.

For now, though, here are winners and losers from the plan:

Winners

Parts of Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx: Single-family homeowners there would see lower property tax bills, according to Marc V. Shaw, the commission’s chairman. He also said certain co-ops and condominiums in parts of the Bronx would see lower tax bills.

Low-income homeowners: They might qualify for a “partial homestead exemption” that would limit tax bills to a certain percentage of household income. The city commission had not specified what that income threshold should be.

Losers

Upper West Side and Harlem: [*Some property taxes there may increase*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday). Robert Jackson, a Democratic state senator who represents the area, said, “I am concerned about anyone’s tax bills going up, but the bottom line is that New York City must have a system that is fair for everyone.”

Brownstone Brooklyn and Park Slope: One resident, Mark Chalfin, bought a three-story home near Prospect Park for $125,000 in 1980.

In the past two years, homes on either side of him sold for around $4 million each. Now, his home has a market value of $4.63 million, but his property taxes remain at about $12,000 a year, in large part because annual increases are capped by law.

Homeowners like Mr. Chalfin could see stark increases in their property tax bills under the plan. Mayor de Blasio, who owns two homes worth at least $1 million in Park Slope, would also see a higher tax bill.

Luxury co-op and condo owners in Manhattan: Kenneth Griffin, the hedge fund billionaire, owns a $238 million condo in Manhattan. Under the current system, co-op and condo owners are not taxed at their true market value, but rather on the income generated by similar buildings.

Currently, Mr. Griffin’s property taxes are about $532,000. Under the new proposal, his tax bill would be about $3 million.

Out-of-town homeowners: “People who own a pied-à-terre in Manhattan will be paying more,” said James A. Parrott, director of economic and fiscal policies at the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School and a commission member.

From The Times

[*How a Clash of Egos Became Bigger Than Fixing the Subway*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)

[*Suicide at Hudson Yards Vessel: Teenager Jumps Over Railing*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)

[*Coronavirus in New York: 2 More Possible Cases in City Are Identified*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)

[*He Assaulted His Girlfriend. Now He Wants a Political Comeback.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)

[*Behind the Racial Uproar at One of the World’s Best Jazz Stations*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)

Want more news? [*Check out our full coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday).

The Mini Crossword: Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday).

What we’re reading

A state bill banning New York police from using facial recognition technology is “insane,” said Bill Bratton, the city’s former police commissioner. [[*New York Post*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)]

Somebody stole a spotted-pig figurine from outside the now-shuttered Spotted Pig restaurant. [[*Eater*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)]

Staten Island Chuck predicted we’ll get an early spring. [[*SILive.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday)]

Coming up today

The artist [*Krzysztof Wodiczko discusses his installation*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday) “Monument,” on view in Madison Square Park, with the writer and critic Aruna D’Souza at Sony Square N.Y.C. in Manhattan. 6 p.m. [Free]

All skill levels are welcome at a three-hour [*figure-drawing session*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday) at the Old Stone House in Brooklyn. 7 p.m. [$12]

The historian and author [*Alexis Coe delves into her biography of George Washington*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday), “You Never Forget Your First,” at Books Are Magic in Brooklyn. 7 p.m. [Free]

— Danya Issawi

Events are subject to change, so double-check before heading out. For more events, see [*the going-out guides*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday) from The Times’s culture pages.

And finally: Mother of crochet

[*Rachel Felder reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday):

Studio Del was a boutique that the designer Del Pitt Feldman opened on East Seventh Street in 1965. Her crocheted garments — including open-weave vests, string bikinis, minidresses and capes — seemed to capture the freewheeling spirit of the neighborhood at the time.

Clientele at the store included Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Grace Slick and Andy Warhol. Cher and Lily Tomlin also wore clothes designed by Ms. Feldman.

Ms. Feldman died on Jan. 14. She was 90.

Ms. Feldman’s designs helped make crochet a respected medium for fashion and art. By the early 1970s, her store had become a de facto clubhouse for a group of female artists who were working in that medium.

Ms. Feldman, who was older than those artists, called herself “the mother of the movement,” her daughter said.

Ms. Feldman was also an author. “Crochet: Discovery and Design,” published in 1972, was praised in The New York Times for going “beyond baby booties and into ideas that could turn into works of art.” A second book followed two years later.

Julie Schafler Dale, who in the early 1970s founded the influential Manhattan store Julie: Artisans’ Gallery, said Ms. Feldman’s shop had been “a magnet for these young women who were interested in using yarns to create innovative new forms and wearable pieces.”

It’s Monday — wear some art.

Metropolitan Diary: Leaving

Dear Diary:

I was breaking up with my boyfriend.

I had shoved everything I needed into a rickety folding cart that I had wheeled into our building’s elevator when my ex came running down the hall. He held the doors open, arguing with me for a really long time.

I wasn’t the only one in the elevator. A man trapped in there with me politely pretended that a relationship wasn’t collapsing in front of him.

The doors finally closed and we went outside. I apologized. He pulled out two cigarettes, handed me one and stood next to me, smoking.

We didn’t speak or even look at each other. We just stood there shoulder to shoulder for a few minutes while I pulled myself together. Then he flicked his butt and walked away.

— Miranda McLeod

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We’re experimenting with the format of New York Today. What would you like to see more (or less) of? Post a comment or email us: [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/newyorktoday).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Dave Sanders for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 3, 2020

**End of Document**



[***A Post-Brexit Britain Strikes Out on Its Own***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:608Y-P0D1-JBG3-64TN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 4, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1517 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler

**Body**

Post-Brexit Britain is going it alone at a time when globalization is in retreat. But a clash with China over Hong Kong has shown the limits of what it can do.

LONDON -- Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his pro-Brexit allies have long promised that once Britain broke free of the European Union, it could play a bold new role on the world stage -- one they dubbed Global Britain. For a few days this week, it looked as if they were actually making good on that promise.

When China imposed a new security law on Hong Kong, Mr. Johnson not only condemned the Chinese government, he also threw open Britain's doors to nearly three million residents of the former British colony who were eligible for residency in Britain. It was a strong, some even said brave, stand by a long-departed colonial government against the oppression of a rising superpower.

But it was, in the end, also a signpost of Britain's diminished stature: The Chinese threatened retaliation, while Mr. Johnson's ministers admitted that there was nothing they could do if China refused to allow those people to leave Hong Kong.

''We're a medium-size power that needs to work with others to secure what we want around the world,'' said Chris Patten, who served as the last British governor of Hong Kong. Leaving the European Union, he said, had deprived Britain of its most natural partner ''in trying to deal with these global issues.''

The clash with China laid bare deeper contradictions in Mr. Johnson's post-Brexit vision: Britain wants to go global at a time when globalization is in retreat. It has cast off from the world's largest trading bloc when the world is more divided than ever into competing regions. And it is trying to carve out an overseas role just as the coronavirus pandemic has crippled its domestic economy.

Mr. Johnson's model is no longer Winston Churchill, the proud symbol of Britain's imperial reach, but Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose New Deal put American society back on its feet after the Great Depression.

With millions of Britons facing joblessness and a mammoth rebuilding project at home, Mr. Johnson's government scarcely has the bandwidth to reestablish Britain as an energetic player on the global stage. His ministers no longer invoke the phrase Singapore-on-Thames, which once described the kind of agile, lightly regulated, free-trading powerhouse that they envisioned emerging from Brexit.

Moreover, the geopolitical landscape has shifted significantly since the Brexit referendum -- and even more rapidly since the pandemic spread around the world. With rivalry and antagonism between China and the West on the rise, Britain as a free agent will be caught uncomfortably in between, constantly forced to choose sides in a postpandemic world.

''One consequence of a postglobalization world is that people will start to think in a defensive way about blocs,'' said Mark Malloch Brown, a former deputy secretary general of the United Nations. ''Britain is adrift without a bloc. That is going to be challenging, and a first example of this is Hong Kong.''

British diplomats showed skill in lining up the United States, Canada and Australia to sign a stern letter to the Chinese government about the new law. But in defending the rights of those who hold British overseas passports, Britain is on its own. Neither the European Union, so recently forsaken by Britain, nor the United States, largely indifferent to human rights under President Trump, is eager to join that fight.

Mr. Johnson once cast Britain's independence as a competitive advantage. He said it would allow the country to pursue trade agreements with China, the United States or anyone else, unencumbered by the European Union.

''As Global Britain, our range is not confined to the immediate European hinterland as we see the rise of new powers,'' said Mr. Johnson, then serving as foreign secretary, in a speech to Chatham House in December 2016. ''It is right that we should make a distinctive approach to policymaking, as regards China.''

But as relations between China and the United States have soured, Mr. Johnson is caught in the middle. After initially fending off pressure from Mr. Trump to keep the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei out of Britain's 5G digital network, Mr. Johnson has been forced to reconsider. Some analysts say they expect him to reverse himself and impose additional restrictions on Huawei.

Part of the reason is technical: American sanctions on Huawei have raised the security risks of allowing the company to build a large part of the network. But part of it is geopolitical reality. In any coming Cold War between the United States and China, Britain cannot afford to alienate its most important ally.

''The danger is finding ourselves trapped between President Trump and President Xi,'' Mr. Patten said, referring to the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping.

Mr. Trump's faltering political fortunes pose another risk to Mr. Johnson. The president has enthusiastically supported Brexit and embraced the prime minister as a like-minded populist. If Mr. Trump were to lose in November, Mr. Johnson would face an uncertain new counterpart in former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

There is nothing to suggest that Mr. Biden would not champion the alliance with Britain. On some issues, like Iran and climate change, there would be fewer points of friction. But Mr. Biden is not likely to attach the same priority to a trade deal that Mr. Trump has. Former President Barack Obama famously warned Britons they would be at the ''back of the queue'' for trade talks if they voted for Brexit.

Mr. Biden is also a devoted Irish-American who would look out for Ireland's interests, as Britain negotiates its long-term trade relationship with the European Union (a breakthrough in those talks seems more elusive than ever). The preservation of the Good Friday Agreement, which ended years of sectarian strife in Northern Ireland, is an article of faith among Democrats.

''Democrats are bewildered by the logic of Brexit, to begin with,'' Mr. Malloch Brown said. ''There is a very strong Democratic Irish lobby, which will be really watching like a hawk that this doesn't put Ireland at a disadvantage.''

To some critics, Global Britain was never more than a marketing slogan. After all, they said, Britain has for centuries seen itself as a global player, one that punched above its weight economically and militarily, long after the end of the empire and throughout its 47 years of membership in Europe's institutions.

Today, in any event, powerful Johnson advisers, like Dominic Cummings, are more concerned about transforming British society than asserting its influence abroad. They know the Conservative Party won its 80-seat Parliamentary majority with the votes of ***working-class*** people in Britain's Midlands and north, who care more about saving their jobs than striking trade deals.

Since Mr. Johnson's victory, he has used the Global Britain label mainly to put a gloss on a bureaucratic decision: merging two government ministries, the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development. The rationale, he said, is to align Britain's foreign aid with its strategic and commercial interests. Some former diplomats said Mr. Johnson should not stop there.

''If you really want a Global Britain, and you want the Foreign Office to have genuine policy heft, then bring in the trade department,'' said Simon Fraser, who once headed the Foreign Office.

There are grounds for hope about Britain's role. Its diplomats are pushing a proposal to expand the Group of 7 to include three other big democracies, South Korea, India and Australia. Other countries have welcomed it as an alternative to Mr. Trump's much-maligned plan to invite Russia back into the club.

Britain remains a substantial military power, with nuclear weapons and a close intelligence relationship with the United States and other allies -- known as the Five Eyes -- that analysts say has recovered since the strains over Huawei.

Mr. Johnson made waves this week with a front-page column in an Israeli newspaper, in which he urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to annex occupied territories in the West Bank. Mr. Netanyahu has held off for now.

Britain's opposition Labour Party has also swung back to the mainstream, after a period in which it seemed influenced by anti-American sentiment and was tainted by allegations of anti-Semitism. Lisa Nandy, the shadow foreign secretary, has emerged as a fresh new voice on Britain's place in the world.

If the pandemic finally punctures the illusion of a Global Britain, Britain can take solace in what has not changed. It remains a midsize country, anchored in the West, deeply intertwined with Europe and inescapably lashed to the United States.

''It has made them realize that they couldn't have their cake and eat it too,'' said Thomas Wright, director of the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution. ''That is a delusion that has now been stripped away. They've been forced back into their more traditional space.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/03/world/europe/johnson-brexit-hong-kong.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/03/world/europe/johnson-brexit-hong-kong.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Boris Johnson, Britain's prime minister, condemned a new security law that China has imposed on Hong Kong. (POOL PHOTO BY PAUL ELLIS)

Union Jack flags line the Mall in London on Jan. 31, the day that Britain formally withdrew from the European Union after 47 years. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

In Hong Kong, protesters hold up their open palms to demand that the government meet their ''five demands, and not one less.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***'Pray for Your Poor Uncle'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CY-8M41-DXY4-X0TT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Elizabeth Bruenig and Damon Winter

**Body**

Rain fell in New York City four days before Christmas of 2018. Francis M. had planned to be in the city that day for business, but he had dutifully put aside time when asked to answer questions at the Archdiocese of New York offices about his experiences with ''Uncle Ted'' -- former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick.

A tall, broad-shouldered man nearing 60 at the time, with blue eyes and steely gray hair, Francis had been in enough depositions in his career as an attorney to know how these question-and-answer sessions went. He assumed he would relate the story of his interactions with Mr. McCarrick, which began when he was 11, and then he would return to his usual routine.

Mr. McCarrick's downfall had been as dizzying as his rise. Once the archbishop of Washington D.C., and a cardinal who boasted of his close ties to Pope Francis, Mr. McCarrick had established himself as a gifted fund-raiser, helping to found the Papal Foundation, a charity with a $200 million endowment. But in 2018, his reputation collapsed in a rush of accusations that he had sexually abused adult seminarians and a teenage boy. More accusations followed, and in 2019 Mr. McCarrick was defrocked -- the first time an American cardinal had been removed from the priesthood.

Francis -- who asked me to refer to him and his family members only by their middle names and last initials, to protect their privacy -- was not surprised, but neither did he feel that the news had much to do with him. He wasn't a victim, he thought. He had never felt like one. He had explanations for all the times Mr. McCarrick had insisted that Francis share a bed with him as a boy and for the ways the man had touched him when he did. Mr. McCarrick was lonely, Francis had told himself; plenty of clergymen were. And Francis had turned out well: A father of four with a happy marriage and lucrative work, he had little reason to meditate on the former cardinal.

But as Mr. McCarrick's case gained national attention, Francis began discussing it with his brothers and male cousins. He told me that in October 2018, one of his brothers reached out to the Archdiocese of New York, and by December, five members of Francis' family, all men, had agreed to testify in the inquiry the Vatican had ordered it to undertake. An attorney representing Mr. McCarrick repeatedly declined to comment on the allegations made in this article. As of 2019, Mr. McCarrick still maintained his innocence.

''I had anticipated that reciting long-ago facts wouldn't be upsetting,'' Francis told me when we first met in January of last year, at his vacation home in the frozen Catskills.

''But the more I went over in my mind the experiences I had and what they really constituted -- with the perspective of an older man -- I really understood for the first time as an adult the premeditation and cunning that Ted brought to his predatory activities, right under the eyes of my parents and aunts and uncles.''

Francis said that he was one of five members of his family who testified against Mr. McCarrick in the church's inquiry.

The experience left him shaken. There were all of the usual questions victims ask themselves: How had his parents missed what Mr. McCarrick was doing, and why had he allowed younger family members to wander into the cardinal's grasp? How had it changed him, and could he recover? And then there were more fundamental questions: Could a religion whose earthly stewards sinned so cruelly really be true? Supposing it wasn't, how could he leave the only church he had ever known? Supposing it was, how could he stay?

Established in 1927 in the Throgs Neck neighborhood of the Bronx, the church of St. Frances de Chantal came into its full glory in 1970, when its severe brick exterior was finally erected beneath a tall, spartan cross. In October of that year, Cardinal Terence Cooke visited the parish to celebrate a Mass of Dedication. Francis recalled that Cardinal Cooke brought with him a delegation of clergymen from the Archdiocese of New York, including an up-and-coming monsignor by the name of Theodore McCarrick.

A parish priest introduced the affable Mr. McCarrick to the nine members of the M. family, Francis, who was then 11, told me. Mr. McCarrick was 40, a slightly built man with an almost elfin look. He was just back from a four-year stint as the president of the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico and had recently been made assistant secretary for education in the archdiocese. In 1971, Cardinal Cooke would make him his personal priest secretary.

Mr. McCarrick soon became a regular visitor at the M. household, where his status in the church made him something of a celebrity. Francis recalled that ''Ted'' always wore his clerical garb, unlike the more casual clergymen around town. ''When Ted came to dinner, he was like the candy man,'' Francis told me. He would bring souvenirs: ''Rosary beads from Fátima, a medal blessed by the pope, a necklace from the Philippines.''

Mr. McCarrick's adventures were of special interest to the M. boys, Francis said, because the priest had a custom of taking boys along with him, from their extended family and from other families like theirs: ***working class***, devoutly Catholic, Irish. Francis' father had immigrated from Ireland and worked as a bus driver, while Francis' mother stayed home with the children. ''Our biggest treat was to go to Howard Johnson's for Easter dinner,'' Francis said, so Mr. McCarrick ''was this window to a whole new world.''

Francis recalled that Mr. McCarrick told him that boys could begin traveling with him at age 13. But when Francis was 12, a rare family trip to Ireland happened to coincide with one of Mr. McCarrick's visits to the old country. During that trip, Francis said, Mr. McCarrick took him and his brother to an estate owned by a wealthy Irish-American, where they spent the night together.

After that, Francis said, traveling with Mr. McCarrick became a fairly regular occurrence. According to Francis, the eagerly avuncular priest took him fishing in upstate New York, dined with him at the Tonga Room in San Francisco, treated him to a visit to the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles and even took him to Walker's Cay, a privately owned island in the Bahamas.

McCarrick introduced the boys as ''nephews,'' Francis recalled, and they called him Uncle Ted. ''Ted told us that these wealthy people were generous to him,'' he explained, but they wouldn't ''be generous to some random group of unrelated boys.'' They had to ''stick to the script or he wouldn't be able to bring us along.''

Perhaps enlisting the boys in that ruse was a kind of overture for what would follow, habituating them to a climate of silence and fear. Mr. McCarrick routinely booked single hotel rooms, Francis said, and at night Mr. McCarrick ''would peel out of his clothes to T-shirt and underwear, and energetically jump onto a bed, where he would arrange himself in a cross-legged position, usually next to one of the 'nephews.''' The familiarity made Francis uncomfortable: ''We came from these typical Irish Catholic, ***working-class*** households. You still shook hands with your dad.'' After Mr. McCarrick's ''exuberant'' displays in the evenings, Francis remembered, he would recruit one of his traveling companions to sleep in bed with him.

It was hard for Francis to describe what happened when it was his turn to sleep in Mr. McCarrick's bed, which he estimated happened a dozen or more times, starting when he was 12 and trailing into his early adulthood. Francis looked down and spoke quietly when he said that Mr. McCarrick would usually offer to scratch his back and that he would sometimes press his body against Francis and slip his hands under the boy's shirt or slide his fingers underneath the waistband of Francis' underwear. While Mr. McCarrick was touching him, Francis said, he would murmur little entreaties: ''You have to pray for your poor uncle,'' Francis recalled his saying, as though it were Francis' responsibility to reconcile the priest to God, even as he lay helpless and confused against him.

Brendan L., one of Francis' cousins, shared a similar account. ''Ted would say, when you're old enough, you can come travel with me,'' Brendan remembered, and that became a highly anticipated privilege. Brendan said he traveled with Mr. McCarrick up and down the East Coast and occasionally overseas. But when night came, he recalled, the anxiety set in. ''It was an accepted norm, nobody talked about it, you just kind of did it. You would think, 'Ah, [expletive], it's my turn tonight.' I was always very anxious.''

In bed, Brendan said, Mr. McCarrick would ''be in his underwear, he would snuggle up to you, put his legs over your hips,'' Brendan recalled uneasily. ''A couple of times, he slipped his hand under the back of my underwear and I kind of slapped his hand away.'' Sometimes, Brendan said, he would climb out of bed and sleep on the floor; on those occasions, he told me, Mr. McCarrick would become angry. He estimated he had slept in bed with Mr. McCarrick more than two dozen times, beginning when he was around 12.

Another relative of Francis' who did not want to be named told me that Mr. McCarrick performed the same back rub routine on him, but went further, occasionally sliding his hands beneath the back of his underwear. He recalled that at least once, Mr. McCarrick placed his hands between his legs but did not touch his genitals. Francis' cousin, who believes he was roughly 18 or 19 when he began traveling with Mr. McCarrick, said he was always deeply disturbed by what happened, thinking: '''I can't believe I have to do this' and 'Why do we have to do this?''' When it was over, he said, ''it would be like such a relief. And I would say to myself: 'All right. I've probably got another month before he calls me to come over and do something again.'''

He told me he didn't want his name used because he has never told his elderly mother about what transpired between him and Mr. McCarrick. She is very devout, he told me, and in fact introduced him to Mr. McCarrick when her son was drifting from the faith as a teenager. ''For my mother, it was, 'Oh, he's with the bishop and this is terrific, and oh,''' he said, and paused for a moment, lost in thought. ''I mean, she was in her glory about it.''

By the mid 1980s, Francis had grown up and apart from Mr. McCarrick, but Mr. McCarrick ''had interwoven himself so much into the family, that if you really wanted to completely cut him out, you'd have to cut yourself out of the family,'' Francis said. ''If you went to somebody's christening or somebody's wedding, he was there.''

Francis married a Catholic woman who had grown up three streets away from his house in the Bronx. Marie, an outgoing and independent nurse, never liked Mr. McCarrick: ''I would call him Ted the pedophile, even before we were married,'' she said. She and Francis agreed that Mr. McCarrick would not officiate their wedding, despite the objections of Francis' family. Instead, the two of them chose a priest they respected.

Nevertheless, Mr. McCarrick sent a papal blessing to their priest to be read aloud during the ceremony, with Mr. McCarrick's name included. Marie was incensed. ''It was like, 'You didn't want me to be a part of this wedding, but I am still a part of it,''' she said. It arrived like an assertion of control, with a sinister message: You can't get rid of me.

Francis remained a faithful Catholic, but disillusionment threatened his peace, especially as his children grew older. One Sunday in the early 2000s, when the sex abuse crisis was first coming to light, his pastor mentioned that some parishioners had threatened to withhold their donations. Francis said that the priest urged parishioners not to make their contributions a referendum on the church's handling of the crisis, because those donations supported local charity work. Francis accepted that; it made sense.

But a year later, he said, the same pastor was ''railing about how the media has sort of blown the whole thing out of proportion. And he said, 'And we know that you didn't fall for it. You know how we know? Because your donations never fell off.''' Francis seethed.

During the summer of 2018, news broke that the Archdiocese of New York had found credible the allegation that Mr. McCarrick had sexually abused a minor in the early 1970s. A month later, another man came forward to claim that he had been abused by Mr. McCarrick as a minor. In late July, Mr. McCarrick resigned from the College of Cardinals.

In August, an archbishop released an incendiary letter accusing Pope Francis of having failed to take action against Mr. McCarrick, despite the pope's being warned that he was a ''serial predator.'' (The pope later denied this.).

I was a writer at The Washington Post at the time, and I began working on the McCarrick story. I knocked on the door of the archdiocesan house he had retreated to, and I requested interviews through his legal team but received no answer from him. I was frustrated by the church's reticence regarding Mr. McCarrick's career of abuse and disturbed by my increasing difficulty producing an answer when asked by friends why I was still Catholic.

As Francis watched the story unfold in the news, he sank into similar spiritual unease. He began to realize that he had failed to appreciate how extensive Mr. McCarrick's abuses really were. ''He was expert in taking boys like me, who felt like they got lost in big families, and making them feel special,'' Francis said. He mentioned reading about a blog post written by a former priest secretary of Mr. McCarrick's, K. Bartholomew Smith, which labeled the disgraced cardinal ''a devourer of souls.'' It rang true to Francis.

Christmas of 2018, after his testimony, was hard for Francis. Dreams about Mr. McCarrick began to stir his subconscious. In one nightmare, he confronted the priest, only to find him glib and evasive, offering a tray of sweets. No one involved in the church's investigation reached out to him with updates or offers of support. He stopped going to Mass. ''The couple of times that I went, even in the context of funerals or weddings, it was hard for me to sit through it and look at the priests on the altar and not question -- was he, this person, also an abuser?''

Those thoughts distracted Francis as he searched for the solace and meaning he had always found in sacred liturgy. He would go during off hours to the Church of Our Savior in Manhattan and sit alone in the golden glory of its vast sanctuary, listening to Gregorian chants through earbuds. ''That was odd to do that,'' Francis said. ''But I felt like I needed to have some connection, until I could find my way back in.''

In the spring of 2019, Francis said that he, along with the four relatives who had testified in the Vatican's inquiry, submitted claims to the Archdiocese of New York's Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program. Though their prior testimonies had been given at the archdiocesan offices, their statements had been strictly confidential, for use only in the Vatican's proceedings. By submitting claims directly to the compensation program, Francis told me, he and his family meant to provide the archdiocese with testimony for use in its own review of Mr. McCarrick's history.

In June 2019, according to Francis, the archdiocese offered him a six-figure settlement to relinquish his claim against the church regarding Mr. McCarrick. Francis was conflicted; he had agreed to share his story with the Vatican and the archdiocese in solidarity with the other victims in his family and in hopes of bringing the truth to light. He had never intended to litigate his case further or to reap any monetary award.

Ultimately, Francis chose to accept the settlement, parceling it out for his children and some home repairs. If he had been affected by Mr. McCarrick's manipulation and abuse, then so too had his family been, he reasoned.

Francis' younger daughter told me over lunch in February of this year that she hadn't touched her portion of the proceeds yet and isn't sure that she ever will.

None of Francis' four adult children describe themselves as practicing Catholics, in large part because of their father's experience with Mr. McCarrick and the sex abuse crisis. Francis had been open -- though not necessarily explicit -- with them about Mr. McCarrick's behavior; he never wanted to foster the climate of oppressive secrecy that had shrouded his childhood.

''Christianity is supposed to be about loving your fellow people and doing good and believing there's good,'' Francis' older daughter told me. ''None of that rings true in any of this.''

''I believe it's important to be spiritual and believe in something,'' the younger daughter said, ''but I don't know if I can call myself Catholic anymore ... and that's really sad.''

A note of longing haunts all faith, especially faith that has been wounded. Francis wears that weary hope in his eyes now. In February, I met with him and his wife on a cool morning in New York in the vestibule of Our Savior, the church he had spent hours in searching a way back into the heart of the faith that sustains him.

Francis greeted me warmly and we sat together in the pew -- two lost souls seeking answers from a God we can't stop loving. The Corinthian columns of the apse rose before us, and between them, flanked by angels, was the image of Christ, wreathed in a golden halo. His face was wan and beautiful, with hollow cheeks and dark, pleading eyes. I was transfixed by him; I always am. We sang and offered our open palms, and I thought of the words of Saint Augustine. ''Why do you mean so much to me,'' he asked the Lord, ''help me to find words to explain. Why do I mean so much to you, that you should command me to love you?''

Love drew Francis back to Mass on Christmas last year. He started attending, not necessarily every Sunday, he said, but something like every other Sunday, in a steady, if cautious, rhythm.

''Faith is really hard to do solo,'' Francis explained as we sat together after Mass, in an empty reception hall with watery light streaming in through tall windows. ''I missed the community feeling of being in church.'' He needed some sign of eternity here in the broken present: The certainty of rituals shared with others, whose trust in the goodness of God and the presence of a transcendent love nurtures the faith of those around them. His parish 30 miles outside New York City has a new pastor, a fresh face sharing no history with the M. family. Francis is still involved in charitable work in the church, applying his skills as an attorney to help aging nuns and monks manage their communities' properties.

Francis told me he thinks it's possible to distinguish the church from the people who have for decades debased it. How dearly I wanted to hear that; how crucial it was for me to believe it. Francis went on in his gentle, searching tone. ''All throughout the church, and the church's history, you can see times where there were people who were really living testaments to their faith,'' he said. ''And you can see people who took advantage of the power that they had. And that God allows that is just kind of, part of the mystery we're all going to have to figure out, when we go to ask him. Right?''

Elizabeth Bruenig (@ebruenig) is an Opinion writer. Damon Winter is a staff photographer on assignment in Opinion.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Homes in the neighborhood near St. Frances de Chantal in the Bronx. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR8)

Top photo, Francis M. at a church in Westchester County, N.Y. Upper left, Theodore McCarrick when he was a Roman Catholic cardinal. Above, rosary beads hanging on a statue outside the church of St. Francis de Chantal in the Bronx. Below left, the offices of the Archdiocese of New York in Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

MAX ROSSI/REUTERS) (SR9)

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[***Contradictions? Oh, He Owns a Few***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60PX-29C1-JBG3-62SK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By David Gelles

**Body**

Stephen Ross -- the billionaire real estate developer who founded Related Companies, owns the Miami Dolphins and has an interest in brands including SoulCycle and Equinox -- is a man of contradictions.

He says the issue most important to him is combating climate change, but last year he hosted a lavish fund-raiser for President Trump, who has rolled back environmental protections.

He claims that New York City has grown too expensive, yet he recently opened Hudson Yards, a new ultraluxury Manhattan development designed for the wealthy.

He preaches the transformative power of philanthropy, but in the midst of a pandemic his main charitable contributions have gone to nonprofits that are named after him.

And he says he does not consider himself a public figure, even as he uses his wealth and Rolodex to influence events around the globe.

To Mr. Ross, these contradictions are simply the realities of operating in a complex world. He says he disagrees with Mr. Trump's climate policies and finds him ''divisive,'' but likes the president and believes he has done good things for the economy.

He knows Hudson Yards is expensive, but blames the high costs on a wasteful city government and notes that the development includes some affordable housing units.

And he says the problem with democracy today is low voter turnout, even as he considers raising up to $100 million to influence the New York mayoral race, and acknowledges that he hosted the fund-raiser for Mr. Trump -- for which some tickets cost $250,000 -- because he was trying to win political favors.

Since the pandemic hit, Mr. Ross has doubled down on the causes he believes in.

Speaking from his office this month, Mr. Ross predicted that cities would be better than ever before long, and said that working from home was overrated.

He recently committed $100 million to the WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, a nonprofit organization named after him, which works to improve the quality of life in major metropolitan areas.

And in the midst of the protests over police brutality and social justice, Mr. Ross said he would donate $13 million over four years to another nonprofit named after him, the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality, or RISE.

Mr. Ross would not say who he was voting for in the upcoming presidential election. But he made clear his displeasure with New York City's leadership, arguing that Mayor Bill de Blasio was damaging the city by unfairly demonizing billionaires like himself.

This interview was condensed and edited for clarity.

Has the pandemic prompted you to reconsider the ways in which you give or the kinds of organizations you're going to give to?

Not really. I've been doing this for a long time. I mean, look at today with the social issues dealing with racism. Five years ago, I set up RISE. It's probably the only group to deal with racism ever formed by a white person, and I gave more money to it than probably anybody in the country. I set this up and I did it in a big way and I've been the total funder of it to date. I didn't come to it all of a sudden because of George Floyd's death. We were there.

My biggest issue in life is really dealing with the environment and I'm very, very involved in dealing with sustainability and knowing how we need to change to a carbonless world.

At this moment in our country with tens of millions unemployed and millions going hungry, are you using your philanthropy to make any sort of acute interventions to try to help those most in need?

Well I mean, down in Florida I own the Miami Dolphins. We have our kitchens at the stadium providing almost 2,000 meals a day for people in need of food down there and we committed to do it for a year. OK? So I mean, I believe in philanthropy very much. I'm a member of the Giving Pledge and more than half of my net worth will go to philanthropy when I die.

You've floated the idea of raising $100 million to support the right candidate for in the mayoral race. Who do you want to see as the next mayor of New York?

Someone not named de Blasio. We need some new leadership.

No one's announced that they're running yet, other than Scott Stringer and Corey Johnson and Eric Adams. And those candidates are appealing to the old way of doing business, where the unions have so much control over them, and they all talk this rhetoric. But it's not going to help New York in the long run.

What specific policies would you like to see more or less of?

The problem with New York is that the cost of doing business here is so much higher than anywhere else in the country. We have to get the cost factors out.

In the city, we overbuilt like crazy and we had bad leadership. We were growing to the point where nobody could really afford to live here.

It strikes me that a development like Hudson Yards exacerbates those trends rather than solves them.

I mean, we have a lot of affordable apartments at Hudson Yards as well. We have a large segment of apartments that are specifically identified that are affordable, OK?

Tell me why you're supporting President Trump in his re-election campaign.

I mean, first of all, who said I was?

You hosted a fund-raiser for him.

Right. So I mean, look. I've known President Trump for a long time. I've known him and I've liked him. I don't agree with a lot of his policies. I believe there's a lot of good, and I believe there's a lot of bad.

At that point there was a fund-raiser at my house I was looking for certain things to benefit New York. But I haven't really made a decision who I'm voting for.

What were you looking for?

I've gotten requests from the governor and people in different parts of the administration to help raise money for New York with the people that I know in Washington, to get money to the cities, to the M.T.A.

What are the areas where you are at odds with the president and his policies?

His climate issues is certainly one of my biggest of all. I mean, I couldn't be any more believing in the environment and climate change.

I think he's been a little divisive.

But I think there are a lot of great business policies he's enacted that have been fantastic and nobody else could have done it but him.

What are some of those business policies?

China. We can see today what China is, and they're really a competitor of ours to put it mildly. And making business grow, creating jobs. We were almost at full employment before the pandemic. I mean, those are very positive things that you have to look at.

So I mean, you have to put it all together, and no one's perfect.

You got a lot of backlash for hosting that fund-raiser.

If I would have known the impact of what happened last year, would I have thought about it differently? Of course. I mean, here I am being called a racist when I've set up and spent more money as an individual in dealing with racism than anybody in the country, and I was ahead of the game. But you know what? The best thing is to keep your mouth shut. You go about your business because that's what matters.

If you had known what would have happened, would you have done it differently?

I'm not saying I would have had it or I wouldn't have. But seeing how it's impacted my business partners, of course I would have to look at it differently. But I never complained. It happened. It's unfortunate. It caused a lot of problems for my business partners and everything. A lot of money was lost from people who were complaining about me. It makes me feel terrible. But I know who I am and I will continue fighting for those causes that I believe need to be dealt with. I will fight for climate control. I will fight against racism. I'm probably the biggest advocate in the country on both of them.

Who do you intend to vote for?

Guess what. We have elections that are private. That's the beautiful part about America.

Look, I didn't try to be in the news. I'm not looking to be in the news. I don't look at myself as a public figure. I'm a businessman who fortunately, from my perspective, has been successful. I've given back. I'm going to give back more than half what I have to charity. I'm not looking to be some public figure, and I'm not controlling everything.

What do you think would make America more resilient?

The biggest thing is there is so much waste in this country. I mean, look how children today who don't have food have to go to school to get their best meal of the day. I mean, that's sad when you think about it and all the privilege we have, and you see the wasted food that's thrown out that we don't use.

You keep coming back to this issue of wastefulness. Are you saying that the state, local and federal bureaucracies have become too bloated?

One hundred percent. I mean, look at this city. The quality of life has gone down, and de Blasio's added 25,000 people or something like that in his administration. And he doesn't care about the wealthy. It's only about the ***working class***.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/27/business/stephen-ross-related-corner-office-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/27/business/stephen-ross-related-corner-office-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Stephen Ross: FOUNDER OF RELATED COMPANIES (PHOTOGRAPH BY GUERIN BLASK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2020

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[***Equality? That's What's Good for Growth***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60PX-29C1-JBG3-62TD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 30, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BU; Column 0; Money and Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1643 words

**Byline:** By Katy Lederer

**Body**

Heather Boushey, who is unofficially one of the top economic advisers to Joseph R. Biden Jr., does not play to type. When the progressive economist and I arranged to meet last December in a Midtown Manhattan coffee shop, I was expecting someone buttoned up, and I couldn't find her in the room. Then she texted and waved from just a few feet away. She was wearing a Stephen Malkmus and the Jicks T-shirt -- a niche band featuring the lead singer of the beloved 1990s indie group Pavement.

When Dr. Boushey and I met again, on a bright July morning in Washington, where she runs the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, it was impossible to miss her. She was masked, on her stoop, and had set out a table and chairs. In the intervening seven months, the coronavirus had killed more than 100,000 Americans and set off a recession with unemployment rates not seen since the Great Depression. Dr. Boushey had seen the pain coming.

She hadn't predicted the virus, of course, but she had spent much of her career studying the financial fissures underlying the American economy. ''Countries that have this deep inequality like we do are much more prone to financial crises,'' she said, ''in no small part because high wealth inequality leads to more debt, which just makes your economy more fragile.''

Dr. Boushey (pronounced boo-SHAY) has a strict policy of not commenting on her work for Mr. Biden, who also takes economic advice from Jared Bernstein and Ben Harris, both veterans of the Obama administration; Janet L. Yellen, the former Federal Reserve chair; and others. In this inner circle, Dr. Boushey is among those arguing against the persistent assumption in Washington that programs that benefit the poor and middle class are bad for the economy. In two volumes of data-studded analysis published in the last four years, she has laid out a platform for what she describes as ''strong, stable and broad-based economic growth'' -- basically, Washington-ese for a fight against plutocracy.

In ''Finding Time: The Economics of Work-Life Conflict,'' released in 2016, she charted the changing structure of the American family since World War II. Promoting policies like universal access to paid sick days and affordable child care, Dr. Boushey contended that addressing suffering and inequality didn't have to come at the expense of economic dynamism; such remedies, she says, can actually promote growth.

In ''Unbound: How Inequality Constricts Our Economy and What We Can Do About It,'' published in October, she took the line of thinking further, laying out the ways that extreme inequality threatens democracy and the market itself.

''We need to recognize how economic power translates into political and social power,'' she wrote, ''and reject old theories that treat the economy as a system governed by natural laws separate from society's.''

Dr. Boushey's work offers a bird's-eye view of policies that might have been -- she was tapped to be the chief economist of Hillary Clinton's transition team, had the 2016 election gone the other way -- and that could find favor if Mr. Biden wins in November. As the federal government deploys trillions of dollars in a once-in-a-century economic emergency, Dr. Boushey is at the forefront of a rising generation of economists rethinking age-old conundrums, like unemployment, competition and the very nature of economic growth.

'Talking to a different audience'

In ''Finding Time,'' Dr. Boushey, who was born in 1970, recounts a childhood in a middle-class neighborhood north of Seattle. Her father worked as a crane operator at the Boeing plant, and her mother took on a full-time job as a bank teller to make ends meet. Her parents were part of a trend. In the context of rising inflation and unemployment, many ***working-class*** families were feeling the same squeeze.

In the early 1980s, Dr. Boushey's father was laid off. Her mother said some after-school activities might be put on hold. ''That was the moment that I realized that actually economics -- whether or not my parents have a job -- affects whether or not I get to do the things that matter to me in my life,'' Dr. Boushey said.

For decades, economists have often sought to frame their discipline as being at an arm's length from politics. But Dr. Boushey and her peers, many of them Generation X, have embraced the field's social and political roots. Informed by mistakes made during the 2008 recession, members of this cohort -- including academics like Emmanuel Saez and Raj Chetty, and Jason Furman on the policy side -- have turned their attention to the structural consequences of deepening inequality. They have eagerly addressed topics that challenge neoclassical economic theory, such as climate change, generational wealth and opportunity disparities.

In an essay published by the journal Democracy last summer, Dr. Boushey described the group as ''a nascent generation of scholars who are steeped in the new data and methods of modern economics, and who argue that the field should -- indeed, must -- change.''

''If anything, economics is reckoning with its political past,'' said Mehrsa Baradaran, a professor of law at the University of California, Irvine, who has written extensively about the racial wealth gap and serves on the Washington Center for Equitable Growth's board of directors.

''Heather is really in the forefront of this,'' Professor Baradaran added. ''She's talking to a different audience than I think a lot of other academic economists. She's actually trying to collect effective policy and make economic changes by looking at the data we measure.''

In addition to awarding grants for academic work, Dr. Boushey's think tank publishes legislation-minded policy proposals. In ''Recession Ready,'' a collection of essays produced in 2019 with the Hamilton Project, a division of the centrist Brookings Institution, Dr. Boushey and her co-authors advocated what are known as automatic stabilizers -- safety-net programs like enhanced unemployment and food stamp benefits that would be triggered without congressional debate if the economy slowed down. This year, Equitable Growth published ''Vision 2020,'' a set of 21 proposals by a range of scholars that included arguments for more affordable early childhood care and the rebuilding of U.S. labor market wage standards.

Many free-market economists remain skeptical of aspects of Dr. Boushey's framework.

''I cannot question somebody on economic grounds who says, 'You know what, I want to give up some efficiency for some more equity, fairness, compassion,''' said Casey B. Mulligan, a professor of economics at the University of Chicago, who has argued that some progressive policies could in fact impede recovery. ''What I can question and criticize is that there wouldn't be a trade-off.''

Michael R. Strain, who runs the economic policy program at the American Enterprise Institute and has appeared on Dr. Boushey's podcast, has said some concern about inequality might be misplaced.

''In terms of the gap between the top and the bottom, I don't see a lot of good evidence as to what exactly the problem with that gap is,'' he said. ''And I think there are lots of problems in terms of what's happening with the bottom 20 or 30 percent, but I don't know that you solve many of those problems by shrinking the income gap.''

Acknowledging the contested nature of her discipline, Dr. Boushey argues that no matter how one figures it, federal policy has not kept up with the changing structure of society -- especially now, as Covid-19 craters the economy.

''In the face of a government that could not provide protective gear, could not protect people, hasn't been paying attention to supply chains, all of these issues,'' she said, ''you're going to have a demand -- an ongoing demand -- for some sort of active policy. So I think the question is then what that is.''

'We're doing this for each other because we care'

As we chatted on her stoop in July, Dr. Boushey gestured at our masks. ''You're doing this to protect me, I'm doing this to protect you,'' she said. ''We're doing this for each other because we care.''

It was as good a summary as any of her holistic vision of prosperity. In her analysis, paid sick leave will translate into a more productive work force. Addressing inequality will reduce market distortions that ultimately inhibit growth.

On July 21, the Biden campaign released its ''21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce'' plan, a 10-year, $775 billion proposal. Advocating subsidies and tax credits for child care and early childhood education, and an expansion of elder care programs, the plan would put into practice many of the policies Dr. Boushey has long endorsed. It would in theory encourage a progressive recovery, boosting the earning and bargaining power of care industry workers, who are disproportionately women of color.

The next week, on July 30, Dr. Boushey testified by video before the congressional Joint Economic Committee. Important components of the $2 trillion federal stimulus known as the CARES Act were set to expire, and Dr. Boushey pushed for extending a $600-a-week federal unemployment payment, a major point of contention in negotiations between the White House and congressional Democrats.

''If you want to be creating more jobs,'' she said, ''you have to sustain that consumer demand, you have to keep people paying their rent, you have to keep them spending in their communities -- until we contain the virus.''

Back on her stoop, Dr. Boushey had mused on the policy ferment of the moment.

''How is it that ideas change?'' she said. ''You read about that in books, and if you get to live long enough and you get to be a part of these communities, you can sort of see how that happens. And I think that is sort of the only good thing about this particular moment in time.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/28/business/heather-boushey-biden-economic-inequality.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/28/business/heather-boushey-biden-economic-inequality.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Heather Boushey, the president and chief executive of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TING SHEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BU5)

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Boris Johnson’s ‘Global Britain’: Inspired Vision or Wishful Thinking?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:608H-BBP1-DXY4-X1BY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

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**Byline:** Mark Landler

**Highlight:** Post-Brexit Britain is going it alone at a time when globalization is in retreat. But a clash with China over Hong Kong has shown the limits of what it can do.

**Body**

Post-Brexit Britain is going it alone at a time when globalization is in retreat. But a clash with China over Hong Kong has shown the limits of what it can do.

LONDON — Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson and his pro-Brexit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/world/europe/brexit-boris-johnson-ireland.html) allies have long promised that once Britain broke free of the European Union, it could play a bold new role on the world stage — one they dubbed Global Britain. For a few days this week, it looked as if they were actually making good on that promise.

When China imposed a new security law on Hong Kong, Mr. Johnson not only condemned the Chinese government, he also threw open Britain’s doors to nearly three million residents of the former British colony who were eligible for residency in Britain. It was a strong, some even said brave, stand by a long-departed colonial government against the oppression of a rising superpower.

But it was, in the end, also a signpost of Britain’s diminished stature: The Chinese [*threatened retaliation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/world/europe/brexit-boris-johnson-ireland.html), while Mr. Johnson’s ministers admitted that there was nothing they could do if China refused to allow those people to leave Hong Kong.

“We’re a medium-size power that needs to work with others to secure what we want around the world,” said Chris Patten, who served as the last British governor of Hong Kong. Leaving the European Union, he said, had deprived Britain of its most natural partner “in trying to deal with these global issues.”

The clash with China laid bare deeper contradictions in Mr. Johnson’s post-Brexit vision: Britain wants to go global at a time when globalization is in retreat. It has cast off from the world’s largest trading bloc when the world is more divided than ever into competing regions. And it is trying to carve out an overseas role just as the coronavirus pandemic has crippled its domestic economy.

Mr. Johnson’s model is no longer Winston Churchill, the proud symbol of Britain’s imperial reach, but Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose New Deal put American society back on its feet after the Great Depression.

With millions of Britons facing joblessness and a mammoth rebuilding project at home, Mr. Johnson’s government scarcely has the bandwidth to reestablish Britain as an energetic player on the global stage. His ministers no longer invoke the phrase Singapore-on-Thames, which once described the kind of agile, lightly regulated, free-trading powerhouse [*that they envisioned emerging from Brexit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/world/europe/brexit-boris-johnson-ireland.html).

Moreover, the geopolitical landscape has shifted significantly since the Brexit referendum — and even more rapidly since the pandemic spread around the world. With rivalry and antagonism between China and the West on the rise, Britain as a free agent will be caught uncomfortably in between, constantly forced to choose sides in a postpandemic world.

“One consequence of a postglobalization world is that people will start to think in a defensive way about blocs,” said Mark Malloch Brown, a former deputy secretary general of the United Nations. “Britain is adrift without a bloc. That is going to be challenging, and a first example of this is Hong Kong.”

British diplomats showed skill in lining up the United States, Canada and Australia to sign a stern letter to the Chinese government about the new law. But in defending the rights of those who hold British overseas passports, Britain is on its own. Neither the European Union, so recently forsaken by Britain, nor the United States, largely indifferent to human rights under President Trump, is eager to join that fight.

Mr. Johnson once cast Britain’s independence as a competitive advantage. He said it would allow the country to pursue trade agreements with China, the United States or anyone else, unencumbered by the European Union.

“As Global Britain, our range is not confined to the immediate European hinterland as we see the rise of new powers,” said Mr. Johnson, then serving as foreign secretary, [*in a speech to Chatham House*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/world/europe/brexit-boris-johnson-ireland.html) in December 2016. “It is right that we should make a distinctive approach to policymaking, as regards China.”

But as relations between China and the United States have soured, Mr. Johnson is caught in the middle. After initially fending off pressure from Mr. Trump to keep the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei out of Britain’s 5G digital network, Mr. Johnson has been forced to reconsider. Some analysts say they expect him to reverse himself and impose additional restrictions on Huawei.

Part of the reason is technical: American sanctions on Huawei have raised the security risks of allowing the company to build a large part of the network. But part of it is geopolitical reality. In any coming Cold War between the United States and China, Britain cannot afford to alienate its most important ally.

“The danger is finding ourselves trapped between President Trump and President Xi,” Mr. Patten said, referring to the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping.

Mr. Trump’s faltering political fortunes pose another risk to Mr. Johnson. The president has enthusiastically supported Brexit and embraced the prime minister as a like-minded populist. If Mr. Trump were to lose in November, Mr. Johnson would face an uncertain new counterpart in former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

There is nothing to suggest that Mr. Biden would not champion the alliance with Britain. On some issues, like Iran and climate change, there would be fewer points of friction. But Mr. Biden is not likely to attach the same priority to a trade deal that Mr. Trump has. Former President Barack Obama famously warned Britons they would be at the “back of the queue” for trade talks if they voted for Brexit.

Mr. Biden is also a devoted Irish-American who would look out for Ireland’s interests, as Britain negotiates its long-term trade relationship with the European Union (a breakthrough in those talks seems more elusive than ever). The preservation of the Good Friday Agreement, which ended years of sectarian strife in Northern Ireland, is an article of faith among Democrats.

“Democrats are bewildered by the logic of Brexit, to begin with,” Mr. Malloch Brown said. “There is a very strong Democratic Irish lobby, which will be really watching like a hawk that this doesn’t put Ireland at a disadvantage.”

To some critics, Global Britain was never more than a marketing slogan. After all, they said, Britain has for centuries seen itself as a global player, one that punched above its weight economically and militarily, long after the end of the empire and throughout its 47 years of membership in Europe’s institutions.

Today, in any event, powerful Johnson advisers, like Dominic Cummings, are more concerned about transforming British society than asserting its influence abroad. They know the Conservative Party won its 80-seat Parliamentary majority with the votes of ***working-class*** people in Britain’s Midlands and north, who care more about saving their jobs than striking trade deals.

Since Mr. Johnson’s victory, he has used the Global Britain label mainly to put a gloss on a bureaucratic decision: merging two government ministries, the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development. The rationale, he said, is to align Britain’s foreign aid with its strategic and commercial interests. Some former diplomats said Mr. Johnson should not stop there.

“If you really want a Global Britain, and you want the Foreign Office to have genuine policy heft, then bring in the trade department,” said Simon Fraser, who once headed the Foreign Office.

There are grounds for hope about Britain’s role. Its diplomats are pushing a proposal to expand the Group of 7 to include three other big democracies, South Korea, India and Australia. Other countries have welcomed it as an alternative to Mr. Trump’s much-maligned plan to invite Russia back into the club.

Britain remains a substantial military power, with nuclear weapons and a close intelligence relationship with the United States and other allies — known as the Five Eyes — that analysts say has recovered since the strains over Huawei.

Mr. Johnson made waves this week with a front-page column in an Israeli newspaper, in which he [*urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to annex*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/world/europe/brexit-boris-johnson-ireland.html) occupied territories in the West Bank. Mr. Netanyahu has held off for now.

Britain’s opposition Labour Party has also swung back to the mainstream, after a period in which it seemed influenced by anti-American sentiment and was tainted by allegations of anti-Semitism. [*Lisa Nandy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/world/europe/brexit-boris-johnson-ireland.html), the shadow foreign secretary, has emerged as a fresh new voice on Britain’s place in the world.

If the pandemic finally punctures the illusion of a Global Britain, Britain can take solace in what has not changed. It remains a midsize country, anchored in the West, deeply intertwined with Europe and inescapably lashed to the United States.

“It has made them realize that they couldn’t have their cake and eat it too,” said Thomas Wright, director of the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution. “That is a delusion that has now been stripped away. They’ve been forced back into their more traditional space.”

PHOTOS: Boris Johnson, Britain’s prime minister, condemned a new security law that China has imposed on Hong Kong. (POOL PHOTO BY PAUL ELLIS); Union Jack flags line the Mall in London on Jan. 31, the day that Britain formally withdrew from the European Union after 47 years. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); In Hong Kong, protesters hold up their open palms to demand that the government meet their “five demands, and not one less.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 10, 2020

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[***New York Plan May Overhaul Property Taxes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y3N-GKK1-DXY4-X07B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 31, 2020 Friday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1339 words

**Byline:** By Emma G. Fitzsimmons, Matthew Haag and Jeffery C. Mays

**Body**

New York City property taxes, long considered inequitable, could face a big overhaul under a plan from a mayoral commission.

New York City's antiquated method of calculating property taxes has long allowed owners of multimillion-dollar brownstones in Brooklyn and high-rise co-ops by Central Park to pay less in taxes than ***working-class*** homeowners in the South Bronx, relative to the value of their properties.

Now, a high-level city commission empowered by the mayor and City Council speaker is proposing a major overhaul that would fundamentally shift the tax burden to those wealthier neighborhoods and lessen it for low- and moderate-income homeowners.

In a preliminary report posted online Thursday, the commission recommended that the city assess most homes, including co-ops and condominiums, at full market value. Such a formula, while commonplace in many cities and counties, is foreign to New York City, where property taxes are often capped.

The changes, which could affect 90 percent of all homeowners in New York City, according to the commission chairman, would have to overcome many hurdles, including approvals from the mayor, the Council, the State Legislature and the governor, before taking effect.

The new system would raise the same amount of tax revenue for the city; it would just redistribute who pays what.

The inequities in the current system can be stark: A five-bedroom brownstone facing Prospect Park in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn is currently listed for sale at $8 million. But it has an extremely low assessed value, leading to an annual property tax bill of $20,165 despite its huge market value.

By comparison, the owner of a ranch-style home in Fieldston in the Bronx would pay roughly the same in property taxes on a house with a market value of about $2 million. So would the owner of a $900,000 home just north of there, in Yonkers in Westchester County, according to tax records.

''I'm happy to be part of a historic revisiting of a situation that has been inequitable for a quarter of a century,'' said Allen P. Cappelli, a lawyer from Staten Island who served on the commission. ''People who live in similarly valued homes ought to be paying the same amount of taxes.''

Mayors including Edward I. Koch and David N. Dinkins have tried to tackle the issue, leading to combustible reactions but few results. Mr. Dinkins also formed a commission; it delivered its report during his last days in office.

Twenty-five years later, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Corey Johnson, the current Council speaker, created a commission in 2018, but it remains to be seen whether they will forcefully support the panel's recommendations.

On Thursday, the mayor and Mr. Johnson already appeared to be wary of embracing the recommendations, mindful perhaps that any significant change would surely set off a flurry of lobbying, angry town-hall-style meetings and pressure from state lawmakers.

Mr. Johnson called the plan ''a work in progress'' and said that he wanted to examine how the system would affect renters as well as how best to address luxury housing.

''I'm eager to hear the public's feedback on these recommendations,'' Mr. Johnson, a Democrat, said in a statement.

Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat in his second and final term, praised the commission's work, but he stopped short of a full-throated endorsement.

''The commission's recommendations are the most significant reforms proposed in 40 years and will bring a much needed level of fairness, transparency and simplicity to the entire system,'' Mr. de Blasio said in a statement. ''I thank the commission for its hard work tackling these issues head on and looking forward to their final report.''

In addition to making the system more equitable, the commission's proposal seeks to simplify it. In the process, it could disrupt an unspoken rationalization that many city homeowners make: Even though the cost of living in New York City, which includes city income taxes, is astronomically high, property taxes are still much lower than in neighboring suburbs.

The proposal follows the federal government's imposition of a $10,000 cap on federal income tax deductions for state and local taxes, a move that disproportionately affected wealthy, high-tax states like New York and sent some residents to other states.

Freddi Goldstein, a spokeswoman for the mayor, said that the administration did not ''believe this will cause a massive exodus of any kind.''

The recommendations call for removing the cap on how much the value of a property can increase each year. The proposal did not specify the specific rates that homeowners might pay, but it was clear that the suggested changes would create winners and losers.

One high-profile potential loser would be the mayor himself. Mr. de Blasio owns two homes in Park Slope, each worth more than $1 million. Homes with skyrocketing prices will be taxed more under the plan, said Marc V. Shaw, the commission's chairman.

''The expectation is that taxes on his property will go up significantly,'' Mr. Shaw, a onetime top deputy to Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor, told reporters in a phone call on Thursday.

Another homeowner who could face a higher tax bill is Kenneth Griffin, a hedge fund billionaire who owns a $238 million Manhattan condo. Co-ops and condos are not taxed at their true market value under the current system, but rather on the income generated by similar rental buildings.

Mr. Griffin's property taxes on the condo are about $532,000 now. If the property were to be taxed at its market value, his tax bill would be about $3 million.

The commission's proposal would have significant consequences for parts of New York City where market values have risen drastically over the past four decades, notably Park Slope and Manhattan neighborhoods around Central Park.

Park Slope is dotted with single-family brownstones near Prospect Park that sell for millions of dollars, but the property taxes on the homes have remained relatively low even as their real value has soared. The commission's proposal would eliminate those benefits and would require owners to pay property taxes based on full market value.

''Park Slope is the classic example,'' said James A. Parrott, the director of economic and fiscal policies at the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School and a commission member.

Some homeowners would see relief under the plan. Mr. Shaw said that those who could pay less included some single-family homes in Queens and Staten Island and certain co-ops and condominiums in parts of the Bronx.

The commission recommended two provisions for owners with lower incomes. One, a ''partial homestead exemption,'' would help people who live in their homes with income below a certain level that has yet to be determined. Out-of-town homeowners would not qualify.

''People who own a pied-à-terre in Manhattan will be paying more,'' Mr. Parrott said.

The second measure, called a ''circuit breaker,'' would limit tax bills to a certain percentage of household income.

Members of the commission were already cautioning on Thursday that it could take years to adopt the changes, and that they would be phased in slowly. The panel plans to hold public hearings in the coming months to receive feedback on the proposal and to then issue final recommendations later in the year.

Under the current system, most residences with up to three units, including single-family homes, are taxed under a complicated equation that begins with their market value, which is determined by the city based on recent sales prices for similar nearby properties.

A property's assessed value is then calculated at 6 percent of the market value, but it cannot increase more than 6 percent a year or 20 percent in five years. That helps people who own property in neighborhoods like Park Slope where values have surged. Tax exemptions and credits, if they exist, are then applied and that total is multiplied by a variable tax rate that is currently around 21.17 percent.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/nyregion/property-tax-reform-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/30/nyregion/property-tax-reform-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A proposed new system would most likely increase tax bills in rapidly appreciating neighborhoods like Park Slope, Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEFANO UKMAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A25)

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2020

**End of Document**



[***A Gen-X Adviser to Biden Argues Equality Is Good for Growth***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60PG-KVB1-DXY4-X3GR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 28, 2020 Friday 17:42 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1635 words

**Byline:** Katy Lederer

**Highlight:** Heather Boushey is at the forefront of a generation of economists rethinking their discipline — just as the government deploys trillions to address a once-in-a-century emergency.

**Body**

Heather Boushey, who is unofficially one of the top economic advisers to Joseph R. Biden Jr., does not play to type. When the progressive economist and I arranged to meet last December in a Midtown Manhattan coffee shop, I was expecting someone buttoned up, and I couldn’t find her in the room. Then she texted and waved from just a few feet away. She was wearing a Stephen Malkmus and the Jicks T-shirt — a niche band featuring the lead singer of the beloved 1990s indie group Pavement.

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She hadn’t predicted the virus, of course, but she had spent much of her career studying the financial fissures underlying the American economy. “Countries that have this deep inequality like we do are much more prone to financial crises,” she said, “in no small part because high wealth inequality leads to more debt, which just makes your economy more fragile.”

Dr. Boushey (pronounced boo-SHAY) has a strict policy of not commenting on her work for Mr. Biden, who also takes economic advice from Jared Bernstein and Ben Harris, both veterans of the Obama administration; [*Janet L. Yellen*](https://equitablegrowth.org/), the former Federal Reserve chair; and others. In this inner circle, Dr. Boushey is among those arguing against the persistent assumption in Washington that programs that benefit the poor and middle class are bad for the economy. In two volumes of data-studded analysis published in the last four years, she has laid out a platform for what she describes as “strong, stable and broad-based economic growth” — basically, Washington-ese for a fight against plutocracy.

In “[*Finding Time: The Economics of Work-Life Conflict*](https://equitablegrowth.org/),” released in 2016, she charted the changing structure of the American family since World War II. Promoting policies like universal access to paid sick days and affordable child care, Dr. Boushey contended that addressing suffering and inequality didn’t have to come at the expense of economic dynamism; such remedies, she says, can actually promote growth.

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Dr. Boushey’s work offers a bird’s-eye view of policies that might have been — she was tapped to be the chief economist of Hillary Clinton’s transition team, had the 2016 election gone the other way — and that could find favor if Mr. Biden wins in November. As the federal government deploys trillions of dollars in a once-in-a-century economic emergency, Dr. Boushey is at the forefront of a rising generation of economists rethinking age-old conundrums, like unemployment, competition and the very nature of economic growth.

‘Talking to a different audience’

In “Finding Time,” Dr. Boushey, who was born in 1970, recounts a childhood in a middle-class neighborhood north of Seattle. Her father worked as a crane operator at the Boeing plant, and her mother took on a full-time job as a bank teller to make ends meet. Her parents were part of a trend. In the context of rising inflation and unemployment, many ***working-class*** families were feeling the same squeeze.

In the early 1980s, Dr. Boushey’s father was laid off. Her mother said some after-school activities might be put on hold. “That was the moment that I realized that actually economics — whether or not my parents have a job — affects whether or not I get to do the things that matter to me in my life,” Dr. Boushey said.

For decades, economists have often sought to frame their discipline as being at an arm’s length from politics. But Dr. Boushey and her peers, many of them Generation X, have embraced the field’s social and political roots. Informed by mistakes made during the 2008 recession, members of this cohort — including academics like Emmanuel Saez and Raj Chetty, and Jason Furman on the policy side — have turned their attention to the structural consequences of deepening inequality. They have eagerly addressed topics that challenge neoclassical economic theory, such as climate change, generational wealth and opportunity disparities.

In [*an essay*](https://equitablegrowth.org/) published by the journal Democracy last summer, Dr. Boushey described the group as “a nascent generation of scholars who are steeped in the new data and methods of modern economics, and who argue that the field should — indeed, must — change.”

“If anything, economics is reckoning with its political past,” said Mehrsa Baradaran, a professor of law at the University of California, Irvine, who has written extensively about[*the racial wealth gap*](https://equitablegrowth.org/) and serves on the Washington Center for Equitable Growth’s board of directors.

“Heather is really in the forefront of this,” Professor Baradaran added. “She’s talking to a different audience than I think a lot of other academic economists. She’s actually trying to collect effective policy and make economic changes by looking at the data we measure.”

In addition to awarding grants for academic work, Dr. Boushey’s think tank publishes legislation-minded policy proposals. In [*“Recession Ready*](https://equitablegrowth.org/),” a collection of essays produced in 2019 with the Hamilton Project, a division of the centrist Brookings Institution, Dr. Boushey and her co-authors advocated what are known as automatic stabilizers — safety-net programs like enhanced unemployment and food stamp benefits that would be triggered without congressional debate if the economy slowed down. This year, Equitable Growth published “[*Vision 2020*](https://equitablegrowth.org/),” a set of 21 proposals by a range of scholars that included arguments for more affordable early childhood care and the rebuilding of U.S. labor market wage standards.

Many free-market economists remain skeptical of aspects of Dr. Boushey’s framework.

“I cannot question somebody on economic grounds who says, ‘You know what, I want to give up some efficiency for some more equity, fairness, compassion,’” said Casey B. Mulligan, a professor of economics at the University of Chicago, who has [*argued*](https://equitablegrowth.org/) that some progressive policies could in fact impede recovery. “What I can question and criticize is that there wouldn’t be a trade-off.”

Michael R. Strain, who runs the economic policy program at the American Enterprise Institute and has appeared on [*Dr. Boushey’s podcast*](https://equitablegrowth.org/), [*has said*](https://equitablegrowth.org/) some concern about inequality might be misplaced.

“In terms of the gap between the top and the bottom, I don’t see a lot of good evidence as to what exactly the problem with that gap is,” he said. “And I think there are lots of problems in terms of what’s happening with the bottom 20 or 30 percent, but I don’t know that you solve many of those problems by shrinking the income gap.”

Acknowledging the contested nature of her discipline, Dr. Boushey argues that no matter how one figures it, federal policy has not kept up with the changing structure of society — especially now, as Covid-19 craters the economy.

“In the face of a government that could not provide protective gear, could not protect people, hasn’t been paying attention to supply chains, all of these issues,” she said, “you’re going to have a demand — an ongoing demand — for some sort of active policy. So I think the question is then what that is.”

‘We’re doing this for each other because we care’

As we chatted on her stoop in July, Dr. Boushey gestured at our masks. “You’re doing this to protect me, I’m doing this to protect you,” she said. “We’re doing this for each other because we care.”

It was as good a summary as any of her holistic vision of prosperity. In her analysis, paid sick leave will translate into a more productive work force. Addressing inequality will reduce market distortions that ultimately inhibit growth.

On July 21, the Biden campaign released its “[*21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce” plan*](https://equitablegrowth.org/), a 10-year, $775 billion proposal. Advocating subsidies and tax credits for child care and early childhood education, and an expansion of elder care programs, the plan would put into practice many of the policies Dr. Boushey has long endorsed. It would in theory encourage a progressive recovery, boosting the earning and bargaining power of care industry workers, who are disproportionately women of color.

The next week, on July 30, Dr. Boushey [*testified*](https://equitablegrowth.org/) by video before the congressional Joint Economic Committee. Important components of the $2 trillion federal stimulus known as the CARES Act were [*set to expire*](https://equitablegrowth.org/), and Dr. Boushey pushed for extending a $600-a-week federal unemployment payment, a major point of contention in negotiations between the White House and congressional Democrats.

“If you want to be creating more jobs,” she said, “you have to sustain that consumer demand, you have to keep people paying their rent, you have to keep them spending in their communities — until we contain the virus.”

Back on her stoop, Dr. Boushey had mused on the policy ferment of the moment.

“How is it that ideas change?” she said. “You read about that in books, and if you get to live long enough and you get to be a part of these communities, you can sort of see how that happens. And I think that is sort of the only good thing about this particular moment in time.”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ting Shen for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Tax System Favoring Central Park Co-ops and Brooklyn Brownstones Could End***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y3M-F0C1-DXY4-X53C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Emma G. Fitzsimmons, Matthew Haag and Jeffery C. Mays

**Highlight:** New York City property taxes, long considered inequitable, could face a big overhaul under a plan from a mayoral commission.

**Body**

New York City property taxes, long considered inequitable, could face a big overhaul under a plan from a mayoral commission.

New York City’s antiquated method of calculating property taxes has long allowed owners of multimillion-dollar brownstones in Brooklyn and high-rise co-ops by Central Park to pay less in taxes than ***working-class*** homeowners in the South Bronx, relative to the value of their properties.

Now, a high-level city commission empowered by the mayor and City Council speaker is proposing a major overhaul that would fundamentally shift the tax burden to those wealthier neighborhoods and lessen it for low- and moderate-income homeowners.

In [*a preliminary report*](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page) posted online Thursday, the commission recommended that the city assess most homes, including co-ops and condominiums, at full market value. Such a formula, while commonplace in many cities and counties, is foreign to New York City, where property taxes are often capped.

The changes, which could affect 90 percent of all homeowners in New York City, according to the commission chairman, would have to overcome many hurdles, including approvals from the mayor, the Council, the State Legislature and the governor, before taking effect.

The new system would raise the same amount of tax revenue for the city; it would just redistribute who pays what.

The inequities in the current system can be stark: A five-bedroom brownstone facing Prospect Park in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn is currently listed for sale at $8 million. But it has an extremely low assessed value, [*leading to an annual property tax bill of $20,165*](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page) despite its huge market value.

By comparison, the owner of a ranch-style home in Fieldston in the Bronx [*would pay roughly the same in property taxes*](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page) on a house with a market value of about $2 million. So would the owner of a $900,000 home just north of there, in Yonkers in Westchester County, according to tax records.

“I’m happy to be part of a historic revisiting of a situation that has been inequitable for a quarter of a century,” said Allen P. Cappelli, a lawyer from Staten Island who served on the commission. “People who live in similarly valued homes ought to be paying the same amount of taxes.”

Mayors including Edward I. Koch and David N. Dinkins have tried to tackle the issue, leading to combustible reactions but few results. Mr. Dinkins also formed a commission; it delivered its report during his last days in office.

Twenty-five years later, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Corey Johnson, the current Council speaker, [*created a commission*](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page) in 2018, but it remains to be seen whether they will forcefully support the panel’s recommendations.

On Thursday, the mayor and Mr. Johnson already appeared to be wary of embracing the recommendations, mindful perhaps that any significant change would surely set off a flurry of lobbying, angry town-hall-style meetings and pressure from state lawmakers.

Mr. Johnson called the plan “a work in progress” and said that he wanted to examine how the system would affect renters as well as how best to address luxury housing.

“I’m eager to hear the public’s feedback on these recommendations,” Mr. Johnson, a Democrat, said in a statement.

Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat in his second and final term, praised the commission’s work, but he stopped short of a full-throated endorsement.

“The commission’s recommendations are the most significant reforms proposed in 40 years and will bring a much needed level of fairness, transparency and simplicity to the entire system,” Mr. de Blasio said in a statement. “I thank the commission for its hard work tackling these issues head on and looking forward to their final report.”

In addition to making the system more equitable, the commission’s proposal seeks to simplify it. In the process, it could disrupt an unspoken rationalization that many city homeowners make: Even though the cost of living in New York City, which includes city income taxes, is astronomically high, property taxes are still much lower than in neighboring suburbs.

The proposal follows the federal government’s imposition of a $10,000 cap on federal income tax deductions for state and local taxes, a move that disproportionately affected wealthy, high-tax states like New York and sent some residents to other states.

Freddi Goldstein, a spokeswoman for the mayor, said that the administration did not “believe this will cause a massive exodus of any kind.”

The recommendations call for removing the cap on how much the value of a property can increase each year. The proposal did not specify the specific rates that homeowners might pay, but it was clear that the suggested changes would create winners and losers.

One high-profile potential loser would be the mayor himself. Mr. de Blasio owns two homes in Park Slope, [*each worth more than $1 million*](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page). Homes with skyrocketing prices will be taxed more under the plan, said Marc V. Shaw, the commission’s chairman.

“The expectation is that taxes on his property will go up significantly,” Mr. Shaw, a onetime top deputy to Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor, told reporters in a phone call on Thursday.

Another homeowner who could face a higher tax bill is Kenneth Griffin, a hedge fund billionaire who [*owns a $238 million Manhattan condo*](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page). Co-ops and condos are not taxed at their true market value under the current system, but rather on the income generated by similar rental buildings.

Mr. Griffin’s property taxes on the condo are about $532,000 now. If the property were to be taxed at its market value, his tax bill would be about $3 million.

The commission’s proposal would have significant consequences for parts of New York City where market values have risen drastically over the past four decades, notably Park Slope and Manhattan neighborhoods around Central Park.

Park Slope is dotted with single-family brownstones near Prospect Park that sell for millions of dollars, but the property taxes on the homes have remained relatively low even as their real value has soared. The commission’s proposal would eliminate those benefits and would require owners to pay property taxes based on full market value.

“Park Slope is the classic example,” said James A. Parrott, the director of economic and fiscal policies at the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School and a commission member.

Some homeowners would see relief under the plan. Mr. Shaw said that those who could pay less included some single-family homes in Queens and Staten Island and certain co-ops and condominiums in parts of the Bronx.

The commission recommended two provisions for owners with lower incomes. One, a “partial homestead exemption,” would help people who live in their homes with income below a certain level that has yet to be determined. Out-of-town homeowners would not qualify.

“People who own a pied-à-terre in Manhattan will be paying more,” Mr. Parrott said.

The second measure, called a “circuit breaker,” would limit tax bills to a certain percentage of household income.

Members of the commission were already cautioning on Thursday that it could take years to adopt the changes, and that they would be phased in slowly. The panel plans to hold public hearings in the coming months to receive feedback on the proposal and to then issue final recommendations later in the year.

Under the current system, most residences with up to three units, including single-family homes, are taxed under a complicated equation that begins with their market value, which is determined by the city based on recent sales prices for similar nearby properties.

A property’s assessed value is then calculated at 6 percent of the market value, but it cannot increase more than 6 percent a year or 20 percent in five years. That helps people who own property in neighborhoods like Park Slope where values have surged. Tax exemptions and credits, if they exist, are then applied and that total is multiplied by a variable tax rate that is currently around 21.17 percent.

PHOTO: A proposed new system would most likely increase tax bills in rapidly appreciating neighborhoods like Park Slope, Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEFANO UKMAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A25)

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Officials Weighed Using 'Heat Ray' to Chase Migrants From Border***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60P7-7N51-DXY4-X0NR-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Michael D. Shear

**Body**

Even as the Republican convention tries to soften President Trump's image, he has made it clear that the extreme immigration policies of his first four years will be central to his re-election pitch.

WASHINGTON -- Fifteen days before the 2018 midterm elections, as President Trump sought to motivate Republicans with dark warnings about caravans heading to the U.S. border, he gathered his homeland security secretary and White House staff to deliver a message: ''extreme action'' was needed to stop the migrants.

That afternoon, at a separate meeting with top leaders of the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection officials suggested deploying a microwave weapon -- a ''heat ray'' designed by the military to make people's skin feel as if it is burning when they get within range of its invisible beams.

Developed by the military as a crowd dispersal tool two decades ago, the Active Denial System had been largely abandoned amid doubts over its effectiveness and morality. Two former officials who attended the afternoon meeting at the Department of Homeland Security on Oct. 22, 2018, said the suggestion that the device be installed at the border shocked attendees, even if it would have satisfied the president.

Kirstjen Nielsen, then the secretary of homeland security, told an aide after the meeting that she would not authorize the use of such a device, and that it should never be brought up again in her presence, the officials said.

Alexei Woltornist, a spokesman for the department, said Wednesday that ''it was never considered.''

It is not known whether Mr. Trump knew of the microwave weapon suggestion, but the discussion in the fall of 2018 underscored how Mr. Trump's obsession with shutting down immigration has driven policy considerations, including his suggestions of installing flesh-piercing spikes on the border wall, building a moat filled with snakes and alligators and shooting migrants in the legs.

The Republican National Convention on Tuesday night featured a small citizenship naturalization ceremony at the White House clearly intended to try to soften the president's image as a heartless opponent of immigrants. In 2018, the president's hard immigration policies may well have backfired when suburban women recoiled at the images of children separated from their families and migrants in cages. A Democratic wave that November driven by such voters swept Republicans from control of the House.

But for his core supporters, Mr. Trump's immigration agenda is again at the heart of his campaign, and the unrest roiling cities from Portland, Ore., to Kenosha, Wis., could give it more punch. The pitch: He has delivered on perhaps the central promise of his 2016 run, to effectively cut off America from foreigners who he said posed security and economic threats. Through hundreds of regulations, policy directives and structural changes, the president has profoundly reshaped the government's vast immigration bureaucracy.

His campaign will also concentrate on making searing, and often false, attacks against former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., telling voters that the president's rival wants to fling open the nation's borders to criminals and disease-carrying immigrants who will take hard-working Americans' jobs.

''The public health necessity and the economic necessity of controlling immigration has placed the view of the Democrat left even more radically outside the pale of mainstream American thought,'' Stephen Miller, the architect of the president's immigration policies, said this week in an interview.

The president tweeted last month that ''the Radical Left Democrats want Open Borders for anyone, including many criminals, to come in!''

Mr. Biden's campaign said such false attacks would be as politically ineffective as they were in 2018, long before the coronavirus and economic recession.

''Doubling down on divisive poison says one thing to voters: that even after all his devastating failed leadership has cost us -- and even though Joe Biden has been showing him the way for months -- Donald Trump still has no strategy for overcoming the pandemic, the overwhelming priority for the American people,'' said Andrew Bates, a spokesman for Mr. Biden's presidential campaign.

Mr. Biden has not called for ''open borders'' or embraced getting rid of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as some on the Democratic left flank have sought. He has said he would roll back Mr. Trump's immigration policies, promising to restore asylum rules, end separation of migrant families at the border, reverse limits on legal immigration and impose a 100-day moratorium on deportations.

But Mr. Biden and Democratic congressional candidates are bracing for what they expect will be a concerted focus on one of the most polarizing issues in American politics -- made even more divisive by Mr. Trump's embrace of ugly, xenophobic language about foreigners.

Some of Mr. Trump's biggest immigration promises from 2016 have fallen short. No ''big, beautiful wall'' stretches the length of the southern border, paid for by Mexico. Instead, the president spent billions of dollars of taxpayer money to replace about 300 miles of existing barriers with a hulking wall built of steel slats.

Like the heat ray, many of the president's ideas -- including the moat and shooting migrants in the legs -- were thwarted by his own officials. Other policy proposals have been blocked by federal judges who have ruled that they violated existing laws, administrative rules or the Constitution.

But even the president's fiercest critics concede that on immigration, the president can rightly claim that he did much of what he said he would do.

''The Trump administration, unilaterally, without passing laws in Congress, has radically reshaped immigration in the United States,'' said Omar Jadwat, the director of the Immigrants' Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union. ''They have effectively shut down the asylum system at the border. They've reintroduced religious, racial and national origin discrimination into our immigration system. These are real, radical shifts.''

Because of the president's policies, Central American migrants fleeing persecution and violence in their home countries now must wait, often for months, in squalid camps on the Mexico side of the border while the United States considers their requests for asylum. For decades, asylum seekers were allowed to remain in the United States while their cases were decided.

Mr. Trump derides that as ''catch and release,'' which he says allowed hundreds of thousands of migrants to fraudulently claim persecution as a means of entering the United States and then disappearing into the country illegally. He repeatedly said it was his top priority to end the practice.

Advocates say he has largely succeeded, aided in part by the coronavirus pandemic. The president has used emergency powers intended for public health crises to turn away all asylum seekers, effectively ending the role of the United States as a place of refuge for those fleeing their homes.

Those deeply rooted changes are a ''bell that can never be unrung,'' one senior aide said.

Even before the pandemic, Mr. Trump had lowered the annual cap for refugees to a trickle, shutting the United States off from war-torn countries like Syria or Somalia.

''Refugees have been left separated from their families or in the United States they've been left without access to critical medical care, or have been left in places where their lives are in danger,'' said Eleanor Acer, the senior director for refugee protection at Human Rights First. ''And for refugees seeking asylum, the asylum system has been totally decimated. Refugees seeking asylum have been turned back to some of the most dangerous places in the world.''

And from the earliest days of his presidency, Mr. Trump has used national security concerns to justify a crackdown on immigration from around the globe, imposing a travel ban on several predominantly Muslim countries only days after taking office in January 2017. A version of that travel ban remains in place and served as the template for other travel bans put in place during the pandemic.

Processing of visa applications from many countries had already slowed to a crawl before the health crisis as the administration aggressively put in place what the president called ''extreme vetting'' of people from countries deemed to harbor terrorists.

The Trump administration has also moved aggressively to reduce the flow of legal immigrants who have for decades sought to live and work in the United States.

It has drafted new regulations aimed at making it harder for poor immigrants to qualify for entry into the United States, arguing that they would be a financial burden on the country. And it has aggressively sought to eliminate programs that allowed American companies to lure foreign workers to the United States for jobs.

Mr. Miller, in particular, has argued that such programs put ***working-class*** Americans at a competitive disadvantage -- a potent campaign theme -- though experts say that, over all, immigrants do not drive down wages or take jobs from American citizens.

Some conservatives say Mr. Trump has not gone far enough to stop immigrants from working in the United States.

''There are areas where this administration isn't as hawkish as they should be,'' said Mark Krikorian, the executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which pushes for immigration restrictions. He said Mr. Trump had failed to push for a program that would let employers quickly determine if a worker was in the country illegally.

''Where the hell is E-verify?'' he asked. Mr. Krikorian said the president had done little to end the H-2B visa program that allows companies to hire temporary workers from abroad for seasonal jobs. ''The H-2B program shouldn't exist. It is harmful, period.''

Still, David Lapan, who served briefly as the top spokesman at the Department of Homeland Security in 2017, said that the president's success in pushing through his immigration agenda would make it difficult for Mr. Biden, should he win in November.

''If the president is not re-elected, and Joe Biden becomes the president, he and his administration are going to have their hands full on a number of fronts, Covid chief among them,'' Mr. Lapan said. ''Trying to undo the damage that has been done to the immigration system is going to be a further challenge. And how much is the next administration able to focus on that, given the panoply of challenges that they're going to face?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/26/us/politics/trump-campaign-immigration.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/26/us/politics/trump-campaign-immigration.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Deportees arrived last month at a shelter in Nogales, Mexico, just across the border from Arizona. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2020

**End of Document**



[***More of Her Metropolitan Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61PT-V8K1-DXY4-X3G0-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Dave Itzkoff

**Body**

The Netflix series, featuring Lebowitz and directed by Scorsese, offers acerbic commentary and a sense of yearning for a pre-pandemic metropolis.

Had this past New Year's Eve been a normal one, Fran Lebowitz and Martin Scorsese would have spent it as they usually do: with each other and a few close friends, in the screening room in Scorsese's office, watching a classic movie like ''Vertigo'' or ''A Matter of Life and Death.''

The year they got together to see ''Barry Lyndon,'' they watched a rare, high-quality print made from the director Stanley Kubrick's original camera negative.

''And I said, 'What's a camera negative?''' Lebowitz recalled in a group video call with Scorsese on Tuesday. ''And then all of the movie lunatics glared at me, like I admitted to being illiterate.''

In previous years, when they were feeling especially energetic, Scorsese said with some audible melancholy, ''We used to have one screening before midnight and then have another screening after.''

But this time, their annual custom had to be put on hold. Instead, Lebowitz explained: ''I talked to Marty on the phone. We commiserated about how horrible we felt, how awful it was not to be doing that.''

Lebowitz, the author, humorist and raconteur, and Scorsese, the Academy Award-winning filmmaker, were speaking from their individual New York homes to discuss their latest collaboration, the documentary series ''Pretend It's a City.'' They are longtime friends who, as they continue to wait out the coronavirus pandemic, have lately been unable to see much of each other or the city with which they are irrevocably associated.

A similar, bittersweet air hangs over the seven-part series, which Netflix will release on Friday. A follow-up to Scorsese's 2010 nonfiction film ''Public Speaking,'' ''Pretend It's a City'' (which Scorsese also directed) chronicles the acerbic Lebowitz in interviews, live appearances and strolls through New York as she shares stories about her life and insights about the city's constant evolution in recent decades.

Of course, the Netflix series was initiated before the pandemic, and Lebowitz and Scorsese are supremely aware that it depicts a bustling, energized New York that now feels just out of reach -- and which they both hope will return soon.

In the meantime, ''Pretend It's a City'' offers a tantalizing snapshot of New York in full bloom, along with Lebowitz's lively and unapologetic commentary on what it means to live there.

As she explained: ''I don't care whether people agree with me or not. My feeling if someone doesn't agree with me is, OK, you're wrong. That is one thing that I've never worried about.''

Scorsese gently replied, ''I had that impression.''

Lebowitz and Scorsese spoke further about the making of ''Pretend It's a City'' and the impact that the pandemic has had on them. These are edited excerpts from that conversation.

I was surprised to learn from ''Pretend It's a City'' that neither of you recall when you first met.

FRAN LEBOWITZ That's because we're old and we have many friendships. I don't mean old in the sense that we don't remember things, because I believe we both have perfect memories. But because there's so many years and so many people. I guess we met at a party, because where else would I have met him? Obviously, I go to a lot more parties than Marty. That's why Marty made so many movies and Fran wrote so few books.

MARTIN SCORSESE I really recall us talking the most at John Waters's 50th birthday party. It was after ''Casino'' came out.

LEBOWITZ Of course, you were not averse to hearing how much I loved it.

SCORSESE No, I was not at all.

LEBOWITZ Even though I'm not as Italian as you might imagine [laughs], Marty's parents and a lot of my father's relatives -- all of whom were ***working-class*** Jews -- have a lot of parallels that are very well-known. The big difference is, the food is better in Italians' houses.

SCORSESE We liked the Jewish food better.

LEBOWITZ No, no, no, there's no comparison.

After working together on ''Public Speaking,'' what made you want to collaborate on another documentary project?

SCORSESE I enjoyed making ''Public Speaking.'' I found it freeing, in terms of narrative. But primarily, it's about being around Fran. I really would like to know what she thinks, pretty much every day, as it's happening. I'd like a running commentary -- not all the time, but one that I can dip in and out of during the day.

Do either of you worry that Fran is a finite resource and you will eventually exhaust her supply of wit?

LEBOWITZ You mean, am I worried about running out of things to say? No. I am worried about running out of money. But it never even occurred to me that I would not have something to say. It's just there. It's like having a trick thumb.

The series is divided into fanciful chapters like ''Cultural Affairs'' and ''Department of Sports & Health.'' How did you settle on these subjects?

SCORSESE We always felt we should have topics. She'll start on a topic, and then it'll go off like a jazz riff into a thousand other places. Eventually, we might be able to pull it back. In a lot of the films I make, the types of actors I work with, the dialogue is like music -- it's the timing and the emphasis. She has that.

LEBOWITZ Of course I am the world's most digressive speaker, but what you're really seeing at work is editing. I don't remember how many days we shot this but I'm confident that it was an infinitesimal amount compared to how much time it took him to edit.

SCORSESE I try to get that kind of freedom in my narrative films, but I very often am stuck to a plot.

LEBOWITZ I am plot-free, so no problem. [Laughter.]

Among the locations where you filmed Fran is at the Queens Museum, where we see her standing amid the Panorama of the City of New York, a highly detailed scale model that Robert Moses had built for the 1964 World's Fair. What was it like to shoot there?

LEBOWITZ I did knock over the Queensboro Bridge. The guy who's in charge of that, the day we shot there, was in a panic the entire time. And I proved him right.

SCORSESE That was the only time that I ever yelled ''Action!'' I don't know what possessed me. It must have thrown you off or something.

LEBOWITZ I did not destroy it, I just knocked it over.

SCORSESE By the way, it is magnificent, that model.

LEBOWITZ I'm not sure it makes up for Robert Moses. [Laughter.] It made you realize that if only Robert Moses had done everything in miniature, we wouldn't hate Robert Moses.

How did the pandemic affect the making of this series?

LEBOWITZ We shot it way before there was a virus. When the virus happened, Marty said, ''What should we do? What can we do?'' At the height of the shutdown, I went out walking around the city, and Marty sent Ellen Kuras [the director of photography on ''Pretend It's a City''], and what she filmed was incredibly beautiful. But I said to Marty, ''I think we should ignore it.''

SCORSESE We tried it. We edited sequences. It was OK, and then a week later, the city changed again. All these stores were closed and they had boards up. A week later, something else changed. So I said, ''Let's just stop it."

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Does the series feel different to you because of the pandemic?

LEBOWITZ There's a difference for sure. I thought of the title, ''Pretend It's a City,'' when New York was packed with morons who would stand in the middle of the sidewalk. And I would yell at them: ''Move! Pretend it's a city!'' The people who have seen it since then -- an agent of mine said, ''Oh, it's a love letter to New York.'' Before the virus, it was me complaining about New York. Now people think it has some more lyrical, metaphorical meaning.

Do you worry that New York won't fully return to what it was before the pandemic?

LEBOWITZ I have lived in New York long enough to know that it will not stay the way it is now. There is not a square foot of New York City, a square foot, that's the same as it was when I came here in 1970. That's what a city is, even without a plague. But I'd like to point out, there were many things wrong with it before. After the big protests in SoHo, I saw a reporter interviewing a woman who was a manager of one of the fancy stores there. The reporter said to her, ''What are you going to do?'' And she said, ''There's nothing we can do until the tourists come back.'' I yelled at the TV and I said, ''Really? You can't think what to do with SoHo without tourists? I can! Let me give you some ideas.'' Because I remember it without tourists. How about, artists could live there? How about, let's not have rent that's $190,000 a month? How about that? Let's try that.

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The day the pandemic is over -- there's no longer any risk of the coronavirus and we can all return to our usual lives -- what's the first thing you do?

SCORSESE First thing I would say is, please, to go to a restaurant. There's a few that I'm missing a great deal. I'll never eat outside. I don't understand how you can sit there and the fumes from the buses come in. I don't get it. It's not Paris.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/arts/television/pretend-its-a-city-martin-scorsese-fran-lebowitz.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/arts/television/pretend-its-a-city-martin-scorsese-fran-lebowitz.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The longtime friends Martin Scorsese and Fran Lebowitz in the new Netflix documentary series ''Pretend It's a City.'' Scorsese, who directed the series, said, ''It's about being around Fran.'' (C1)

''I have lived in New York long enough to know that it will not stay the way it is now,'' said Fran Lebowitz, above, who moved to the city in 1970. Below, Lebowitz, with the Panorama of the City of New York at the Queens Museum. Robert Moses had the detailed scale model built for the 1964 World's Fair. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX) (C10)

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2021

**End of Document**



[***The Billionaire Behind Hudson Yards Thinks New York Is Too Expensive; corner office***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60P8-DYT1-DXY4-X1JV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2020 Thursday 17:29 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1487 words

**Byline:** David Gelles

**Highlight:** Stephen Ross, a friend of President Trump, talks about politics, philanthropy and his pet peeve: wastefulness.

**Body**

[*Stephen Ross*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/nyregion/stephen-ross-mayor-money.html) — the billionaire real estate developer who founded Related Companies, owns the Miami Dolphins and has an interest in brands including SoulCycle and Equinox — is a man of contradictions.

He says the issue most important to him is combating climate change, but last year he [*hosted a lavish*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/nyregion/stephen-ross-mayor-money.html) fund-raiser for President Trump, who has [*rolled back*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/nyregion/stephen-ross-mayor-money.html) environmental protections.

He claims that New York City has grown too expensive, yet he recently opened Hudson Yards, a new ultraluxury Manhattan development [*designed for the wealthy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/nyregion/stephen-ross-mayor-money.html).

He preaches the transformative power of philanthropy, but in the midst of a pandemic his main charitable contributions have gone to nonprofits that are named after him.

And he says he does not consider himself a public figure, even as he uses his wealth and Rolodex to influence events around the globe.

To Mr. Ross, these contradictions are simply the realities of operating in a complex world. He says he disagrees with Mr. Trump’s climate policies and finds him “divisive,” but likes the president and believes he has done good things for the economy.

He knows Hudson Yards is expensive, but blames the high costs on a wasteful city government and notes that the development includes some affordable housing units.

And he says the problem with democracy today is low voter turnout, even as he considers [*raising up to $100 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/nyregion/stephen-ross-mayor-money.html) to influence the New York mayoral race, and acknowledges that he hosted the fund-raiser for Mr. Trump — for which some tickets cost $250,000 — because he was trying to win political favors.

Since the pandemic hit, Mr. Ross has doubled down on the causes he believes in.

Speaking from his office this month, Mr. Ross predicted that cities would be better than ever before long, and said that working from home was overrated.

He recently committed $100 million to the WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, a nonprofit organization named after him, which works to improve the quality of life in major metropolitan areas.

And in the midst of the protests over police brutality and social justice, Mr. Ross said he would donate $13 million over four years to another nonprofit named after him, the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality, or RISE.

Mr. Ross would not say who he was voting for in the upcoming presidential election. But he made clear his displeasure with New York City’s leadership, arguing that Mayor Bill de Blasio was damaging the city by unfairly demonizing billionaires like himself.

This interview was condensed and edited for clarity.

Has the pandemic prompted you to reconsider the ways in which you give or the kinds of organizations you’re going to give to?

Not really. I’ve been doing this for a long time. I mean, look at today with the social issues dealing with racism. Five years ago, I set up RISE. It’s probably the only group to deal with racism ever formed by a white person, and I gave more money to it than probably anybody in the country. I set this up and I did it in a big way and I’ve been the total funder of it to date. I didn’t come to it all of a sudden because of George Floyd’s death. We were there.

My biggest issue in life is really dealing with the environment and I’m very, very involved in dealing with sustainability and knowing how we need to change to a carbonless world.

At this moment in our country with tens of millions unemployed and millions going hungry, are you using your philanthropy to make any sort of acute interventions to try to help those most in need?

Well I mean, down in Florida I own the Miami Dolphins. We have our kitchens at the stadium providing almost 2,000 meals a day for people in need of food down there and we committed to do it for a year. OK? So I mean, I believe in philanthropy very much. I’m a member of the [*Giving Pledge*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/nyregion/stephen-ross-mayor-money.html) and more than half of my net worth will go to philanthropy when I die.

You’ve floated the idea of raising $100 million to support the right candidate for in the mayoral race. Who do you want to see as the next mayor of New York?

Someone not named de Blasio. We need some new leadership.

No one’s announced that they’re running yet, other than Scott Stringer and Corey Johnson and Eric Adams. And those candidates are appealing to the old way of doing business, where the unions have so much control over them, and they all talk this rhetoric. But it’s not going to help New York in the long run.

What specific policies would you like to see more or less of?

The problem with New York is that the cost of doing business here is so much higher than anywhere else in the country. We have to get the cost factors out.

In the city, we overbuilt like crazy and we had bad leadership. We were growing to the point where nobody could really afford to live here.

It strikes me that a development like Hudson Yards exacerbates those trends rather than solves them.

I mean, we have a lot of affordable apartments at Hudson Yards as well. We have a large segment of apartments that are specifically identified that are affordable, OK?

Tell me why you’re supporting President Trump in his re-election campaign.

I mean, first of all, who said I was?

You hosted a fund-raiser for him.

Right. So I mean, look. I’ve known President Trump for a long time. I’ve known him and I’ve liked him. I don’t agree with a lot of his policies. I believe there’s a lot of good, and I believe there’s a lot of bad.

At that point there was a fund-raiser at my house I was looking for certain things to benefit New York. But I haven’t really made a decision who I’m voting for.

What were you looking for?

I’ve gotten requests from the governor and people in different parts of the administration to help raise money for New York with the people that I know in Washington, to get money to the cities, to the M.T.A.

What are the areas where you are at odds with the president and his policies?

His climate issues is certainly one of my biggest of all. I mean, I couldn’t be any more believing in the environment and climate change.

I think he’s been a little divisive.

But I think there are a lot of great business policies he’s enacted that have been fantastic and nobody else could have done it but him.

What are some of those business policies?

China. We can see today what China is, and they’re really a competitor of ours to put it mildly. And making business grow, creating jobs. We were almost at full employment before the pandemic. I mean, those are very positive things that you have to look at.

So I mean, you have to put it all together, and no one’s perfect.

You got a lot of backlash for hosting that fund-raiser.

If I would have known the impact of what happened last year, would I have thought about it differently? Of course. I mean, here I am being called a racist when I’ve set up and spent more money as an individual in dealing with racism than anybody in the country, and I was ahead of the game. But you know what? The best thing is to keep your mouth shut. You go about your business because that’s what matters.

If you had known what would have happened, would you have done it differently?

I’m not saying I would have had it or I wouldn’t have. But seeing how it’s impacted my business partners, of course I would have to look at it differently. But I never complained. It happened. It’s unfortunate. It caused a lot of problems for my business partners and everything. A lot of money was lost from people who were complaining about me. It makes me feel terrible. But I know who I am and I will continue fighting for those causes that I believe need to be dealt with. I will fight for climate control. I will fight against racism. I’m probably the biggest advocate in the country on both of them.

Who do you intend to vote for?

Guess what. We have elections that are private. That’s the beautiful part about America.

Look, I didn’t try to be in the news. I’m not looking to be in the news. I don’t look at myself as a public figure. I’m a businessman who fortunately, from my perspective, has been successful. I’ve given back. I’m going to give back more than half what I have to charity. I’m not looking to be some public figure, and I’m not controlling everything.

What do you think would make America more resilient?

The biggest thing is there is so much waste in this country. I mean, look how children today who don’t have food have to go to school to get their best meal of the day. I mean, that’s sad when you think about it and all the privilege we have, and you see the wasted food that’s thrown out that we don’t use.

You keep coming back to this issue of wastefulness. Are you saying that the state, local and federal bureaucracies have become too bloated?

One hundred percent. I mean, look at this city. The quality of life has gone down, and de Blasio’s added 25,000 people or something like that in his administration. And he doesn’t care about the wealthy. It’s only about the ***working class***.

PHOTO: Stephen Ross: FOUNDER OF RELATED COMPANIES (PHOTOGRAPH BY GUERIN BLASK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Fran Lebowitz and Martin Scorsese Seek a Missing New York in ‘Pretend It’s a City’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61PM-R4K1-DXY4-X25J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 7, 2021 Thursday 00:17 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1826 words

**Byline:** Dave Itzkoff

**Highlight:** The Netflix series, featuring Lebowitz and directed by Scorsese, offers acerbic commentary and a sense of yearning for a pre-pandemic metropolis.

**Body**

The Netflix series, featuring Lebowitz and directed by Scorsese, offers acerbic commentary and a sense of yearning for a pre-pandemic metropolis.

Had this past New Year’s Eve been a normal one, [*Fran Lebowitz*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/21/books/review/fran-lebowitz-by-the-book.html?searchResultPosition=1) and [*Martin Scorsese*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/21/books/review/fran-lebowitz-by-the-book.html?searchResultPosition=1) would have spent it as they usually do: with each other and a few close friends, in the screening room in Scorsese’s office, watching a classic movie like “Vertigo” or “A Matter of Life and Death.”

The year they got together to see “Barry Lyndon,” they watched a rare, high-quality print made from the director Stanley Kubrick’s original camera negative.

“And I said, ‘What’s a camera negative?’” Lebowitz recalled in a group video call with Scorsese on Tuesday. “And then all of the movie lunatics glared at me, like I admitted to being illiterate.”

In previous years, when they were feeling especially energetic, Scorsese said with some audible melancholy, “We used to have one screening before midnight and then have another screening after.”

But this time, their annual custom had to be put on hold. Instead, Lebowitz explained: “I talked to Marty on the phone. We commiserated about how horrible we felt, how awful it was not to be doing that.”

Lebowitz, the author, humorist and raconteur, and Scorsese, the Academy Award-winning filmmaker, were speaking from their individual New York homes to discuss their latest collaboration, the documentary series [*“Pretend It’s a City.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/21/books/review/fran-lebowitz-by-the-book.html?searchResultPosition=1) They are longtime friends who, as they continue to wait out the coronavirus pandemic, have lately been unable to see much of each other or the city with which they are irrevocably associated.

A similar, bittersweet air hangs over the seven-part series, which Netflix will release on Friday. A follow-up to Scorsese’s 2010 nonfiction film [*“Public Speaking,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/21/books/review/fran-lebowitz-by-the-book.html?searchResultPosition=1) “Pretend It’s a City” (which Scorsese also directed) chronicles the acerbic Lebowitz in interviews, live appearances and strolls through New York as she shares stories about her life and insights about the city’s constant evolution in recent decades.

Of course, the Netflix series was initiated before the pandemic, and Lebowitz and Scorsese are supremely aware that it depicts a bustling, energized New York that now feels just out of reach — and which they both hope will return soon.

In the meantime, “Pretend It’s a City” offers a tantalizing snapshot of New York in full bloom, along with Lebowitz’s lively and unapologetic commentary on what it means to live there.

As she explained: “I don’t care whether people agree with me or not. My feeling if someone doesn’t agree with me is, OK, you’re wrong. That is one thing that I’ve never worried about.”

Scorsese gently replied, “I had that impression.”

Lebowitz and Scorsese spoke further about the making of “Pretend It’s a City” and the impact that the pandemic has had on them. These are edited excerpts from that conversation.

I was surprised to learn from “Pretend It’s a City” that neither of you recall when you first met.

FRAN LEBOWITZ That’s because we’re old and we have many friendships. I don’t mean old in the sense that we don’t remember things, because I believe we both have perfect memories. But because there’s so many years and so many people. I guess we met at a party, because where else would I have met him? Obviously, I go to a lot more parties than Marty. That’s why Marty made so many movies and Fran wrote so few books.

MARTIN SCORSESE I really recall us talking the most at John Waters’s 50th birthday party. It was after “Casino” came out.

LEBOWITZ Of course, you were not averse to hearing how much I loved it.

SCORSESE No, I was not at all.

LEBOWITZ Even though I’m not as Italian as you might imagine [laughs], Marty’s parents and a lot of my father’s relatives — all of whom were ***working-class*** Jews — have a lot of parallels that are very well-known. The big difference is, the food is better in Italians’ houses.

SCORSESE We liked the Jewish food better.

LEBOWITZ No, no, no, there’s no comparison.

After working together on “Public Speaking,” what made you want to collaborate on another documentary project?

SCORSESE I enjoyed making “Public Speaking.” I found it freeing, in terms of narrative. But primarily, it’s about being around Fran. I really would like to know what she thinks, pretty much every day, as it’s happening. I’d like a running commentary — not all the time, but one that I can dip in and out of during the day.

Do either of you worry that Fran is a finite resource and you will eventually exhaust her supply of wit?

LEBOWITZ You mean, am I worried about running out of things to say? No. I am worried about running out of money. But it never even occurred to me that I would not have something to say. It’s just there. It’s like having a trick thumb.

The series is divided into fanciful chapters like “Cultural Affairs” and “Department of Sports &amp; Health.” How did you settle on these subjects?

SCORSESE We always felt we should have topics. She’ll start on a topic, and then it’ll go off like a jazz riff into a thousand other places. Eventually, we might be able to pull it back. In a lot of the films I make, the types of actors I work with, the dialogue is like music — it’s the timing and the emphasis. She has that.

LEBOWITZ Of course I am the world’s most digressive speaker, but what you’re really seeing at work is editing. I don’t remember how many days we shot this but I’m confident that it was an infinitesimal amount compared to how much time it took him to edit.

SCORSESE I try to get that kind of freedom in my narrative films, but I very often am stuck to a plot.

LEBOWITZ I am plot-free, so no problem. [Laughter.]

Among the locations where you filmed Fran is at the Queens Museum, where we see her standing amid the [*Panorama of the City of New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/21/books/review/fran-lebowitz-by-the-book.html?searchResultPosition=1), a highly detailed scale model that Robert Moses had built for the 1964 World’s Fair. What was it like to shoot there?

LEBOWITZ I did knock over the Queensboro Bridge. The guy who’s in charge of that, the day we shot there, was in a panic the entire time. And I proved him right.

SCORSESE That was the only time that I ever yelled “Action!” I don’t know what possessed me. It must have thrown you off or something.

LEBOWITZ I did not destroy it, I just knocked it over.

SCORSESE By the way, it is magnificent, that model.

LEBOWITZ I’m not sure it makes up for Robert Moses. [Laughter.] It made you realize that if only Robert Moses had done everything in miniature, we wouldn’t hate Robert Moses.

How did the pandemic affect the making of this series?

LEBOWITZ We shot it way before there was a virus. When the virus happened, Marty said, “What should we do? What can we do?” At the height of the shutdown, I went out walking around the city, and Marty sent Ellen Kuras [the director of photography on “Pretend It’s a City”], and what she filmed was incredibly beautiful. But I said to Marty, “I think we should ignore it.”

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Do you worry that New York won’t fully return to what it was before the pandemic?

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PHOTOS: The longtime friends Martin Scorsese and Fran Lebowitz in the new Netflix documentary series “Pretend It’s a City.” Scorsese, who directed the series, said, “It’s about being around Fran.” (C1); “I have lived in New York long enough to know that it will not stay the way it is now,” said Fran Lebowitz, above, who moved to the city in 1970. Below, Lebowitz, with the Panorama of the City of New York at the Queens Museum. Robert Moses had the detailed scale model built for the 1964 World’s Fair. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX) (C10)

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Alex Da Corte, Puppet Master; T’s 2021 Art Issue***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62XH-3MF1-DXY4-X25G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2021 Tuesday 13:25 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 2875 words

**Byline:** Arthur Lubow

**Highlight:** A great and unlikely success story, the artist creates funny and therapeutic works in the hope of easing the “exquisite pain” of modern life.

**Body**

A great and unlikely success story, the artist creates funny and therapeutic works in the hope of easing the “exquisite pain” of modern life.

[*Alex Da Corte*](http://alexdacorte.com/) planned to become an animator for Disney until he determined that he lacked the chops. Still, he never truly abandoned his youthful dream. “It wasn’t until I went to school that I thought, ‘I’m not a good animator,’” he told me. “I couldn’t draw very well. It was a winding road to figure out what telling stories through cartoons might be for me.” The spirit of Walt hovers over the Day-Glo hues of Da Corte’s installations, the adorability of his Muppet figures and the gentle empathy of his video impersonations of characters as divergent as Fred Rogers and Eminem. He once constructed a sculpture of a rampant viper with scales that were brightly colored artificial fingernails. He has a penchant for transmuting anger and danger into cartoon jokiness. His art soothes.

“You can take pain or fear or sadness and turn it into something new,” he said in his northeast Philadelphia studio, a vast space flooded with light through industrial casement windows, where he directs half a dozen assistants to craft costumes, props, puppets, masks and whatever else is needed for his videos and sculptures. His attitude of determined optimism made him an inspired choice to construct [*this year’s rooftop installation*](http://alexdacorte.com/) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which was unveiled in April, soon after the yearlong pandemic lockdown eased up. “It was a really sad time and a really sad year,” he said. “I keep thinking of it as four seasons in hell.”

“As Long as the Sun Lasts,” the roof showstopper, is a 26-foot-tall sculptural mash-up of [*Alexander Calder*](http://alexdacorte.com/) and Jim Henson. On top of a towering trapezoidal steel base, which is painted Calder Red — the vermilion that Calder used for his stabile “[*Flamingo*](http://alexdacorte.com/)” (1974) in Chicago’s Federal Plaza — but textured to resemble the snap-together plastic pieces of Little Tikes toys, Da Corte attached a vertical spindle supporting a tilted horizontal armature that bears on one side five brightly colored discs (a nod to Calder’s modernism) and, on the other, a blue version of “Sesame Street”’s Big Bird, who is seated on a crescent moon holding a short ladder (a fond wink at childhood). “I wanted the work to be hopeful or look forward, look beyond that exquisite pain,” he said.

At 40, Da Corte is a prominent artist of his generation. He is representative in how he mines and recombines the ubiquitous imagery of contemporary life but, in many ways, his career path has been exceptional. For one thing, despite earning his M.F.A. at Yale in 2010, he maintained his roots in his native ground of Philadelphia, working as a painter’s assistant and placing work in group shows there before skyrocketing. In 2012, he had exhibitions in New York, Paris, Dublin and Palma de Mallorca, Spain. “It’s exciting that he can live in Philadelphia and be seen all over the world,” said Sid Sachs, the director of exhibitions and chief curator at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. “I’m just amazed by him. It’s a different model of an artist. At one time, you got into a gallery like Castelli or Paula Cooper and they guided your career. But Alex just bops around from gallery to gallery.” And he does it without presenting an identifiable, branded persona as an artist-celebrity. Indeed, it is fitting that one of his favorite characters to impersonate is the Wicked Witch of the West, played by Margaret Hamilton in “The Wizard of Oz,” because Da Corte himself bears comparison to the Wizard, hiding behind a curtain, exposing himself only in multiple disguises.

Having seen him only in his video incarnations, I felt a little like Dorothy encountering this tall, thin, dark-haired unassuming fellow with a soft, low-pitched voice and a shy, courteous demeanor — because, like the Wizard, his reputation is not as modest as his persona. “He’s one of the best working today,” said Jamillah James, the senior curator of the [*Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles*](http://alexdacorte.com/), who has known him since 2008. “He’s maturing as an artist, refining his visual language, providing some alternatives to the horror of today with work that has some lightness to it.”

The unrelenting lightness puzzled me when I tried to understand how Da Corte relates to the older artists he admires. Unlike the abject, scary or kinky stuffed animals of [*Mike Kelley*](http://alexdacorte.com/), which are so smeared and grubby that you would hesitate to touch them, his puppets are endearingly cute and cuddle-worthy. His neon figurative artworks inevitably bring to mind those of [*Bruce Nauman*](http://alexdacorte.com/), whose blinking neon pieces of 1985 transformed clowns into aggressively sexual beings brandishing hefty penises; Da Corte, in three neon creations currently on display at the [*Philadelphia Museum of Art*](http://alexdacorte.com/), performs a reverse alchemy, muting scenes of violence and disaster — a burning house, a pistol, a trapped cat — into tranquil, formally beautiful designs. And in contrast to [*Paul McCarthy*](http://alexdacorte.com/), who dirties the Disneyfied purity of Snow White and plunges her into orgies of sexual perversion, Da Corte’s fantasies unfold in a thoroughly G-rated domain. More than these artists whom he takes after stylistically, Da Corte reminds me of [*Takashi Murakami*](http://alexdacorte.com/) and his protégés in the production company [*Kaikai Kiki*](http://alexdacorte.com/) — taking nightmares (for Murakami, most notably, the atomic bombing of Japan) and flattening them into cheerful, post-ironic cartoon imagery.

In the videos that constitute the major portion of his output, Da Corte often takes a malignant character and, through impersonation, drains out the venom and replaces it with more sympathetic humors. Michael Myers, the white-masked slasher of the “Halloween” movies, was his first such venture. More recently, in gallery shows and videos, he has embodied Eminem, inspired originally by a friend’s mistaking a photograph of the macho rapper, famous for his rage, with mild-mannered Alex, whom he somewhat resembles. Da Corte dyed his hair blond and put on an oversize white T-shirt, assuming the persona. “When I was growing up, he was celebrated, and I thought, ‘That person is not for me, he scares me,’” Da Corte said. “Being Hispanic and gay, I thought his language seemed threatening. I wondered about the realm of people who loved his work and the violence, and what that’s about. If you embody his skin, do you become just as angry, just as white, just as straight, or is it the other way around?” He continued, “I think it’s about trying to find forgiveness.”

Born in Camden, N.J., Da Corte is the son of an upper-middle-class Venezuelan father and a white mother from a ***working-class*** family in the Philadelphia suburbs. When he was 4, the family moved back to Caracas, where his paternal grandfather owned grocery stores, but they returned to the United States when Da Corte was 8, where his father took a job in finance. The artist is no longer fluent in Spanish. “I’ll look at old videos and I’m speaking Spanish, and it’s like another person,” he said. Of course, he is accustomed to seeing himself in videos as another person.

He spent his later childhood and adolescence in Gloucester City, N.J., a blue-collar town near Philadelphia. “I grew up Catholic, and studied so much of that way of understanding the world,” he said. “It is through transformation of materials and a kind of body as offering or object. I think of the Lives of the Saints — plates with eyeballs on them. So much of the iconography or interest in dismembered bodies seeps into the work.” A carefully edited self-presentation is second nature to him. “There is that code-switching that any person who has been marginalized knows, so you don’t get bullied,” he said. “You long to fit in if you’re someone who’s been bullied. You recognize when you’re wearing a pink bandanna or a purple bandanna or a backward cap or an untucked shirt, that means something.”

With an earnest affability, Da Corte gives the impression of a man who is keeping his emotions under tight control. He is very private. When I asked him the unavoidable follow-up question — “Were you bullied as a child?” — his eyes misted over. “I don’t want to talk about that,” he said. Sachs has known Da Corte since he transferred to the University of the Arts two decades ago, following his frustrating studies in animation at the School of Visual Arts in New York. “I’ve been to his studio, I’ve had meals with him, but I don’t know his personal life,” Sachs said. “He’s like a poker player. I don’t think he reveals himself.”

Da Corte says he is closest to his large family, which on his mother’s side includes many house painters and carpenters. “I’ve always used my family as the audience I want for my work,” he said. “It’s a way of connecting with them and talking about difficult ideas. I’ve always wanted the work to appeal to so many people, and not to alienate.” He appropriates elements of high and low culture with equal affection. “With Alex, it is about the confirmation of the object through personal associations and attachment,” said Shanay Jhaveri, an assistant curator of international art at the Met, who worked with him closely on “As Long as the Sun Lasts.” “That’s where the feeling in the work comes from. It’s an appropriation that comes out of attachment.”

To my mind, his art is strongest when some pain seeps through and the wound is visible beneath the Band-Aid. His earliest video, “Carry That Weight” (2003), named for the Beatles song, shows him lurching down a city street, clutching a soft sculpture of a ketchup bottle that is as tall as he is. While it alludes specifically to a 1966 photograph of Claes Oldenburg struggling with a giant toothpaste tube in London, the work also unmistakably evokes Jesus carrying the weight of the cross. Staggering under his burden, Da Corte is funny and touching at the same time.

In “[*Slow Graffiti*](http://alexdacorte.com/)” (2017), a weird, campy and poignant video, he recreated shot by shot Jorgen Leth’s short film “The Perfect Human” of 50 years before, a Danish mock-documentary that examines an elegant man and woman through the lens of a narrator with the dispassionate tone of a zoologist. “Slow Graffiti” replaces the heterosexual couple with a tortured Boris Karloff and the lonely Frankenstein’s monster he embodied, both played by Alex. His frame-by-frame reconstruction is comparable to the painstaking efforts of old-school animators. “You’re looking into the hours it took, the labor to make it and the labor of looking,” he said. “And you’re looking into your own heart. There’s a kind of joy in it.” A similar transubstantiation takes place when he impersonates Eminem, Jim Henson or the Wicked Witch of the West. “Dressing up as Eminem is the cartoon stand-in for him, or it’s a cartoon stand-in for Jim Henson,” he said. “It’s different from acting. It’s more like a visual replication of the person. That yields a difference in one’s own self, the way you literally move in the world.” He explained: “It’s like walking in someone else’s high heels. It makes for new ways of seeing the world and understanding the world.”

Along with “[*Free Roses*](http://alexdacorte.com/),” a massive remix of his work that was staged in 2016 at Mass MoCA, Da Corte’s most ambitious project to date was his installation at the 2018 [*Carnegie International*](http://alexdacorte.com/) in Pittsburgh. Characteristically, he riffed on two beloved icons associated with that city: Fred Rogers, who lived very near the grounds of the exhibition’s setting at the Carnegie Museum of Art, and Heinz ketchup. Through happy coincidence, it was the 57th Carnegie International, encouraging Da Corte to exploit the Heinz slogan, “57 Varieties,” and produce a video over two and a half hours long, “Rubber Pencil Devil,” that contains 57 segments.

Contrasting in length and tone, some of the 57 episodes are saccharine, such as an interminable impersonation of Mister Rogers changing back and forth between dress shoes and navy blue sneakers. But others are edgier: Da Corte as a devilish weatherman, gleefully slapping fire symbols across a map of the United States or dancing orgiastically with a serpentlike yellow pencil; Da Corte as a ballet dancer in a Robin Hood outfit, sniffing and licking the shoe of his dance partner; a pretty, smiling blond woman emasculating the antenna of a telephone with a large knife; the eye of a corpse with a happy face on its iris; and, most memorably, Da Corte cavorting as Gene Kelly in “[*Singin’ in the Rain*](http://alexdacorte.com/)” to the tune of Dolly Parton crooning “[*I can see the light of a clear blue morning*](http://alexdacorte.com/)” while the rain keeps pouring down and, finally, after a pratfall, he lies motionless on the ground.

For the Carnegie International, Da Corte used saturated lime greens, pinks and purples to construct a neon-lit version of the Mister Rogers set, which visitors entered through a large mouse hole in a sealed-up wall, reminiscent of the peephole viewing point of Marcel Duchamp’s scabrous “[*Étant Donnés*](http://alexdacorte.com/)” (1946-66), a treasure of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He blends in high-art references discreetly. And if you don’t pick up on the loftier allusions (for example, the wings of a butterfly in one video segment are patterned after a Frank Stella protractor painting), what you don’t know won’t bother you. “In one video, there’s Sylvester the Cat and in another, the Irish artist Michael Craig-Martin is referenced,” said Ingrid Schaffner, who curated that year’s Carnegie International. Now the curator at the [*Chinati Foundation*](http://alexdacorte.com/) in Marfa, Texas, Schaffner for many years worked at the University of Pennsylvania’s Institute of Contemporary Art, where she championed Da Corte’s work. “For me, Alex’s multiplicity of references is part of network culture, the way we’re a culture of image readers,” she said. “I don’t find much irony in Alex’s work. He genuinely loves the things that he loves, and he wants you to love them, too.” As Sachs observes: “He’s not a minimalist. He’s the exact opposite. He’s layering stuff. He’s always looking for connections.”

Walking me through the studio, Da Corte pointed out the motley group of things that, for various reasons, appealed to him. A “fiber area,” stocked with cloth and yarn, was the birthing place for puppets. “We’re never not making Muppets,” he said. “Something about the simplicity of their initial structures has stood the test of time.” Elsewhere there was a toy ladder, like the one in the Met rooftop sculpture. He related his fascination with ladders to his love of early Buster Keaton movies, and to his cousins’ labor as house painters. A bulletin board held many images he’d clipped from periodicals or plucked from the internet. A marathon runner in a green rotary telephone costume was a particular favorite; Da Corte was pondering how he might use that idea. Some of the props needed a space this large to house them: a small gaggle of goose decoys, for example. “I like the velvet of them, the way they’re flocked,” he said. He plans to incorporate a 12-foot-tall fake human skeleton into a video, in which, dressed in vestments, he will be enclosed in the rib cage.

Taking up part of one wall was a large metal window grate composed of stylized bucolic scenes. It is a reproduction of one that guards a Mexican restaurant near his home that he liked so much he had it replicated. “I was thinking about protecting yourself from the outside with these seemingly peaceful views of nature, and thinking about walls and who is allowed in and who isn’t,” he said.

His art functions like the screen: formally beautiful constructions that shield you from the terrors and horrors of the world, occasionally letting a few through. “I wonder if it’s a kind of reconciling of actual fear and actual violence, and trying to distance myself from it and see it more clearly and objectively,” he said. “What does a house on fire look like as a form, and less like a house where one actually loses everything? No one likes a house on fire, but how can we think about it without emotion — because it exists in the world.” His soothing art is also self-soothing.

Da Corte’s own metaphor for how he processes pain sounds more Catholic: a taking on of what is troubling or downright evil in the world, soaking it up and releasing it in a distilled, nontoxic form. He is less a screen than a sponge. “The sponge has the capacity to take in, until it doesn’t, and then it lets go,” he explained. “There’s a balance. If I see something or something happens in my life that’s unsavory, there’s a desire to run away. But if you can absorb it and turn it into something good, that’s like a sponge.”

He is an enthusiastic audience for popular music, horror movies, art history, animation traditions and much, much more. In his art, he pays tribute to the efforts of those who inspire him by reproducing, sampling, hybridizing and embellishing their creations. “I think these works have so much emotion in them and so much care and, like, magic,” he said. “Maybe that’s part of realizing these things and making them exist in the world. It is because you want to spend time with the things you love or value, or that scare you. To know them better. To appreciate them.”

PHOTO: Alex Da Corte, photographed in costume in his Philadelphia studio in May. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jeffrey Stockbridge FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Border Officials Weighed Deploying Migrant ‘Heat Ray’ Ahead of Midterms***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60P2-V2K1-JBG3-64MD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Michael D. Shear

**Highlight:** Even as the Republican convention tries to soften President Trump’s image, he has made it clear that the extreme immigration policies of his first four years will be central to his re-election pitch.

**Body**

Even as the Republican convention tries to soften President Trump’s image, he has made it clear that the extreme immigration policies of his first four years will be central to his re-election pitch.

WASHINGTON — Fifteen days before the 2018 midterm elections, as President Trump sought to motivate Republicans with dark warnings about caravans heading to the U.S. border, he gathered his homeland security secretary and White House staff to deliver a message: “extreme action” was needed to stop the migrants.

That afternoon, at a separate meeting with top leaders of the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection officials suggested deploying a microwave weapon — a “heat ray” designed by the military to make people’s skin feel as if it is burning when they get within range of its invisible beams.

Developed by the military as a crowd dispersal tool two decades ago, the Active Denial System had been largely abandoned amid doubts over its effectiveness and morality. Two former officials who attended the afternoon meeting at the Department of Homeland Security on Oct. 22, 2018, said the suggestion that the device be installed at the border shocked attendees, even if it would have satisfied the president.

Kirstjen Nielsen, then the secretary of homeland security, told an aide after the meeting that she would not authorize the use of such a device, and that it should never be brought up again in her presence, the officials said.

Alexei Woltornist, a spokesman for the department, said Wednesday that “it was never considered.”

It is not known whether Mr. Trump knew of the microwave weapon suggestion, but the discussion in the fall of 2018 underscored how Mr. Trump’s obsession with shutting down immigration has driven policy considerations, [*including his suggestions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) of installing flesh-piercing spikes on the border wall, building a moat filled with snakes and alligators and shooting migrants in the legs.

The [*Republican National Convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) on Tuesday night featured [*a small citizenship naturalization ceremony at the White House*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) clearly intended to try to soften the president’s image as a heartless opponent of immigrants. In 2018, the president’s hard immigration policies may well have backfired when suburban women recoiled at the images of children separated from their families and migrants in cages. A Democratic wave that November driven by such voters swept Republicans from control of the House.

But for his core supporters, Mr. Trump’s immigration agenda is again at the heart of his campaign, and the unrest roiling cities from Portland, Ore., to Kenosha, Wis., could give it more punch. The pitch: He has delivered on perhaps the central promise of his 2016 run, to effectively cut off America from foreigners who he said posed security and economic threats. Through hundreds of regulations, policy directives and structural changes, the president has profoundly reshaped the government’s vast immigration bureaucracy.

His campaign will also concentrate on making searing, and often false, attacks against former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., telling voters that the president’s rival wants to fling open the nation’s borders to criminals and disease-carrying immigrants who will take hard-working Americans’ jobs.

“The public health necessity and the economic necessity of controlling immigration has placed the view of the Democrat left even more radically outside the pale of mainstream American thought,” Stephen Miller, the architect of the president’s immigration policies, said this week in an interview.

The president [*tweeted last month*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) that “the Radical Left Democrats want Open Borders for anyone, including many criminals, to come in!”

Mr. Biden’s campaign said such false attacks would be as politically ineffective as they were in 2018, long before the coronavirus and economic recession.

“Doubling down on divisive poison says one thing to voters: that even after all his devastating failed leadership has cost us — and even though Joe Biden has been showing him the way for months — Donald Trump still has no strategy for overcoming the pandemic, the overwhelming priority for the American people,” said Andrew Bates, a spokesman for Mr. Biden’s presidential campaign.

Mr. Biden has not called for “open borders” or embraced getting rid of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as some on the Democratic left flank have sought. He has said he would roll back Mr. Trump’s immigration policies, promising to restore asylum rules, end separation of migrant families at the border, reverse limits on legal immigration and impose a 100-day moratorium on deportations.

But Mr. Biden and Democratic congressional candidates are bracing for what they expect will be a concerted focus on one of the most polarizing issues in American politics — made even more divisive by Mr. Trump’s [*embrace of ugly, xenophobic language*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) about foreigners.

Some of Mr. Trump’s biggest immigration promises from 2016 have fallen short. No “big, beautiful wall” stretches the length of the southern border, paid for by Mexico. Instead, the president spent billions of dollars of taxpayer money to replace about 300 miles of existing barriers with a hulking wall built of steel slats.

Like the heat ray, many of the president’s ideas — including the moat and shooting migrants in the legs — were thwarted by his own officials. Other policy proposals have been blocked by federal judges who have ruled that they violated existing laws, administrative rules or the Constitution.

But even the president’s fiercest critics concede that on immigration, the president can rightly claim that he did much of what he said he would do.

“The Trump administration, unilaterally, without passing laws in Congress, has radically reshaped immigration in the United States,” said Omar Jadwat, the director of the Immigrants’ Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union. “They have effectively shut down the asylum system at the border. They’ve reintroduced religious, racial and national origin discrimination into our immigration system. These are real, radical shifts.”

Because of the president’s policies, Central American migrants fleeing persecution and violence in their home countries now must wait, often for months, in squalid camps on the Mexico side of the border while the United States considers their requests for asylum. For decades, asylum seekers were allowed to remain in the United States while their cases were decided.

Mr. Trump derides that as “catch and release,” which he says allowed hundreds of thousands of migrants to fraudulently claim persecution as a means of entering the United States and then disappearing into the country illegally. He repeatedly said it was his top priority to end the practice.

Advocates say he has largely succeeded, aided in part by the coronavirus pandemic. The president has used [*emergency powers intended for public health crises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) to turn away all asylum seekers, effectively ending the role of the United States as a place of refuge for those fleeing their homes.

Those deeply rooted changes are a “bell that can never be unrung,” one senior aide said.

Even before the pandemic, Mr. Trump had [*lowered the annual cap for refugees*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) to a trickle, shutting the United States off from war-torn countries like Syria or Somalia.

“Refugees have been left separated from their families or in the United States they’ve been left without access to critical medical care, or have been left in places where their lives are in danger,” said Eleanor Acer, the senior director for refugee protection at Human Rights First. “And for refugees seeking asylum, the asylum system has been totally decimated. Refugees seeking asylum have been turned back to some of the most dangerous places in the world.”

And from the earliest days of his presidency, Mr. Trump has used national security concerns to justify a crackdown on immigration from around the globe, [*imposing a travel ban on several predominantly Muslim countries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) only days after taking office in January 2017. A [*version of that travel ban remains in place*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) and served as the template for other travel bans put in place during the pandemic.

Processing of visa applications from many countries had already slowed to a crawl before the health crisis as the administration aggressively put in place what the president called [*“extreme vetting” of people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) from countries deemed to harbor terrorists.

The Trump administration has also [*moved aggressively to reduce the flow of legal immigrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) who have for decades sought to live and work in the United States.

It has drafted [*new regulations aimed at making it harder for poor immigrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) to qualify for entry into the United States, arguing that they would be a financial burden on the country. And it has aggressively sought to [*eliminate programs that allowed American companies to lure foreign workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/trump-border-wars.html) to the United States for jobs.

Mr. Miller, in particular, has argued that such programs put ***working-class*** Americans at a competitive disadvantage — a potent campaign theme — though experts say that, over all, immigrants do not drive down wages or take jobs from American citizens.

Some conservatives say Mr. Trump has not gone far enough to stop immigrants from working in the United States.

“There are areas where this administration isn’t as hawkish as they should be,” said Mark Krikorian, the executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which pushes for immigration restrictions. He said Mr. Trump had failed to push for a program that would let employers quickly determine if a worker was in the country illegally.

“Where the hell is E-verify?” he asked. Mr. Krikorian said the president had done little to end the H-2B visa program that allows companies to hire temporary workers from abroad for seasonal jobs. “The H-2B program shouldn’t exist. It is harmful, period.”

Still, David Lapan, who served briefly as the top spokesman at the Department of Homeland Security in 2017, said that the president’s success in pushing through his immigration agenda would make it difficult for Mr. Biden, should he win in November.

“If the president is not re-elected, and Joe Biden becomes the president, he and his administration are going to have their hands full on a number of fronts, Covid chief among them,” Mr. Lapan said. “Trying to undo the damage that has been done to the immigration system is going to be a further challenge. And how much is the next administration able to focus on that, given the panoply of challenges that they’re going to face?”

PHOTO: Deportees arrived last month at a shelter in Nogales, Mexico, just across the border from Arizona. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2020

**End of Document**



[***‘Pray for Your Poor Uncle,’ a Predatory Priest Told His Victims***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60C2-TX61-JBG3-64PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION; sunday

**Length:** 3348 words

**Byline:** Elizabeth Bruenig and Damon Winter

**Highlight:** As former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick became a powerful figure in the church, several boys from one family say he targeted them.

**Body**

Rain fell in New York City four days before Christmas of 2018. Francis M. had planned to be in the city that day for business, but he had dutifully put aside time when asked to answer questions at the Archdiocese of New York offices about his experiences with “Uncle Ted” — former Cardinal [*Theodore McCarrick*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html).

A tall, broad-shouldered man nearing 60 at the time, with blue eyes and steely gray hair, Francis had been in enough depositions in his career as an attorney to know how these question-and-answer sessions went. He assumed he would relate the story of his interactions with Mr. McCarrick, which began when he was 11, and then he would return to his usual routine.

Mr. McCarrick’s downfall had been as dizzying as his rise. Once the archbishop of Washington D.C., and a cardinal who boasted of his [*close ties*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) to Pope Francis, Mr. McCarrick had established himself as a gifted fund-raiser, helping to found the Papal Foundation, a charity with a $200 million [*endowment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html). But in 2018, his reputation collapsed in a rush of [*accusations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) that he had sexually abused adult seminarians and [*a teenage boy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html). More accusations followed, and in 2019 Mr. McCarrick [*was defrocked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) — the first time an American cardinal had been removed from the priesthood.

Francis — who asked me to refer to him and his family members only by their middle names and last initials, to protect their privacy — was not surprised, but neither did he feel that the news had much to do with him. He wasn’t a victim, he thought. He had never felt like one. He had explanations for all the times Mr. McCarrick had insisted that Francis share a bed with him as a boy and for the ways the man had touched him when he did. Mr. McCarrick was lonely, Francis had told himself; plenty of clergymen were. And Francis had turned out well: A father of four with a happy marriage and lucrative work, he had little reason to meditate on the former cardinal.

But as Mr. McCarrick’s case gained national attention, Francis began discussing it with his brothers and male cousins. He told me that in October 2018, one of his brothers reached out to the Archdiocese of New York, and by December, five members of Francis’ family, all men, had agreed to testify in the inquiry [*the Vatican*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) had ordered it to undertake. An attorney representing Mr. McCarrick repeatedly declined to comment on the allegations made in this article. As of 2019, Mr. McCarrick still [*maintained his innocence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html).

“I had anticipated that reciting long-ago facts wouldn’t be upsetting,” Francis told me when we first met in January of last year, at his vacation home in the frozen Catskills.

“But the more I went over in my mind the experiences I had and what they really constituted — with the perspective of an older man — I really understood for the first time as an adult the premeditation and cunning that Ted brought to his predatory activities, right under the eyes of my parents and aunts and uncles.”

Francis said that he was one of five members of his family who testified against Mr. McCarrick in the church’s inquiry.

The experience left him shaken. There were all of the usual questions victims ask themselves: How had his parents missed what Mr. McCarrick was doing, and why had he allowed younger family members to wander into the cardinal’s grasp? How had it changed him, and could he recover? And then there were more fundamental questions: Could a religion whose earthly stewards sinned so cruelly really be true? Supposing it wasn’t, how could he leave the only church he had ever known? Supposing it was, how could he stay?

Established in 1927 in the Throgs Neck neighborhood of the Bronx, the church of St. Frances de Chantal came into its full glory in 1970, when its severe brick exterior was finally erected beneath a tall, spartan cross. In October of that year, Cardinal Terence Cooke visited the parish to celebrate a Mass of Dedication. Francis recalled that Cardinal Cooke brought with him a delegation of clergymen from the Archdiocese of New York, including an up-and-coming monsignor by the name of Theodore McCarrick.

A parish priest introduced the affable Mr. McCarrick to the nine members of the M. family, Francis, who was then 11, told me. Mr. McCarrick was 40, a slightly built man with an almost elfin look. He was just back from a four-year stint as the president of the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico and had recently been made assistant secretary for education in the archdiocese. In 1971, Cardinal Cooke would make him his personal priest secretary.

Mr. McCarrick soon became a regular visitor at the M. household, where his status in the church made him something of a celebrity. Francis recalled that “Ted” always wore his clerical garb, unlike the more casual clergymen around town. “When Ted came to dinner, he was like the candy man,” Francis told me. He would bring souvenirs: “Rosary beads from Fátima, a medal blessed by the pope, a necklace from the Philippines.”

Mr. McCarrick’s adventures were of special interest to the M. boys, Francis said, because the priest had a custom of taking boys along with him, from their extended family and from other families like theirs: ***working class***, devoutly Catholic, Irish. Francis’ father had immigrated from Ireland and worked as a bus driver, while Francis’ mother stayed home with the children. “Our biggest treat was to go to Howard Johnson’s for Easter dinner,” Francis said, so Mr. McCarrick “was this window to a whole new world.”

Francis recalled that Mr. McCarrick told him that boys could begin traveling with him at age 13. But when Francis was 12, a rare family trip to Ireland happened to coincide with one of Mr. McCarrick’s visits to the old country. During that trip, Francis said, Mr. McCarrick took him and his brother to an estate owned by a wealthy Irish-American, where they spent the night together.

After that, Francis said, traveling with Mr. McCarrick became a fairly regular occurrence. According to Francis, the eagerly avuncular priest took him fishing in upstate New York, dined with him at the Tonga Room in San Francisco, treated him to a visit to the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles and even took him to Walker’s Cay, a privately owned island in the Bahamas.

McCarrick introduced the boys as “nephews,” Francis recalled, and they called him Uncle Ted. “Ted told us that these wealthy people were generous to him,” he explained, but they wouldn’t “be generous to some random group of unrelated boys.” They had to “stick to the script or he wouldn’t be able to bring us along.”

Perhaps enlisting the boys in that ruse was a kind of overture for what would follow, habituating them to a climate of silence and fear. Mr. McCarrick routinely booked single hotel rooms, Francis said, and at night Mr. McCarrick “would peel out of his clothes to T-shirt and underwear, and energetically jump onto a bed, where he would arrange himself in a cross-legged position, usually next to one of the ‘nephews.’” The familiarity made Francis uncomfortable: “We came from these typical Irish Catholic, ***working-class*** households. You still shook hands with your dad.” After Mr. McCarrick’s “exuberant” displays in the evenings, Francis remembered, he would recruit one of his traveling companions to sleep in bed with him.

It was hard for Francis to describe what happened when it was his turn to sleep in Mr. McCarrick’s bed, which he estimated happened a dozen or more times, starting when he was 12 and trailing into his early adulthood. Francis looked down and spoke quietly when he said that Mr. McCarrick would usually offer to scratch his back and that he would sometimes press his body against Francis and slip his hands under the boy’s shirt or slide his fingers underneath the waistband of Francis’ underwear. While Mr. McCarrick was touching him, Francis said, he would murmur little entreaties: “You have to pray for your poor uncle,” Francis recalled his saying, as though it were Francis’ responsibility to reconcile the priest to God, even as he lay helpless and confused against him.

Brendan L., one of Francis’ cousins, shared a similar account. “Ted would say, when you’re old enough, you can come travel with me,” Brendan remembered, and that became a highly anticipated privilege. Brendan said he traveled with Mr. McCarrick up and down the East Coast and occasionally overseas. But when night came, he recalled, the anxiety set in. “It was an accepted norm, nobody talked about it, you just kind of did it. You would think, ‘Ah, [expletive], it’s my turn tonight.’ I was always very anxious.”

In bed, Brendan said, Mr. McCarrick would “be in his underwear, he would snuggle up to you, put his legs over your hips,” Brendan recalled uneasily. “A couple of times, he slipped his hand under the back of my underwear and I kind of slapped his hand away.” Sometimes, Brendan said, he would climb out of bed and sleep on the floor; on those occasions, he told me, Mr. McCarrick would become angry. He estimated he had slept in bed with Mr. McCarrick more than two dozen times, beginning when he was around 12.

Another relative of Francis’ who did not want to be named told me that Mr. McCarrick performed the same back rub routine on him, but went further, occasionally sliding his hands beneath the back of his underwear. He recalled that at least once, Mr. McCarrick placed his hands between his legs but did not touch his genitals. Francis’ cousin, who believes he was roughly 18 or 19 when he began traveling with Mr. McCarrick, said he was always deeply disturbed by what happened, thinking: “‘I can’t believe I have to do this’ and ‘Why do we have to do this?’” When it was over, he said, “it would be like such a relief. And I would say to myself: ‘All right. I’ve probably got another month before he calls me to come over and do something again.’”

He told me he didn’t want his name used because he has never told his elderly mother about what transpired between him and Mr. McCarrick. She is very devout, he told me, and in fact introduced him to Mr. McCarrick when her son was drifting from the faith as a teenager. “For my mother, it was, ‘Oh, he’s with the bishop and this is terrific, and oh,’” he said, and paused for a moment, lost in thought. “I mean, she was in her glory about it.”

By the mid 1980s, Francis had grown up and apart from Mr. McCarrick, but Mr. McCarrick “had interwoven himself so much into the family, that if you really wanted to completely cut him out, you’d have to cut yourself out of the family,” Francis said. “If you went to somebody’s christening or somebody’s wedding, he was there.”

Francis married a Catholic woman who had grown up three streets away from his house in the Bronx. Marie, an outgoing and independent nurse, never liked Mr. McCarrick: “I would call him Ted the pedophile, even before we were married,” she said. She and Francis agreed that Mr. McCarrick would not officiate their wedding, despite the objections of Francis’ family. Instead, the two of them chose a priest they respected.

Nevertheless, Mr. McCarrick sent a papal blessing to their priest to be read aloud during the ceremony, with Mr. McCarrick’s name included. Marie was incensed. “It was like, ‘You didn’t want me to be a part of this wedding, but I am still a part of it,’” she said. It arrived like an assertion of control, with a sinister message: You can’t get rid of me.

Francis remained a faithful Catholic, but disillusionment threatened his peace, especially as his children grew older. One Sunday in the early 2000s, when the sex abuse crisis was first coming to light, his pastor mentioned that some parishioners had threatened to withhold their donations. Francis said that the priest urged parishioners not to make their contributions a referendum on the church’s handling of the crisis, because those donations supported local charity work. Francis accepted that; it made sense.

But a year later, he said, the same pastor was “railing about how the media has sort of blown the whole thing out of proportion. And he said, ‘And we know that you didn’t fall for it. You know how we know? Because your donations never fell off.’” Francis seethed.

During the summer of 2018, news broke that the Archdiocese of New York had found credible the allegation that Mr. McCarrick had sexually abused a minor in the [*early 1970s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html). A month later, [*another man*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) came forward to claim that he had been abused by Mr. McCarrick as a minor. In late July, Mr. McCarrick resigned from the College of Cardinals.

In August, an archbishop released an [*incendiary letter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) accusing Pope Francis of having failed to take action against Mr. McCarrick, despite the pope’s being warned that he was a “serial predator.” (The pope later [*denied this*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html).).

I was a writer at The Washington Post at the time, and I began working on the McCarrick story. I knocked on the door of the archdiocesan house he had retreated to, and I requested interviews through his legal team but received no answer from him. I was frustrated by the church’s reticence regarding Mr. McCarrick’s career of abuse and disturbed by my increasing difficulty producing an answer when asked by friends why I was still Catholic.

As Francis watched the story unfold in the news, he sank into similar spiritual unease. He began to realize that he had failed to appreciate how extensive Mr. McCarrick’s abuses really were. “He was expert in taking boys like me, who felt like they got lost in big families, and making them feel special,” Francis said. He mentioned reading about a blog post written by a former priest secretary of Mr. McCarrick’s, K. Bartholomew Smith, which labeled the disgraced cardinal [*“a devourer of souls.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) It rang true to Francis.

Christmas of 2018, after his testimony, was hard for Francis. Dreams about Mr. McCarrick began to stir his subconscious. In one nightmare, he confronted the priest, only to find him glib and evasive, offering a tray of sweets. No one involved in the church’s investigation reached out to him with updates or offers of support. He stopped going to Mass. “The couple of times that I went, even in the context of funerals or weddings, it was hard for me to sit through it and look at the priests on the altar and not question — was he, this person, also an abuser?”

Those thoughts distracted Francis as he searched for the solace and meaning he had always found in sacred liturgy. He would go during off hours to the Church of Our Savior in Manhattan and sit alone in the golden glory of its vast sanctuary, listening to Gregorian chants through earbuds. “That was odd to do that,” Francis said. “But I felt like I needed to have some connection, until I could find my way back in.”

In the spring of 2019, Francis said that he, along with the four relatives who had testified in the Vatican’s inquiry, submitted claims to the Archdiocese of New York’s Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program. Though their prior testimonies had been given at the archdiocesan offices, their statements had been strictly confidential, for use only in the Vatican’s proceedings. By submitting claims directly to the compensation program, Francis told me, he and his family meant to provide the archdiocese with testimony for use in its own review of Mr. McCarrick’s history.

In June 2019, according to Francis, the archdiocese offered him a six-figure settlement to relinquish his claim against the church regarding Mr. McCarrick. Francis was conflicted; he had agreed to share his story with the Vatican and the archdiocese in solidarity with the other victims in his family and in hopes of bringing the truth to light. He had never intended to litigate his case further or to reap any monetary award.

Ultimately, Francis chose to accept the settlement, parceling it out for his children and some home repairs. If he had been affected by Mr. McCarrick’s manipulation and abuse, then so too had his family been, he reasoned.

Francis’ younger daughter told me over lunch in February of this year that she hadn’t touched her portion of the proceeds yet and isn’t sure that she ever will.

None of Francis’ four adult children describe themselves as practicing Catholics, in large part because of their father’s experience with Mr. McCarrick and the sex abuse crisis. Francis had been open — though not necessarily explicit — with them about Mr. McCarrick’s behavior; he never wanted to foster the climate of oppressive secrecy that had shrouded his childhood.

“Christianity is supposed to be about loving your fellow people and doing good and believing there’s good,” Francis’ older daughter told me. “None of that rings true in any of this.”

“I believe it’s important to be spiritual and believe in something,” the younger daughter said, “but I don’t know if I can call myself Catholic anymore … and that’s really sad.”

A note of longing haunts all faith, especially faith that has been wounded. Francis wears that weary hope in his eyes now. In February, I met with him and his wife on a cool morning in New York in the vestibule of Our Savior, the church he had spent hours in searching a way back into the heart of the faith that sustains him.

Francis greeted me warmly and we sat together in the pew — two lost souls seeking answers from a God we can’t stop loving. The Corinthian columns of the apse rose before us, and between them, flanked by angels, was the image of Christ, wreathed in a golden halo. His face was wan and beautiful, with hollow cheeks and dark, pleading eyes. I was transfixed by him; I always am. We sang and offered our open palms, and I thought of the words of Saint Augustine. “Why do you mean so much to me,” he asked the Lord, “help me to find words to explain. Why do I mean so much to you, that you should command me to love you?”

Love drew Francis back to Mass on Christmas last year. He started attending, not necessarily every Sunday, he said, but something like every other Sunday, in a steady, if cautious, rhythm.

“Faith is really hard to do solo,” Francis explained as we sat together after Mass, in an empty reception hall with watery light streaming in through tall windows. “I missed the community feeling of being in church.” He needed some sign of eternity here in the broken present: The certainty of rituals shared with others, whose trust in the goodness of God and the presence of a transcendent love nurtures the faith of those around them. His parish 30 miles outside New York City has a new pastor, a fresh face sharing no history with the M. family. Francis is still involved in charitable work in the church, applying his skills as an attorney to help aging nuns and monks manage their communities’ properties.

Francis told me he thinks it’s possible to distinguish the church from the people who have for decades debased it. How dearly I wanted to hear that; how crucial it was for me to believe it. Francis went on in his gentle, searching tone. “All throughout the church, and the church’s history, you can see times where there were people who were really living testaments to their faith,” he said. “And you can see people who took advantage of the power that they had. And that God allows that is just kind of, part of the mystery we’re all going to have to figure out, when we go to ask him. Right?”

Elizabeth Bruenig (@ebruenig) is an Opinion writer. Damon Winter is a staff photographer on assignment in Opinion.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/us/theodore-mccarrick-vatican-report.html).

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PHOTOS: Homes in the neighborhood near St. Frances de Chantal in the Bronx. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR8); Top photo, Francis M. at a church in Westchester County, N.Y. Upper left, Theodore McCarrick when he was a Roman Catholic cardinal. Above, rosary beads hanging on a statue outside the church of St. Francis de Chantal in the Bronx. Below left, the offices of the Archdiocese of New York in Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES; MAX ROSSI/REUTERS) (SR9)

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2020

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[***Trump's Appeal to Some Hispanics: 'We Saw Him Being a Boss'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:612P-78K1-DXY4-X1D4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina

**Body**

Though a majority of Latino voters favor Democrats, Hispanic men are a small but enduring part of Trump's base. Those supporters see him as forceful, unapologetic and a symbol of economic success.

PHOENIX -- They packed into the room to cheer their heroes.

The crowd of more than 100 hollered enthusiastically at Henry Cejudo, a local hero and Olympic gold medalist, the son of undocumented immigrants from Mexico who had gone on to become a mixed martial arts superstar.

But they were really there to celebrate President Trump.

Wearing red Make America Great Again hats, several men held giant American flags and stood in front of several campaign signs: ''Latinos for Trump,'' ''Cops for Trump'' and another imploring them to text ''WOKE'' to get the latest information on the campaign.

In the words of Eric Trump, the president's son and the headliner of the event, the battle is simple. It's right versus wrong, he said, to a loud round of cheers.

''They are trying to cancel our voice, guys.''

Men are the core of President Trump's base. In polling, gender gaps exist in nearly every demographic: among white voters, among senior citizens, among voters without a college degree, men are far more likely than women to support his re-election. And little of that support has shifted in the days since Mr. Trump announced he had tested positive for the coronavirus. Polls suggest that this presidential election could result in the largest gender gap since the passage of the 19th Amendment a century ago.

Then there is one of the most enduring questions of the Trump appeal: Who are the nearly 30 percent of Hispanic voters who say they support him, despite his anti-immigration rhetoric and policies?

There is no one simple answer. Mr. Trump has strong backing from Cuban and Venezuelan exiles in South Florida, who like his stance against communism. And his campaign has heavily courted evangelical Latinos throughout the country. But no other group worries Democrats more than American-born Hispanic men, particularly those under the age 45, who polls show are highly skeptical of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Yet what has alienated so many older, female and suburban voters is a key part of Mr. Trump's appeal to these men, interviews with dozens of Mexican-American men supporting Mr. Trump shows: To them, the macho allure of Mr. Trump is undeniable. He is forceful, wealthy and, most important, unapologetic. In a world where at any moment someone might be attacked for saying the wrong thing, he says the wrong thing all the time and does not bother with self-flagellation.

''I feel so powerful,'' the president declared at a rally in Florida on Monday, standing in front of Air Force One. Lest anyone miss the message, the rally ended with ''Macho Man'' by the Village People blasting on the speakers.

Paul Ollarsaba Jr., a 41-year-old Marine veteran, voted for a Republican for the first time in 2016, won over by what he saw as Mr. Trump's commitment to the military.

''I am Mexican,'' Mr. Ollarsaba said, adding that for years he thought that meant he had to vote for Democrats. When he began supporting Mr. Trump in 2016, his family ostracized him. ''My parents say: 'Why are you supporting a racist? You're Mexican, you have to vote this way,''' he said. ''No, it's my country. It's fear, people are afraid of saying they support the president.''

Mr. Cejudo clearly had no such fear. When President Trump hosted large rallies in Nevada last month, Mr. Cejudo joined several other M.M.A. fighters who backed his campaign.

''I've been the biggest fan of him,'' said Mr. Cejudo, 33, recalling watching ''The Apprentice'' in a high school class. ''We need a businessman, we need somebody like this to run our country.''

Other attendees at the event with Mr. Cejudo and Eric Trump spoke of watching Mr. Trump on ''The Apprentice,'' saying they liked his strong style, his apparent confidence in his own opinions. In interviews, they said they viewed his actions as president much in the same way: Even those they do not wholeheartedly agree with, they see as further evidence of his strength.

They said they saw his defiance of widely accepted medical guidance in the face of his own illness not as a sign of poor leadership, but one of a man who does his own research to reach his own conclusion. They see his disdain for masks as an example of his toughness, his incessant interruptions during the debate with Mr. Biden as an effective use of his power.

''We saw him being a boss,'' said Edwin Gonzales, 31, who held a large American flag outside the Trump campaign office. ''And for him to go down the escalator is basically the same thing -- it's like, 'Dang, the boss has stepped down and he's putting himself out there to be the president.' That's what's exciting.''

Mr. Gonzales added that for him, and many other Trump supporters, the president represented the best of capitalism, adding, ''He's a boss and they wanted to be him, they idolize him.''

At the event, voters said they admired President Trump and also criticized Mr. Biden, whom many of these supporters described as weak and deserving of the derogatory label coined by the Trump campaign: ''Basement Biden.''

Indeed, many of these men dismiss the need for masks themselves. After being screened with temperature checks at the event with Eric Trump and Mr. Cejudo, almost none of the audience members wore a mask, nor did any of the speakers.

Mr. Biden has mocked President Trump's reluctance over masks. ''What is this macho thing, 'I'm not going to wear a mask'?'' he said during one town hall event this month. The comment prompted a commentator on Fox to retort that Mr. Biden ''might as well carry a purse with that mask.''

''We're at a turning point in this country where we can either be afraid or move forward,'' said Ricco Rossi, 40. ''I think what they have done in the last few months, they have damaged their party more. They try to scare us.''

Though Hispanic women overwhelmingly support Mr. Biden, Hispanic men appear to have a persistent discomfort, with polls showing him struggling to maintain more than 60 percent of the group, far below his average among nonwhite voters. (Polls show him still well ahead of Mr. Trump's roughly 30 percent support from Hispanic voters.) Mr. Biden has not done enough to directly reach out to these young Latino men, Republican and Democratic strategists say.

''You have these U.S.-born Hispanic males under 40 who are pretty Trumpy, the question is why?'' said Mike Madrid, a Republican consultant involved with the Lincoln Project, which is working to get Mr. Trump out of the White House.

Both parties have often focused their outreach efforts on white, ***working-class*** voters, though many Hispanic men share the same basic priorities. ''They're English dominant, they are facing very similar economic situations, listening to the same media,'' Mr. Madrid said.

After facing months of persistent criticism that it was not doing enough to reach out to Latino voters, the Biden campaign has released several Spanish language advertisements in the last few weeks, including one featuring Bad Bunny, a pop star known for his gender-fluid style. Other advertisements focus heavily on the way Trump administration has targeted Latinos, a message that simply does not resonate among men who do not want to see themselves pitied.

Some Democrats argue that the support for Mr. Trump is an example of machismo culture, venerating traditional gender roles and a kind of hyper-masculinity. But the enthusiasm hints at some of the underlying trends among U.S.-born Latinos. More Hispanic women than men attend and graduate from college, while Hispanic men tend to be overrepresented in law enforcement institutions, including the military, the Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Yet the admiration of Mr. Trump reveals something deeper as well. Democratic pollsters who have closely tracked Hispanic men say they are more likely to prioritize jobs and the economy and less likely to be concerned about immigration and racism. Many Hispanic men are singularly focused on earning a living, gaining an economic edge that they can pass on to their children. There is a deep belief in an up-by-your-bootstraps mentality -- and that Mr. Trump did no such thing seems utterly beside the point.

Joshua Tapia, a 35-year-old cashier, said that before the pandemic, he believed he was much better off economically, because he started investing in the stock market. And now?

''A lot of jobs are suffering right now, and I don't blame Trump, I just blame circumstances, unfortunately,'' he said. ''Nobody could have seen how this played out.''

Even devoted Democrats have criticized Mr. Biden for offering a somewhat fuzzy economic message, at a time when the pandemic has left more than 10 percent of Latinos unemployed and many more with a reduction in wages.

''In the Latino community, you are defined by your ability to provide,'' said Tomás Robles Jr., an executive director of Lucha, a progressive group that is campaigning for Mr. Biden and other Democrats in Arizona. ''Folks who live in a perpetual state of economic insecurity want to look around and at least believe that you can do great in this economy. Biden needs to have a message that they matter, that he is going to create an economic reality they have the ability to make it.''

In interviews with scores of Hispanic Trump supporters at events in Florida, New Mexico, Nevada and Arizona over the last year, nearly everyone said their politics angered some friends and family, and rejected any suggestion that their support was based on anti-immigrant attitudes.

And it is not quite assimilation either: These men are proud to be Latino, children and grandchildren of Mexican immigrants specifically, and many have made an effort to continue speaking Spanish.

Many say there is some appeal in being a political curiosity and voting differently than the vast majority of Latinos.

Even Mr. Cejudo, the M.M.A. star, told the enthusiastic crowd in South Phoenix that he had been shunned for his views, which had made him only more outspoken.

''Getting backlash as a Latino, you know what that tells me,'' he said. ''That there's a lot of ignorance in this game.''

He told the group -- supporters of a president whose first campaign was largely built on opposing illegal immigration -- that his own mother came from Mexico ''in a politically incorrect way.'' He said his father was later deported, while his mother helped him nurture his dreams of becoming an Olympian.

Then he posed for pictures with a flashy bicep flex.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/14/us/politics/trump-macho-appeal.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/14/us/politics/trump-macho-appeal.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Supporters surrounded Eric Trump, the president's son, for selfies at an event organized by Latinos for Trump in Arizona last month. About 30 percent of Hispanic voters say they support the president.

Eric Trump told the crowd in Phoenix, ''They are trying to cancel our voice.'' Some of the people who attended the rally said they had long been fans of President Trump and that their support of him caused tension at home. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 15, 2020

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[***How the N-Word Became Unsayable***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62K4-X8T1-DXY4-X1XR-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2564 words

**Byline:** By John McWhorter

**Body**

This article contains obscenities and racial slurs, fully spelled out. Ezekiel Kweku, the Opinion politics editor, and Kathleen Kingsbury, the Opinion editor, wrote about how and why we came to the decision to publish these words in Friday's edition of the Opinion Today newsletter.

In 1934, Allen Walker Read, an etymologist and lexicographer, laid out the history of the word that, then, had ''the deepest stigma of any in the language.'' In the entire article, in line with the strength of the taboo he was referring to, he never actually wrote the word itself. The obscenity to which he referred, ''fuck,'' though not used in polite company (or, typically, in this newspaper), is no longer verboten. These days, there are two other words that an American writer would treat as Mr. Read did. One is ''cunt,'' and the other is ''nigger.'' The latter, though, has become more than a slur. It has become taboo.

Just writing the word here, I sense myself as pushing the envelope, even though I am Black -- and feel a need to state that for the sake of clarity and concision, I will be writing the word freely, rather than ''the N-word.'' I will not use the word gratuitously, but that will nevertheless leave a great many times I do spell it out, love it though I shall not.

''Nigger'' began as a neutral descriptor, although it was quickly freighted with the casual contempt that Europeans had for African and, later, African-descended people. Its evolution from slur to unspeakable obscenity was part of a gradual prohibition on avowed racism and the slurring of groups. It is also part of a larger cultural shift: Time was that it was body parts and what they do that Americans were taught not to mention by name -- do you actually do much resting in a restroom?

That kind of concern has been transferred from the sexual and scatological to the sociological, and changes in the use of the word ''nigger'' tell part of that story. What a society considers profane reveals what it believes to be sacrosanct: The emerging taboo on slurs reveals the value our culture places -- if not consistently -- on respect for subgroups of people. (I should also note that I am concerned here with ''nigger'' as a slur rather than its adoption, as ''nigga,'' as a term of affection by Black people, like ''buddy.'')

For all of its potency, in terms of etymology, ''nigger'' is actually on the dull side, like ''damn'' and ''hell.'' It just goes back to Latin's word for ''black,'' ''niger,'' which not surprisingly could refer to Africans, although Latin actually preferred other words like ''aethiops'' -- a singular, not plural, word -- which was borrowed from Greek, in which it meant (surprise again) ''burn face.''

English got the word more directly from Spaniards' rendition of ''niger,'' ''negro,'' which they applied to Africans amid their ''explorations.'' ''Nigger'' seems more like Latin's ''niger'' than Spanish's ''negro,'' but that's an accident; few English sailors and tradesmen were spending much time reading their Cicero. ''Nigger'' is how an Englishman less concerned than we often are today with making a stab at foreign words would say ''negro.''

For Mandarin's ''feng shui,'' we today say ''fung shway,'' as the Chinese do, but if the term had caught on in the 1500s or even the early 1900s, we would be saying something more like ''funk shoe-y,'' just as we call something ''chop suey'' that is actually pronounced in Cantonese ''tsopp suh-ew.'' In the same way, ''negro'' to ''nigger'' is as ''fellow'' is to ''feller'' or ''Old Yellow'' is to ''Old Yeller''; ''nigger'' feels more natural in an Anglophone mouth than ''negro.''

''Nigger'' first appeared in English writings in the 1500s. As it happens, the first reference involved ''aethiops,'' as it had come to refer to Ethiopia, or at least that term as applied sloppily to Africa. We heard of ''The Nigers of Aethiop'' in 1577, and that spelling was but one of many from then on. With spelling as yet unconventionalized, there were ''neger,'' ''nigur,'' ''niger,'' ''nigor'' and ''nigre'' -- take your pick.

It was, as late as the 1700s, sometimes presented as a novelty item. The Scottish poet Robert Burns dutifully taught, referring to ''niger,'' that it rhymes with ''vigour, rigour, tiger.'' Note, we might, that last word. If ''tiger'' rhymes with ''vigor'' and ''rigor,'' that means that ''tiger'' could once be pronounced ''tigger,'' which then sheds light on the rhyme:

Eeny, meeny, miny, moeCatch a tigger by the toeIf he hollers, let him goEeeny, meeny, miny, moe.

''Tigger,'' then, was a polite substitute for the original ''nigger.'' After all, do we really imagine a tiger hollering in protest? So, for one, we gain insight into why the Winnie-the-Pooh character is called ''Tigger'' and the books are so vague on why it's pronounced that way. That was an available alternate pronunciation to A.A. Milne. But more to the point, the original version of the ''Eeny, meeny'' doggerel is a window into how brutally casual the usage of ''nigger'' once was, happily trilled even by children at play. For eons, it was ordinary white people's equivalent of today's ''African-American.''

Someone wrote in passing in 1656 that woolly hair is ''very short as Nigers have,'' with the term meant as a bland clinical reference. ''Jethro, his Niger, was then taken,'' someone breezily wrote in a diary 20 years later. And this sort of thing went on through the 1700s and 1800s. Just as ''cunt'' was a casual anatomical term in medieval textbooks, ''nigger,'' however spelled, was simply the way one said ''Black person,'' with the pitiless dismissiveness of the kind we moderns use in discussing hamsters, unquestioned by anyone. After a while, the current spelling settled in, which makes the contrast with today especially stark.

Its use straddling the 19th and 20th centuries is especially interesting: While America was becoming recognizable as its modern self, its denizens said ''nigger'' as casually as today we do ''boomer'' or ''soccer mom.'' Frank Norris's anthropological realism is an example. In his ''Vandover and the Brute,'' set at the end of the 1800s, the white protagonist in San Francisco squires a gal about town who has been doing some teaching and tells him

about the funny little nigger girl, and about the games and songs and how they played birds and hopped around and cried, ''Twit, twit,'' and the game of the butterflies visiting the flowers.

Annals of popular dancing shortly after this era gaily chronicled dances such as the bunny hug, turkey trot and grizzly bear but discreetly left out that a girl like the one in ''Vandover'' was equally fond of one called the nigger wiggle, named as if Black people were just one more kind of amusing animal. (This dance entailed, for the record, a couple putting their hips together and holding each other's rear ends.)

Of course, the word was also used in pure contempt. Not long after ''Vandover,'' William Jennings Bryan, the iconic populist orator, as secretary of state, remarked about Haitians, ''Dear me, think of it, niggers speaking French.'' Meanwhile, the Marine in charge of Haiti on the behalf of our great nation at the time, L.W.T. Waller, made sure all knew that whatever their linguistic aptitudes, the Haitians were ''real nigs beneath the surface.''

There was a transitional period between the breeziness of ''real nigs beneath the surface'' and the word becoming unsayable. In the 20th century, with Black figures of authority insisting that Black Americans be treated with dignity, especially after serving in World War I, ''nigger'' began a move from neutral to impolite. Most Black thinkers favored ''colored'' or ''Negro.'' But ''nigger'' was not yet profane.

Film is, as always, illuminating. We have been told that early talkies were splendidly vulgar because, for instance, Barbara Stanwyck's character openly sleeps her way to the top in ''Baby Face.'' But linguistically, these films are post-Victorian. That character never says ''fuck,'' ''ass'' or ''shit'' as the real-life version would, and in films of this genre, that reticence includes ''nigger.'' It is, despite the heartless racism of the era, almost absent from American cinema until the 1960s. Rather, we today can glean it in the shadows: There it reigned with an appalling vigor.

So in the film ''Gone With the Wind'' no one utters it, but in the book it was based on, which almost everyone had read, Scarlett O'Hara hauls off with, ''You're a fool nigger, and the worst day's work Pa ever did was to buy you.'' And she then thinks, ''I've said 'nigger' and Mother wouldn't like that at all.'' As in, there was now a veil coming down, such that one was supposed to be polite -- approximately in the book, conclusively in the movie. But still, it was always just under the same surface that our Marine saw ''nig''-ness through.

Same period, 1937: a Looney Tunes cartoon (''Porky's Railroad'') has Porky Pig as the engineer in a race between trains. Porky's rival zooms past a pile of logs and blows them away to reveal a Black man sitting, perplexed. Today we wonder why this person was sitting under a pile of logs. The reason is that this was a joke referring to the expression ''nigger in the woodpile,'' an old equivalent of ''the elephant in the room.'' No Looney Tunes characters ever utter ''nigger,'' but this joke reveals that their creators were quite familiar with the word being used with joy.

Even into the 1970s, the word's usage in the media was different from today's. ''The Jeffersons,'' a television sitcom portraying a Black family that moves from ***working-class*** Queens to affluence in a Manhattan apartment tower, was considered a brash, modern and even thoughtful statement at the time. Here was the era when television shows took a jump into a realism unknown before, except in flashes: The contrast between the goofy vaudeville of ''Here's Lucy'' and the salty shout-fests on ''The Jeffersons'' is stark. So it was almost a defining element of a show like ''The Jeffersons'' that loudmouthed, streety George Jefferson would use ''nigger'' to refer to Black people with (and without) affection.

George freely hurled it while playing the Dozens in an early episode. (''Take this elite nigga, wolfin' at my door / With your yellow behind, I'm gonna mop up the entire floor!'') On the show the character began in, ''All in the Family,'' while bigoted Archie Bunker does not use the word, as his real-life counterpart would, George uses it, such as when he rages about the possibility of having (white) Edith Bunker help out at his dry-cleaning location. (''The niggers will think she owns the store, and the honkies will think we bleached the help!'')

Nor are only Black people shown using it; the writers air the ''real'' ''nigger'' as well. White men use it a few times on an episode in which George meets modern Klansmen. But white people aren't limited to it only in very special episode cases like this. George calls his white neighbor Tom Willis ''honky,'' and Tom petulantly fires back, ''How would you like it if I called you 'nigger'?'' Then, that read as perfectly OK (I saw it and remember); he was just talking about it, not using it. But today, for Tom to even mention the word at all would be considered beyond the pale -- so to speak.

The outright taboo status of ''nigger'' began only at the end of the 20th century; 2002 was about the last year that a mainstream publisher would allow a book to be titled ''Nigger,'' as Randall Kennedy's was. As I write this, nearly 20 years later, the notion of a book like it with that title sounds like science fiction. In fact, only a year after that, when a medical school employee of the University of Virginia reportedly said, ''I can't believe in this day and age that there's a sports team in our nation's capital named the Redskins. That is as derogatory to Indians as having a team called Niggers would be to Blacks,'' the head of the N.A.A.C.P., Julian Bond, suggested this person get mandatory sensitivity training, saying that his gut instinct was that the person deserved to simply be fired. The idea, by then, was that the word was unutterable, regardless of context. Today's equivalent of that employee would not use the word that way.

Rather, the modern American uses ''the N-word.'' This tradition settled in after the O.J. Simpson trial, in which it was famously revealed that Detective Mark Fuhrman had frequently used ''nigger'' in the past. Christopher Darden, a Black prosecutor, refused to utter the actual word, and with the high profile of the case and in his seeming to deliberately salute Mr. Read's take, by designating ''nigger'' ''the filthiest, dirtiest, nastiest word in the English language,'' Mr. Darden in his way heralded a new era.

That was in 1995, and in the fall of that year I did a radio interview on the word, in which the guests and I were free to use it when referring to it, with nary a bleep. That had been normal until then but would not be for much longer, such that the interview is now a period piece.

It's safe to say that the transition to ''the N-word'' wasn't driven by the linguistic coarseness of a Los Angeles detective or something a prosecutor said one day during a monthslong trial. Rather, Mr. Darden's reticence was a symptom of something already in the air by 1995: the larger shift in sensibility that rendered slurs, in general, the new profanity.

This occurred as Generation X, born from about 1965 to 1980, came of age. These were the first Americans raised in post-civil-rights-era America. To Generation X, legalized segregation was a bygone barbarism in black-and-white photos and film clips. Also, Generation X grew up when overt racist attitudes came to be ridiculed and socially punished in general society. Racism continued to exist in endless manifestations. However, it became complicated -- something to hide, to dissemble about and, among at least an enlightened cohort, something to check oneself for and call out in others, to a degree unknown in perhaps any society until then.

For Americans of this postcountercultural cohort, the pox on matters of God and the body seemed quaint beyond discussion, while a pox on matters of slurring groups seemed urgent beyond discussion. The N-word euphemism was an organic outcome, as was an increasing consensus that ''nigger'' itself is forbidden not only in use as a slur but even when referred to. Our spontaneous sense is that profanity consists of the classic four-letter words, while slurs are something separate. However, anthropological reality is that today, slurs have become our profanity: repellent to our senses, rendering even words that sound like them suspicious and eliciting not only censure but also punishment.

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**Load-Date:** May 2, 2021

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[***The British Design Legend Known for Tailoring With a Twist; Profile in Style***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:612S-D091-JBG3-60JV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1665 words

**Byline:** Natalia Rachlin

**Highlight:** On the occasion of his label’s 50th anniversary, Paul Smith talks about some of the inspirations behind his singular aesthetic.

**Body**

“My childhood was very gentle,” says the designer [*Paul Smith*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html), who grew up in Nottinghamshire, England, the youngest of three children by eight years. “My mother rather beautifully told me, ‘Darling, you were a gift from God’ — a very polite way of saying I was a mistake,” adds Smith, 74, who is similarly well mannered. With his siblings already out of the house, Smith spent his adolescent years luxuriating in the company of his parents, snapping photographs that he’d develop with his father in the family attic and taking long bike rides through the Midlands. At 15, he left school intent on becoming a professional cyclist, but was forced to give up the pursuit after suffering a bad crash two years later, at which point he started spending weekends in London, hanging out with an art and music school crowd that opened his eyes to the cultural currents of the 1960s. Often, he’d go to concerts and hawk homemade silk-screened T-shirts he’d made to whomever was performing ([*Rod Stewart*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html), [*Eric Clapton*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html)) and use some of his earnings to pay for the gas to get home. “I came from a ***working-class*** family and I had no money, no education,” says Smith. “I had to make it work, and I liked clothes.”

He liked them enough that in 1970, with the encouragement, guidance and help of Pauline Denyer, his then girlfriend and now wife, who studied fashion at the Royal College of Art, Smith opened a windowless shop, just under 10 feet by 10 feet, in his hometown. On the racks were some of [*his own designs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html), such as double-breasted flannel coats with pearl buttons and flared corduroy trousers with cuffed hems. “Pauline was the one who first taught me how to cut a pattern,” says Smith, who showed his eponymous brand’s first full men’s wear collection in Paris in 1976 and was immediately heralded for his irreverent take on suiting. An affinity for stripes and various sartorial winks, such as a loud lining on a jacket or brightly colored stitching around a buttonhole, have remained trademarks of his ever since, and he’s become a stalwart of U.K. fashion, with outposts in 70 countries. Though expertly crafted from the finest of textiles, his work is a reminder that tailoring need not be stuffy, and his spring 2021 collection, which he presented last month, showing two-button, wool-mix suits in lavender and mint worn with sandals and without shirts, was no exception. It was inspired by a past trip to Havana, something that wouldn’t be so easy at the moment. But while it’s been a difficult year, what with the pandemic and much social strife, it’s also been a special one for Smith, as 2020 constitutes his brand’s 50th anniversary, which he’s marking with a monograph, out this week, that details his life and career through 50 of his favorite objects. Here, the designer elaborates on the elements of his style and singular approach to running his brand, which he’s proud to have kept independent. “We’ve just always enjoyed having a lovely day every day, saying please and thank you, and not being part of a big machine,” he says.

At top: This portrait of me was taken last year in my office in central London by a photographer called Jonathan Pryce. There’s an [*Yves Saint Laurent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html) illustration behind me, and you can also see a corner of a larger work by the artist [*James Lloyd*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html), who, in the mid-90s, was one of the first recipients of the Paul Smith Scholarship at the Slade School of Fine Art. He went on to become quite a big name and was actually commissioned to paint me by the National Portrait Gallery. They didn’t know about the scholarship, so that was quite charming.

Left: Here I am in my school uniform, age 5 or 6. Because my brother and sister were older, I grew up almost like an only child. My father was an amateur photographer and bought me a camera when I was 11 — I didn’t want to waste film, so it really made me learn how to look and see, which has certainly helped me in my career. He was also a warm and funny man, one who, even when he died at 94, had a lot of young friends, a testament to his openness and ability to connect, which is something else he taught me.

Right: I love Japan and have been traveling there since the early 1980s. One of my favorite things to do in Tokyo — at four in the morning when I’m jet-lagged — is go to the fish market. This bag, from [*our spring 2018 collection*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html) and printed with a mackerel, was an homage to that tradition. I have many shops in Japan and I think my success there goes back to my dad, who was able to communicate even without words. In the early days, there was only one employee at Paul Smith Japan who spoke English, so we had to find other ways to understand each other, though I’ve also learned a few Japanese words and phrases over the years.

Left: When we sat down 15 years ago to plan out [*our flagship Los Angeles shop*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html) and I said, “Why don’t we do it in bright pink?” I had no idea it would become such a sensation. Apparently, it’s one of the most Instagrammed buildings in L.A. I did want to make it a place that would really make you want to stop, especially because everyone there drives everywhere, but I was thinking more about the Mexican architect [*Luis Barragán*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html), who is one of my heroes, and who gravitated to punchy colors.

Center: Once, while I was daydreaming on a train from London to Nottingham, the friend I was with asked me what I was looking for out the window and I responded, just for fun, “If I see a rabbit, then my next collection will do well.” A bit later, when he was back in New York, he sent me a papier-mâché rabbit in the post, and, though I’m not a superstitious person, it just became a thing. For many, many years since, my wife has given me some kind of rabbit for good luck with every new collection. I have the most beautiful collection of Austrian bronze ones, and this purple ceramic rabbit is one we used to sell in some of my shops.

Right: This is of me and Pauline in Italy in the mid-1970s. When we met, I was 21 and she was 27 and already had two young sons — this photo was taken by her older son, Jason. We’ve been together since 1967, and she was instrumental to the brand’s early success, but we only got married in 2000, not for any good reason — we just didn’t get around to it until we did. In the lead-up to the wedding, I got a letter from Buckingham Palace saying they wanted to make me a knight, and it turned out the ceremony was on the same day. I got knighted at 11 a.m. and married at 4 p.m., and Pauline became Mrs. Smith and Lady Smith all in one day.

People often ask me how British Paul Smith is. In the beginning, it was very British in that the fabrics available to a young designer just starting out were quite local. Today, we retain a bit of that history: This look from [*my fall 2020 collection*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html) (right) shows a short jacket and coat in a contemporary high-tech fabric, but one featuring a very traditional houndstooth check. I first started designing women’s wear in 1993, after learning women were coming into my shops and buying things for themselves, and on the left is a women’s look from [*my fall 2018 collection*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html), which was inspired by the 1915 book “[*Dreamer of Dreams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html),” written by Marie, the Queen of Romania, and illustrated by Edmund Dulac. He created these whimsical drawings of forests, moonscapes and other mysterious settings, and we reinterpreted and transposed them onto knitwear.

Left: I’ve visited almost all of [*Christo and Jeanne-Claude*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html)’s big installations around the world and am drawn to the oddness of wrapping a building or putting a curtain across a valley or what have you. It represents an unusual way of thinking about things, and I’ve always tried to do something similar with my brand, bringing unexpected elements together. Now it’s completely normal to pair a denim shirt with a cashmere suit, or a flower tie with a floral shirt, but in the 1970s, it was considered outrageous. The other reason I love Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s work is that you don’t just say, “[*I’m going to wrap the Reichstag*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html),” as they did in 1995. There is paperwork, financing, organization — and so there is also a lot of willpower.

Right: Apparently, and completely unbeknown to me at the time, I was a bit of a pioneer in terms of printing photographs onto fabrics, which I started doing in the 1980s — I did apples, flowers, plates of spaghetti, all sorts of things. For our anniversary this year, we revisited the archives and created [*a capsule collection*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html) of some key printed styles, and this loafer has proved very popular.

Left: [*Alexey Brodovitch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html) was the art director of [*Harper’s Bazaar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html) from the 1930s through the late 1950s and such a radical, lateral thinker — he brought Richard Avedon and Andy Warhol into the fold there. This is a hell of a cover. It’s from August 1940 but just so modern.

Right: I live a four-minute walk from London’s Holland Park, and Pauline and I regularly pop our heads into its Kyoto Garden, which reminds me of my visits to Japan. We go to the garden to clear our heads. Though in a way we’re already at peace — one of the joys of being with Pauline is that we’re completely comfortable with silence and just very much at ease with each other.

Left: [*Mario Bellini for Cassina Cab Chairs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/26/t-magazine/fashion/paul-smith-los-angeles-photos.html), which were designed in the late 1970s, sit around this long table in my London office. They’re made from thick leather that zips around the frame, so each one is like a piece of clothing — maybe a beloved pair of jeans that gets better with every wear.

Right: During my early trips to Japan, I’d go for two weeks and have time to explore. I loved popping into antiques shops, where I would admire the old workwear made out of thick cotton fabric and dyed with indigo to repel mosquitoes. These were garments that, for a time, anyway, were not replaced but repaired. A lot of them were darned using decorative Sashiko stitching, which inspired me to create a series of my own pieces, including this pair of jeans from the late 1990s, with built-in repairs.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Courtesy of Paul Smith FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 16, 2020

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[***Philadelphia Mayor Warns Mummers to End Blackface or Risk Parade***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y27-RYH1-JBG3-6097-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Mayor Jim Kenney told leaders of the Mummers that their centuries-old tradition could lose the city’s support if they did not better police participants.

**Body**

Mayor Jim Kenney told leaders of the Mummers that their centuries-old tradition could lose the city’s support if they did not better police participants.

Mayor Jim Kenney of Philadelphia warned this week that if leaders of the city’s Mummers Parade did not put a stop to the use of blackface by some participants, the centuries-old New Year’s tradition would be in jeopardy.

In a letter sent to five leaders of Mummers divisions, as the brigades of costumed revelers are called, Mr. Kenney said that time and time again, the racist behavior of a few participants had “cast a shadow” over the carnivalesque tradition, which dates to the Colonial era and has become an emblem of Philadelphia.

“The repeated inability of Mummers leadership to control the use of blackface by some participants threatens the city’s continued support for the parade,” he wrote. “Despite your progress in recent years, every time a parade participant mocks our black community through the willful, ignorant use of blackface, it exacerbates the parade’s association with racism and bigotry.”

Blackface has been [*banned*](https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/04/archives/blackface-is-barredinmummersparade.html) at the New Year’s Day parade since 1964, but it and brownface have never been eradicated, despite condemnations from Mummers associations. In 1985, a string band   [*petitioned organizers to be able to use blackface*](https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/04/archives/blackface-is-barredinmummersparade.html); in 2016, several people   [*painted their faces brown*](https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/04/archives/blackface-is-barredinmummersparade.html) in a Mexican-themed group; and this year, two marchers   [*painted their faces black*](https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/04/archives/blackface-is-barredinmummersparade.html).

“You must understand the anger and frustration of those who feel strongly that taxpayer dollars and corporate funds should not be devoted to supporting this event,” Mr. Kenney wrote in the letter, dated Jan. 21.

The Mummers divisions loosely organize many groups under broad banners — there is a Comic Division and a Fancy Brigade — and their leaders have always struggled to police the behavior of groups and participants. Mr. Kenney, himself a former Mummer, requested a meeting of the leaders with the city’s managing director, and proposed several changes to how the Mummers organize.

“We agree with his chain of thought that some things have to be improved,” said Richard Porco, the president of the Comic Division. He said that the groups had improved “a lot over the past four or five years,” pointing to sensitivity training in 2016 and increased city oversight of the themes chosen by the groups.

Mr. Porco said that the two marchers with black-painted faces this year had put on makeup during the course of the parade, calling them “two knuckleheads that took it upon themselves to put blackface on out of 10,000 marchers, approximately.” He said that the Mummers do not condone blackface, but found it difficult to police amid the thousands of people wearing colorful costumes and makeup.

“We try to stop it,” he said. “But it’s going to be a hard road to haul.”

On Thursday, Councilwoman Cindy Bass introduced a bill that would penalize people who wear blackface at the parade, including with a $75 fine and a ban of up to five years from the parade. The bill is not final, she said in an interview on Friday, noting that it would have to take into account legal protections for free speech.

But she said it was overdue to push the Mummers into better self-policing. “Every year, we have this conversation on Jan. 2; every year, they say it’s going to be better, it’s not going to happen again,” she said. “And it happens again.”

Ms. Bass said she hoped the final City Council bill would include a potential ban for groups whose members broke the rules. That way, she said, members would be more motivated to stop bad behavior and say, “‘I’m going to pull you aside so that you’re not embarrassing our city in front of our audience, so that you’re not participating in this racism.’”

She added that there had long been a disconnect between Philadelphia’s African-American community and the Mummers, noting that the participants are predominantly white. “There has been a feeling of exclusion and of disrespect by the Mummers that has been allowed to permeate forever,” she said.

The Mummers tradition in Philadelphia first took shape in the 17th century, as German and Scandinavian immigrants blended their Christmas and New Year traditions into a chaotic and often drunken celebration.

In the 1800s, waves of Irish, Italian and Polish immigration brought new traditions, and the event became a “real melting pot of cultures,” especially in the ***working class***, said Stephen Highsmith, a former broadcaster who wrote a book on the history of Mummers.

“The costuming, originally, was taking pretty much what was on the wash line, a wife’s dress, a potato sack — anything you could get your hands on — and being silly and drinking,” he said. “Part of its heritage is to be disorganized and chaotic.”

Over the centuries, old European [*practices of blackface*](https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/04/archives/blackface-is-barredinmummersparade.html) became   [*intertwined with the rise of minstrel shows*](https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/04/archives/blackface-is-barredinmummersparade.html) in the United States, and major cities like Philadelphia were often where they met. After the parade was made a city-sponsored event, in 1901, some of the people involved “brought performances from the minstrel stage directly into the Mummers Parade,” said Christian DuComb, a professor of theater at Colgate University.

“In some ways, we can see the afterlife of the minstrel show on display in the Mummers Parade even now,” said Dr. DuComb, who is also the author of a book on race and street performances in Philadelphia.

The tensions may have reached their highest point in the civil rights era, when judges [*ruled against allowing blackface*](https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/04/archives/blackface-is-barredinmummersparade.html), in part for fear of bloodshed.

That long history has faded in the minds of many marchers today, if it was ever taught. Many young people who take part associate the Mummers with family tradition and the city’s identity.

“Two people don’t define 10,000 people,” said Matt Kruc, 31, a South Philadelphia resident who plays in a brass band in the parade. He said that for him, the day was about community and family. (He has taken part for 25 years, his father for 54.)

“This day is so special, the atmosphere and the feeling that people give you and the way the street comes to life,” he said. “It’s the only day that you can be a rock star with a trombone.”

His father, Andrew, said that when he hears the first brass bands on New Year’s Day, “I get a lump in my throat because I think of my loved ones that I did it with and have lost, and now I’m doing it with my kids.”

The marchers who wore blackface had caused an uproar in his neighborhood, he said, adding that he thought thousands were now “paying the price for the foolish actions of two people.”

Despite the civic pride the event can create, frustration has mounted — along with calls to change the celebration, if not end it entirely — with each new case of offensive conduct by people in the parade.

Noting how the parade could bind together community life, Dr. DuComb said he hoped it would continue. But he added, “There needs to be a real public reckoning about the history of the parade if it’s going to remain part of the civic life going forward.”

PHOTO: Two marchers wore blackface while marching in this year’s Mummers Parade, drawing condemnation from Mummers groups and city leaders. (PHOTOGRAPH BY David Maialetti/The Philadelphia Inquirer, via Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 25, 2020

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[***New Political Force Is Rising in Georgia: Asian-American Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61CN-72W1-DXY4-X0VH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Sabrina Tavernise

**Body**

The Asian-American population in the state has doubled in two decades, and many live in the Atlanta suburbs, which voted for Joseph R. Biden Jr. by large margins.

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. -- Four years ago, Maliha Javed, an immigrant from Pakistan, was not paying attention to politics. A community college student in suburban Atlanta, she was busy paying for books and studying for classes. She did not vote that year.

But the past four years changed her. The Trump administration's Muslim travel ban affected some of her friends. The child separation policy reminded her of living apart from her parents for three years during her own move to the United States. Then, this summer, the discovery that she was pregnant made it final: On Election Day, she marched into the Amazing Grace Lutheran Church near her house and voted for the first time in her life. She chose Joseph R. Biden Jr.

''I want it to be a better country for him to grow up in,'' said Ms. Javed, who is 24 and is having a boy.

Ms. Javed is part of a small but powerful new force in Georgia politics: Asian-American voters. She lives in Gwinnett County, Georgia's second-most populous county and the one with the largest Asian-American population. Mr. Biden, who narrowly defeated President Trump in Georgia, won Gwinnett County by 18 percentage points, a substantial increase over Hillary Clinton's performance four years ago and only the second time the county went blue since the 1970s.

The county is also the heart of the only tightly contested House seat in the entire country that Democrats flipped this year -- Georgia's Seventh Congressional District. A survey of Asian-American early voters in that district found that 41 percent reported voting for the first time, said Taeku Lee, a political science professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who helped conduct it.

The emergence in Georgia of Asian-American voters is a potential bright spot for a Democratic Party counting on demographic changes to bring political wins across the country. Asian-Americans are the fastest-growing segment of eligible voters out of the major racial and ethnic groups in the country, according to the Pew Research Center; their numbers, nationally and in Gwinnett County, more than doubled between 2000 and 2020.

Families of Asian descent in the United States come from dozens of countries, but according to Pew, a vast majority of the voting population comes from just six. China, the Philippines and India account for more than half, followed by Vietnam, Korea and Japan.

But interviews with Asian-Americans in Gwinnett County showed that their political preferences are fluid. While many voted for Mr. Biden, they are hardly a done deal for the Democratic Party. A large portion are socially conservative, often observant Christians and owners of small businesses.

Many new voters were drawn to the presidential race because it had loomed so large in American culture. But that also means they are no guarantee for Democrats in Georgia's runoffs for two critical U.S. Senate seats in January, in which control of the upper chamber hangs in the balance.

''People are like, 'What?''' said Cam Ashling, 40, a Democratic activist, referring to new voters' responses when she raises the runoffs, which she referred to as ''a giant uphill battle.''

She added: ''We have to try very hard to keep Georgia blue. It is not solid.''

As a group nationally, Asian-Americans tend to prefer Democrats, but that masks deep differences by ethnic origin and generation. AAPI Data, a data analytics firm that focuses on Asian-Americans, has found that many Vietnamese immigrant voters lean Republican, for instance, while very few Bangladeshi voters do. And American-born Vietnamese voters lean less toward Republicans than do their foreign-born parents.

Two-thirds of all eligible Asian-American voters in 2018 were naturalized citizens, according to Pew, the highest ratio of any major racial or ethnic group.

''I would love to be a Republican, but right now they're just crazy,'' said Jae Song, 50, an IT worker who was picking up lunch at Vietvana Pho Noodle House in Duluth, an upscale town in Gwinnett County that is 24 percent Asian-American. Mr. Song, a Korean immigrant, said he loved Mr. Trump on the economy, but hated him on the coronavirus. His daughter in New York has had racist slurs flung at her. But he said he was also confused by Democrats' priorities.

He had heard a lot of the phrase ''Black lives matter,'' and he understood that. But this also led him to wonder, ''What about us?''

Surveys suggest a substantial increase in Asian-American votes this year, a jump that follows the expansion of the group's population in the state. About 2.5 percent of Georgia's voters were Asian-American this year, up from 1.6 percent in 2016.

The Asian-American population in Georgia is mixed economically. Some are doctors and upper-income professionals, but others are owners of beauty supply stores, restaurants, mobile phone franchises and laundromats.

James Woo, 35, who immigrated from Seoul to Meridian, Miss., in the late 1990s, said Korean immigrants had a saying that whatever the business of the person who picked you up at the airport would become yours, too. His father was picked up by his brother-in-law who owned a beauty supply store. Now Mr. Woo's extended family owns more than two dozen beauty supply stores in Georgia and Louisiana.

In the early years, being Asian-American was not easy, and Mr. Woo, who moved to Georgia in sixth grade and worked at his parents' shop on the weekends up through college, had searing experiences of discrimination.

''I saw that growing up, the discrimination, and I don't want that for my kids,'' he said. ''I want them to feel like we belong. Because we do. This is our home.''

He said he realized that the way to achieve that was to elect more Asian-Americans to office in Georgia. He now works full time as the Korean outreach leader for Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta, an advocacy group. He said about half of the voters he helped this cycle were voting for the first time.

''For me it's not about the state turning blue or belonging to one party or another,'' he said. ''It's seeing people who look like me with similar backgrounds to mine get elected.''

For years, the few Asian-Americans in elected office in Georgia were often Republicans, and organizing was more focused on raising money from economically established immigrant voters than registering ***working-class*** immigrants. Nationally, voter participation among Asian-Americans has historically been low: In 2016, they had the second-lowest turnout after Hispanics of all major groups.

''Voter participation had always been an iffy question because those communities had not matured politically and the younger generation had not really become active,'' said Baoky Vu, former commissioner to George W. Bush's Presidential Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, who lives in DeKalb County.

Today, Asian immigrants have reached a critical mass and their children, entering their 30s and 40s and many of them educated in the United States, are pushing for representation. In Gwinnett County, about 12 percent of people are of Asian heritage, according to William Frey, senior demographer at the Brookings Institution.

When Stephanie Cho moved to Georgia from California in 2013, ''there were lots of Asians but they had very little power,'' she said. Ms. Cho, who is now the executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta, said she remembered walking the halls of the State Legislature and seeing just two Asian-Americans: a Republican named Byung J. Pak and a member of his staff.

Now there will be six Asian-Americans in the Statehouse, including Michelle Au, a Chinese-American doctor who was elected to the State Senate as a Democrat this month, the result of aggressive voter registration and turnout efforts. In this election, Mr. Woo put ads in Korean-language newspapers, started chats with dozens of voters on KakaoTalk, an app popular among Korean immigrants, and made announcements at his church.

Bee Nguyen, a Democrat who was elected to Georgia's House District 89 in 2017, said she only realized just how ignored Asian voters had been in 2016 when she was canvassing for Sam Park, the first openly gay Korean-American to run for a State House seat.

''The pattern we saw when we were knocking on doors was that no one had ever talked to these people before,'' said Ms. Nguyen, 39, who was born in Iowa to Vietnamese refugees.

An important turning point for Asian-American voters came in 2018, several Democratic activists said, when Stacey Abrams in her race for governor had a staff member assigned to Asian immigrant communities. Exit polls later showed that 78 percent of Asian-American voters cast their ballots for her.

But not all Asian-Americans are Democrats. According to AAPI Data, about a fifth of Korean immigrants in the country voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, and a number in Gwinnett County this month said they trusted him more on the economy.

Kyung Baek, 58, a Korean immigrant who sells shoes and cloth flowers in the H Mart in Duluth, said she voted for Mr. Trump because she liked his tough talk against Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, whom she sees as a bully, and also because Mr. Trump looked past the ''smaller issue'' of the virus to the ''bigger one'' of the economy.

''Trump's concern is big things, not small things,'' she said. The economy, she said, is the top priority: ''When America is rich, I can be rich.''

The generational divide is particularly pronounced among Vietnamese-Americans. Many of the older generation came to the United States after the fall of Saigon, and a fear of communism runs deep.

''If you went to a Viets for Trump rally they spoke with broken English and if you went to a Viets for Biden rally they spoke broken Vietnamese,'' said Ms. Ashling, 40, who came to Georgia in 1988 as a Vietnamese refugee.

This year has stood out, second-generation Vietnamese-Americans said in interviews, because of a flood of misinformation targeting older Vietnamese voters in the form of videos in Vietnamese that have cast Mr. Biden as a communist.

Ms. Ashling said she had found countering it nearly impossible.

She prefers to spend the weeks that remain before Georgia's crucial Senate runoff elections on more persuadable voters. Ms. Javed, the community college student from Lawrenceville, was one. She said she had become increasingly furious about the cost of higher education, feelings she said she would channel into a vote for each of the Democrats.

She has already marked down Election Day for the runoff races, Jan. 5, in her calendar.

Richard Fausset contributed reporting from Atlanta, and Nate Cohn from New York.Richard Fausset contributed reporting from Atlanta, and Nate Cohn from New York.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/25/us/georgia-asian-american-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/25/us/georgia-asian-american-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Dr. Michelle Au, a Democrat, won a seat in the Georgia Senate this month, thanks to extra voter registration and turnout efforts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHNATHON KELSO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

James Woo moved from Seoul to Mississippi, then to Georgia in sixth grade. He had searing experiences of discrimination.

The Park Village Shopping Center in Duluth, Ga., has an array of Asian stores. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Cam Ashling, a Democratic activist, lives in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta. Her yard has goats, turkeys and chickens, above, and political signs in abundance, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A21)

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Ella Baker’s Legacy Runs Deep. Know Her Name.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1H-8YK1-DXY4-X2BT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1415 words

**Byline:** Barbara Ransby

**Highlight:** Her fighting spirit lives on in today’s social movements.

**Body**

Her fighting spirit lives on in today’s social movements.

When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in 1964, he observed that anytime an award is given to “the dedicated pilots of our struggle who have sat at the controls as the freedom movement soared into orbit,” the prize is also bestowed on “the ground crew without whose labor and sacrifices the jet flights to freedom could never have left the earth.”

[*Ella Josephine Baker*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html), a black North Carolina native who migrated to New York in the 1920s, was a major part of that ground crew for over 50 years, and her legacy lives on in today’s social movements.

Her political activism began in Harlem in the 1930s. She worked with the cooperative movement during the Great Depression; supported the campaign against Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia; and opposed the racist conviction of the famed Scottsboro boys.

Baker was a field secretary and director of branches for the N.A.A.C.P. in the 1940s, and she traveled throughout the Jim Crow South, organizing against discrimination and recruiting people to the Civil Rights Movement. She worked alongside King and others in the Southern Christian Leadership Council in the 1950s and was a mentor to the young activists who founded the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in 1960. S.N.C.C. went on to lead the “Freedom Rides,” in which participants risked life and limb to desegregate interstate transportation, and then to organize “Freedom Summer,” a massive voter registration drive targeting disenfranchised black southern voters.

Baker was a strategist, organizer and mother to the movement whose political acumen, humble leadership style and razor sharp political insights were legendary. It’s a reflection of our selective amnesia that few people know her name. The S.N.C.C. leader James Forman once remarked that “many people helped to ignite or were touched by the creative fire of S.N.C.C., without appreciating the generating force of Ella Baker.”

In this crucible election year, Ella Baker’s work with the [*Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html) may be the most relevant. The party, formed in the early 1960s by black residents and a few white allies, was a brave political experiment in one of the most notoriously racist states in the south, where lynchings and other acts of racial terror were commonplace. In 1963, Medgar Evers, the Mississippi field secretary for the N.A.A.C.P. was killed. The following year, three young civil rights workers were killed. Many African-Americans had been killed in Mississippi before that, most notoriously Emmet Till, a 14-year-old who was visiting from Chicago in 1955.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party had three goals in mind. It wanted to push the Democratic Party to take a firm stance against racist all-white primaries, defend the right of black citizens to vote and showcase the leadership and agency of poor black southerners. It was not looking to win elections, but to compel the Democratic Party to do the right thing for the maids, sharecroppers and poor people of Mississippi and to open its doors to them.

At a contentious 1964 Democratic Party convention in Atlantic City, N.J., its impact was felt. The delegation, which had formed through an open nondiscrimination process in the state, posed a challenge to the racist all-white delegation that had excluded Mississippi’s black citizens. The mainstream Democrats had a dilemma: concede to the white Dixiecrats, who had long been part of their base, or embrace the principled challenge raised by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and oppose segregation and disenfranchisement. That is, to embrace a true freedom agenda.

The Democrats tried to engineer a compromise but eventually capitulated to the status quo. While the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was not seated at the convention, their efforts set the stage for the passage of the Voting Rights Act the following year and for reforms that made future Democratic Party conventions more diverse. Ella Baker was at the center of the fray as the director of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party’s Washington office, and she worked tirelessly to build support for the challenge that emerged in Atlantic City.

Throughout her life, Baker insisted on the importance of grass-roots leadership. “Strong people don’t need a strong leader,” she declared, warning activists to eschew messiahs and saviors and build local leaders by the thousands. “Martin didn’t make the movement,” she said. Rather, “the movement made Martin.” She did not mean this to be a disparaging assessment but a hopeful one. The strength and determination of ordinary people and the power of the organizations they build together are the locus of the power that fuels change, power that is bigger than any one individual, no matter how charismatic or committed.

And she knew that individuals were vulnerable. Two of her friends, the N.A.A.C.P. organizers Harriette and Harry Moore, were blown up in their home on Christmas Day 1951 by the Ku Klux Klan. And King would later be tragically assassinated.

Ella Baker was not interested in elite strategy sessions or flowery oratory. She was about the hard, unglamorous work of building relationships, mobilizing communities, developing campaigns and creating new organizers. She was a mentor to Representative John Lewis of Georgia; Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture); Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton of Washington, D.C.; Marian Wright Edelman, the president emeritus of the Children’s Defense Fund; Joyce Ladner, the former president of Howard University; and the social activist Julian Bond. One of her closest political protégés was Bob Moses, the Algebra Project founder and a MacArthur Genius Award recipient. Her legacy runs deep.

I hesitate to speculate what activists from earlier eras, like Ella Baker, who died in 1986, might do or say today. Still, I am pretty confident that if she were with us in 2020, Baker would be on the side of the growing racial and social justice movements that are decentralized and engaged in mass direct action tactics: the climate justice movement, the immigration rights and antiwar movements, the [*Poor Peoples’ Campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html), and the groups that comprise   [*The Rising Majority*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html) coalition; all of them doing work that foregrounds the interests and voices of members of the most long-suffering and marginalized sectors of our society.

Ella Baker has many political heirs today, people who carry on in the defiant spirit of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. They are the young people who make up the grass-roots of the Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren presidential campaigns, full of zeal, passion and determination to forge a new kind of national politics; the freshmen congresswomen known as “the squad,” who are working within the Democratic Party but not on the condition of silence or unprincipled compliance; and the activists in groups like the [*Working Families Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html) and the   [*Justice Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html) supporting “outsider” progressive candidates in local elections from Philadelphia to Chicago.

When, in 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenged the Democratic Party leadership to act on the values they professed, the elites in the party turned a deaf ear. The party’s base of black ***working class*** people and their fellow white and Latino supporters who attended the Atlantic City convention were manipulated, spied upon and lied to in order to undermine their power. Many of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party’s original inside supporters caved under pressure from the top.

In July, the Democratic Party will host its 2020 convention in Milwaukee, and Ella Baker’s “fighting spirit” will be very present. Hopefully, this time it will be the forward looking progressives rather than the “play it safe” centrists who win the day and make Ella Baker proud.

Barbara Ransby ([*@BarbaraRansby*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html)), a history professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is the author of, most recently, “   [*Making All Black Lives Matter.*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html)”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/17/obituaries/ella-baker-organizer-for-groups-in-civil-rights-movement-in-south.html).

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PHOTO: Ella Baker at a news conference in 1968. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jack Harris/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2020

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[***How the N-Word Became Unsayable; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62JP-WYT1-DXY4-X4HP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2513 words

**Byline:** John McWhorter

**Highlight:** The evolution of the slur&#39;s use — and the taboo around it — tells a story about what our culture values.

**Body**

This article contains obscenities and racial slurs, fully spelled out. Ezekiel Kweku, the Opinion politics editor, and Kathleen Kingsbury, the Opinion editor, wrote about how and why we came to the decision to publish these words in [*Friday’s edition of the Opinion Today newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html).

In 1934, Allen Walker Read, an etymologist and lexicographer, [*laid out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html) the history of the word that, then, had “the deepest stigma of any in the language.” In the entire article, in line with the strength of the taboo he was referring to, he never actually wrote the word itself. The obscenity to which he referred, “fuck,” though not used in polite company (or, typically, in this newspaper), is no longer verboten. These days, there are two other words that an American writer would treat as Mr. Read did. One is “cunt,” and the other is “nigger.” The latter, though, has become more than a slur. It has become taboo.

Just writing the word here, I sense myself as pushing the envelope, even though I am Black — and feel a need to state that for the sake of clarity and concision, I will be writing the word freely, rather than “the N-word.” I will not use the word gratuitously, but that will nevertheless leave a great many times I do spell it out, love it though I shall not.

“Nigger” began as a neutral descriptor, although it was quickly freighted with the casual contempt that Europeans had for African and, later, African-descended people. Its evolution from slur to unspeakable obscenity was part of a gradual prohibition on avowed racism and the slurring of groups. It is also part of a larger cultural shift: Time was that it was body parts and what they do that Americans were taught not to mention by name — do you actually do much resting in a restroom?

That kind of concern has been transferred from the sexual and scatological to the sociological, and changes in the use of the word “nigger” tell part of that story. What a society considers profane reveals what it believes to be sacrosanct: The emerging taboo on slurs reveals the value our culture places — if not consistently — on respect for subgroups of people. (I should also note that I am concerned here with “nigger” as a slur rather than its adoption, as “nigga,” as a term of affection by Black people, like “buddy.”)

For all of its potency, in terms of etymology, “nigger” is actually on the dull side, like “damn” and “hell.” It just goes back to [*Latin’s word for “black,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html) “niger,” which not surprisingly could refer to Africans, although Latin actually preferred other words like “aethiops” — a singular, not plural, word — which was borrowed from Greek, in which it meant (surprise again) “burn face.”

English got the word more directly from Spaniards’ rendition of “niger,” “negro,” which they applied to Africans amid their “explorations.” “Nigger” seems more like Latin’s “niger” than Spanish’s “negro,” but that’s an accident; few English sailors and tradesmen were spending much time reading their Cicero. “Nigger” is how an Englishman less concerned than we often are today with making a stab at foreign words would say “negro.”

For Mandarin’s “feng shui,” we today say “fung shway,” as the Chinese do, but if the term had caught on in the 1500s or even the early 1900s, we would be saying something more like “funk shoe-y,” just as we call something “chop suey” that is actually pronounced in Cantonese “tsopp suh-ew.” In the same way, “negro” to “nigger” is as “fellow” is to “feller” or “Old Yellow” is to “Old Yeller”; “nigger” feels more natural in an Anglophone mouth than “negro.”

“Nigger” first appeared in English writings in the 1500s. As it happens, the first reference involved “aethiops,” as it had come to refer to Ethiopia, or at least that term as applied sloppily to Africa. We heard of “The Nigers of Aethiop” in 1577, and that spelling was but one of many from then on. With spelling as yet unconventionalized, there were “neger,” “nigur,” “niger,” “nigor” and “nigre” — take your pick.

It was, as late as the 1700s, sometimes presented as a novelty item. The Scottish poet Robert Burns dutifully taught, referring to “niger,” that it rhymes with “vigour, rigour, tiger.” Note, we might, that last word. If “tiger” rhymes with “vigor” and “rigor,” that means that “tiger” could once be pronounced “tigger,” which then sheds light on the rhyme:

Eeny, meeny, miny, moe

Catch a tigger by the toe

If he hollers, let him go

Eeeny, meeny, miny, moe.

“Tigger,” then, was a polite substitute for the original “nigger.” After all, do we really imagine a tiger hollering in protest? So, for one, we gain insight into why the Winnie-the-Pooh character is called “Tigger” and the books are so vague on why it’s pronounced that way. That was an available alternate pronunciation to A.A. Milne. But more to the point, the original version of the “Eeny, meeny” doggerel is a window into how brutally casual the usage of “nigger” once was, happily trilled even by children at play. For eons, it was ordinary white people’s equivalent of today’s “African-American.”

Someone wrote in passing in 1656 that woolly hair is “very short as Nigers have,” with the term meant as a bland clinical reference. “Jethro, his Niger, was then taken,” someone breezily wrote in a diary 20 years later. And this sort of thing went on through the 1700s and 1800s. Just as “cunt” was a casual anatomical term in medieval textbooks, “nigger,” however spelled, was simply the way one said “Black person,” with the pitiless dismissiveness of the kind we moderns use in discussing hamsters, unquestioned by anyone. After a while, the current spelling settled in, which makes the contrast with today especially stark.

Its use straddling the 19th and 20th centuries is especially interesting: While America was becoming recognizable as its modern self, its denizens said “nigger” as casually as today we do “boomer” or “soccer mom.” Frank Norris’s anthropological realism is an example. In his “Vandover and the Brute,” set at the end of the 1800s, the white protagonist in San Francisco squires a gal about town who has been doing some teaching and tells him

about the funny little nigger girl, and about the games and songs and how they played birds and hopped around and cried, “Twit, twit,” and the game of the butterflies visiting the flowers.

Annals of popular dancing shortly after this era gaily chronicled dances such as the bunny hug, turkey trot and grizzly bear but discreetly left out that a girl like the one in “Vandover” was equally fond of one called the nigger wiggle, named as if Black people were just one more kind of amusing animal. (This dance entailed, for the record, a couple putting their hips together and holding each other’s rear ends.)

Of course, the word was also used in pure contempt. Not long after “Vandover,” William Jennings Bryan, the iconic populist orator, as secretary of state, remarked about Haitians, “Dear me, think of it, niggers speaking French.” Meanwhile, the Marine in charge of Haiti on the behalf of our great nation at the time, L.W.T. Waller, made sure all knew that whatever their linguistic aptitudes, the Haitians were “real nigs beneath the surface.”

There was a transitional period between the breeziness of “real nigs beneath the surface” and the word becoming unsayable. In the 20th century, with Black figures of authority insisting that Black Americans be treated with dignity, especially after serving in World War I, “nigger” began a move from neutral to impolite. Most Black thinkers favored “colored” or “Negro.” But “nigger” was not yet profane.

Film is, as always, illuminating. We have been told that early talkies were splendidly vulgar because, for instance, Barbara Stanwyck’s character openly sleeps her way to the top in “Baby Face.” But linguistically, these films are post-Victorian. That character never says “fuck,” “ass” or “shit” as the real-life version would, and in films of this genre, that reticence includes “nigger.” It is, despite the heartless racism of the era, almost absent from American cinema until the 1960s. Rather, we today can glean it in the shadows: There it reigned with an appalling vigor.

So in the film “Gone With the Wind” no one utters it, but in the book it was based on, which almost everyone had read, Scarlett O’Hara hauls off with, “You’re a fool nigger, and the worst day’s work Pa ever did was to buy you.” And she then thinks, “I’ve said ‘nigger’ and Mother wouldn’t like that at all.” As in, there was now a veil coming down, such that one was supposed to be polite — approximately in the book, conclusively in the movie. But still, it was always just under the same surface that our Marine saw “nig”-ness through.

Same period, 1937: a Looney Tunes cartoon ([*“Porky’s Railroad”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html)) has Porky Pig as the engineer in a race between trains. Porky’s rival zooms past a pile of logs and blows them away to reveal a Black man sitting, perplexed. Today we wonder why this person was sitting under a pile of logs. The reason is that this was a joke referring to the expression “nigger in the woodpile,” an old equivalent of “the elephant in the room.” No Looney Tunes characters ever utter “nigger,” but this joke reveals that their creators were quite familiar with the word being used with joy.

Even into the 1970s, the word’s usage in the media was different from today’s. “The Jeffersons,” a television sitcom portraying a Black family that moves from ***working-class*** Queens to affluence in a Manhattan apartment tower, was considered a brash, modern and even thoughtful statement at the time. Here was the era when television shows took a jump into a realism unknown before, except in flashes: The contrast between the goofy vaudeville of “Here’s Lucy” and the salty shout-fests on “The Jeffersons” is stark. So it was almost a defining element of a show like “The Jeffersons” that loudmouthed, streety George Jefferson would use “nigger” to refer to Black people with (and without) affection.

George freely hurled it while playing the Dozens in an early episode. (“Take this elite nigga, wolfin’ at my door / With your yellow behind, I’m gonna mop up the entire floor!”) On the show the character began in, “All in the Family,” while bigoted Archie Bunker does not use the word, as his real-life counterpart would, George uses it, such as when he rages about the possibility of having (white) Edith Bunker help out at his dry-cleaning location. (“The niggers will think she owns the store, and the honkies will think we bleached the help!”)

Nor are only Black people shown using it; the writers air the “real” “nigger” as well. White men use it a few times on an episode in which George meets modern Klansmen. But white people aren’t limited to it only in very special episode cases like this. George calls his white neighbor Tom Willis “honky,” and Tom petulantly fires back, “How would you like it if I called you ‘nigger’?” Then, that read as perfectly OK (I saw it and remember); he was just talking about it, not using it. But today, for Tom to even mention the word at all would be considered beyond the pale — so to speak.

The outright taboo status of “nigger” began only at the end of the 20th century; 2002 was about the last year that a mainstream publisher would allow a book to be titled “Nigger,” as [*Randall Kennedy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html)’s was. As I write this, nearly 20 years later, the notion of a book like it with that title sounds like science fiction. In fact, only a year after that, when a medical school employee of the University of Virginia reportedly said, “I can’t believe in this day and age that there’s a sports team in our nation’s capital named the Redskins. That is as derogatory to Indians as having a team called Niggers would be to Blacks,” the head of the N.A.A.C.P., Julian Bond, suggested this person get mandatory sensitivity training, saying that his gut instinct was that the person deserved to simply be fired. The idea, by then, was that the word was unutterable, regardless of context. Today’s equivalent of that employee would not use the word that way.

Rather, the modern American uses “the N-word.” This tradition settled in after the O.J. Simpson trial, in which it was famously revealed that Detective Mark Fuhrman had frequently used “nigger” in the past. Christopher Darden, a Black prosecutor, [*refused*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html) to utter the actual word, and with the high profile of the case and in his seeming to deliberately salute Mr. Read’s take, by designating “nigger” “the filthiest, dirtiest, nastiest word in the English language,” Mr. Darden in his way heralded a new era.

That was in 1995, and in the fall of that year I did a radio interview on the word, in which the guests and I were free to use it when referring to it, with nary a bleep. That had been normal until then but would not be for much longer, such that the interview is now a period piece.

It’s safe to say that the transition to “the N-word” wasn’t driven by the linguistic coarseness of a Los Angeles detective or something a prosecutor said one day during a monthslong trial. Rather, Mr. Darden’s reticence was a symptom of something already in the air by 1995: the larger shift in sensibility that rendered slurs, in general, the new profanity.

This occurred as Generation X, born from about 1965 to 1980, came of age. These were the first Americans raised in post-civil-rights-era America. To Generation X, legalized segregation was a bygone barbarism in black-and-white photos and film clips. Also, Generation X grew up when overt racist attitudes came to be ridiculed and socially punished in general society. Racism continued to exist in endless manifestations. However, it became complicated — something to hide, to dissemble about and, among at least an enlightened cohort, something to check oneself for and call out in others, to a degree unknown in perhaps any society until then.

For Americans of this postcountercultural cohort, the pox on matters of God and the body seemed quaint beyond discussion, while a pox on matters of slurring groups seemed urgent beyond discussion. The N-word euphemism was an organic outcome, as was an increasing consensus that “nigger” itself is forbidden not only in use as a slur but even when referred to. Our spontaneous sense is that profanity consists of the classic four-letter words, while slurs are something separate. However, anthropological reality is that today, slurs have become our profanity: repellent to our senses, rendering even words that sound like them suspicious and eliciting not only censure but also punishment.

John McWhorter ([*@JohnHMcWhorter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html)) is an associate professor of linguistics at Columbia University. He is the author of “[*The Power of Babel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html): A Natural History of Language” and, most recently, “[*Nine Nasty Words*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/opinion/times-opinion-mcwhorter-essay.html): English in the Gutter — Then, Now, and Forever,” from which this guest essay is adapted.

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[***A New Political Force Emerges in Georgia: Asian-American Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61CG-3H31-DXY4-X55W-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The Asian-American population in the state has doubled in two decades, and many live in the Atlanta suburbs, which voted for Joseph R. Biden Jr. by large margins.

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. — Four years ago, Maliha Javed, an immigrant from Pakistan, was not paying attention to politics. A community college student in suburban Atlanta, she was busy paying for books and studying for classes. She did not vote that year.

But the past four years changed her. The Trump administration’s Muslim travel ban affected some of her friends. The child separation policy reminded her of living apart from her parents for three years during her own move to the United States. Then, this summer, the discovery that she was pregnant made it final: On Election Day, she marched into the Amazing Grace Lutheran Church near her house and voted for the first time in her life. She chose Joseph R. Biden Jr.

“I want it to be a better country for him to grow up in,” said Ms. Javed, who is 24 and is having a boy.

Ms. Javed is part of a small but powerful new force in [*Georgia politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html): [*Asian-American voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html). She lives in Gwinnett County, Georgia’s second-most populous county and the one with the largest [*Asian-American*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) population. Mr. Biden, who narrowly defeated President Trump in Georgia, won Gwinnett County by 18 percentage points, a substantial increase over Hillary Clinton’s performance four years ago and only the second time the county went blue since the 1970s.

The county is also the heart of the only tightly contested House seat [*in the entire country*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) that Democrats flipped this year — Georgia’s Seventh Congressional District. [*A survey of Asian-American early voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) in that district found that 41 percent reported voting for the first time, said Taeku Lee, a political science professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who helped conduct it.

The emergence in Georgia of Asian-American voters is a potential bright spot for a Democratic Party counting on demographic changes to bring political wins across the country. Asian-Americans are [*the fastest-growing segment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) of eligible voters out of the major racial and ethnic groups in the country, according to the Pew Research Center; their numbers, nationally and in Gwinnett County, more than doubled between 2000 and 2020.

Families of Asian descent in the United States come from dozens of countries, but [*according to Pew*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html), a vast majority of the voting population comes from just six. China, the Philippines and India account for more than half, followed by Vietnam, Korea and Japan.

But interviews with Asian-Americans in Gwinnett County showed that their political preferences are fluid. While many voted for Mr. Biden, they are hardly a done deal for the Democratic Party. A large portion are socially conservative, often observant Christians and owners of small businesses.

Many new voters were drawn to the presidential race because it had loomed so large in American culture. But that also means they are no guarantee for Democrats in Georgia’s runoffs for two critical U.S. Senate seats in January, in which control of the upper chamber hangs in the balance.

“People are like, ‘What?’” said Cam Ashling, 40, a Democratic activist, referring to new voters’ responses when she raises the runoffs, which she referred to as “a giant uphill battle.”

She added: “We have to try very hard to keep Georgia blue. It is not solid.”

As a group nationally, Asian-Americans tend to prefer Democrats, but that masks deep differences by ethnic origin and generation. [*AAPI Data,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) a data analytics firm that focuses on Asian-Americans, has found that many Vietnamese immigrant voters lean Republican, for instance, while very few Bangladeshi voters do. And American-born Vietnamese voters lean less toward Republicans than do their foreign-born parents.

Two-thirds of all eligible Asian-American voters in 2018 were naturalized citizens, according to Pew, the highest ratio of any major racial or ethnic group.

“I would love to be a Republican, but right now they’re just crazy,” said Jae Song, 50, an IT worker who was picking up lunch at Vietvana Pho Noodle House in Duluth, an upscale town in Gwinnett County that is 24 percent Asian-American. Mr. Song, a Korean immigrant, said he loved Mr. Trump on the economy, but hated him on the coronavirus. His daughter in New York has had racist slurs flung at her. But he said he was also confused by Democrats’ priorities.

He had heard a lot of the phrase “Black lives matter,” and he understood that. But this also led him to wonder, “What about us?”

[*Surveys suggest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) a substantial increase in Asian-American votes this year, a jump that follows the expansion of the group’s population in the state. About 2.5 percent of Georgia’s voters were Asian-American this year, up from 1.6 percent in 2016.

The Asian-American population in Georgia is mixed economically. Some are doctors and upper-income professionals, but others are owners of beauty supply stores, restaurants, mobile phone franchises and laundromats.

James Woo, 35, who immigrated from Seoul to Meridian, Miss., in the late 1990s, said Korean immigrants had a saying that whatever the business of the person who picked you up at the airport would become yours, too. His father was picked up by his brother-in-law who owned a beauty supply store. Now Mr. Woo’s extended family owns more than two dozen beauty supply stores in Georgia and Louisiana.

In the early years, being Asian-American was not easy, and Mr. Woo, who moved to Georgia in sixth grade and worked at his parents’ shop on the weekends up through college, had searing experiences of discrimination.

“I saw that growing up, the discrimination, and I don’t want that for my kids,” he said. “I want them to feel like we belong. Because we do. This is our home.”

He said he realized that the way to achieve that was to elect more Asian-Americans to office in Georgia. He now works full time as the Korean outreach leader for Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta, an [*advocacy group*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html). He said about half of the voters he helped this cycle were voting for the first time.

“For me it’s not about the state turning blue or belonging to one party or another,” he said. “It’s seeing people who look like me with similar backgrounds to mine get elected.”

For years, the few Asian-Americans in elected office in Georgia were often Republicans, and organizing was more focused on raising money from economically established immigrant voters than registering ***working-class*** immigrants. Nationally, voter participation among Asian-Americans has historically been low: In 2016, they had the second-lowest turnout after Hispanics of all major groups.

“Voter participation had always been an iffy question because those communities had not matured politically and the younger generation had not really become active,” said Baoky Vu, former commissioner to George W. Bush’s Presidential Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, who lives in DeKalb County.

Today, Asian immigrants have reached a critical mass and their children, entering their 30s and 40s and many of them educated in the United States, are pushing for representation. In Gwinnett County, about 12 percent of people are of Asian heritage, according to William Frey, senior demographer at the Brookings Institution.

When Stephanie Cho moved to Georgia from California in 2013, “there were lots of Asians but they had very little power,” she said. Ms. Cho, who is now the executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta, said she remembered walking the halls of the State Legislature and seeing just two Asian-Americans: a Republican named [*Byung J. Pak*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) and a member of his staff.

Now there will be six Asian-Americans in the Statehouse, including [*Michelle Au*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html), a Chinese-American doctor who was elected to the State Senate as a Democrat this month, the result of aggressive voter registration and turnout efforts. In this election, Mr. Woo put ads in Korean-language newspapers, started chats with dozens of voters on KakaoTalk, an app popular among Korean immigrants, and made announcements at his church.

Bee Nguyen, a Democrat who was elected to Georgia’s House District 89 in 2017, said she only realized just how ignored Asian voters had been in 2016 when she was canvassing for Sam Park, the first openly gay Korean-American to run for a State House seat.

“The pattern we saw when we were knocking on doors was that no one had ever talked to these people before,” said Ms. Nguyen, 39, who was born in Iowa to Vietnamese refugees.

An important turning point for Asian-American voters came in 2018, several Democratic activists said, when Stacey Abrams in her race for governor had a staff member assigned to Asian immigrant communities. Exit polls later showed that [*78 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html) of Asian-American voters cast their ballots for her.

But not all Asian-Americans are Democrats. [*According to AAPI Data*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/us/politics/georgia-democrats-black-women.html), about a fifth of Korean immigrants in the country voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, and a number in Gwinnett County this month said they trusted him more on the economy.

Kyung Baek, 58, a Korean immigrant who sells shoes and cloth flowers in the H Mart in Duluth, said she voted for Mr. Trump because she liked his tough talk against Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, whom she sees as a bully, and also because Mr. Trump looked past the “smaller issue” of the virus to the “bigger one” of the economy.

“Trump’s concern is big things, not small things,” she said. The economy, she said, is the top priority: “When America is rich, I can be rich.”

The generational divide is particularly pronounced among Vietnamese-Americans. Many of the older generation came to the United States after the fall of Saigon, and a fear of communism runs deep.

“If you went to a Viets for Trump rally they spoke with broken English and if you went to a Viets for Biden rally they spoke broken Vietnamese,” said Ms. Ashling, 40, who came to Georgia in 1988 as a Vietnamese refugee.

This year has stood out, second-generation Vietnamese-Americans said in interviews, because of a flood of misinformation targeting older Vietnamese voters in the form of videos in Vietnamese that have cast Mr. Biden as a communist.

Ms. Ashling said she had found countering it nearly impossible.

She prefers to spend the weeks that remain before Georgia’s crucial Senate runoff elections on more persuadable voters. Ms. Javed, the community college student from Lawrenceville, was one. She said she had become increasingly furious about the cost of higher education, feelings she said she would channel into a vote for each of the Democrats.

She has already marked down Election Day for the runoff races, Jan. 5, in her calendar.

Richard Fausset contributed reporting from Atlanta, and Nate Cohn from New York.

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PHOTOS: Dr. Michelle Au, a Democrat, won a seat in the Georgia Senate this month, thanks to extra voter registration and turnout efforts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHNATHON KELSO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); James Woo moved from Seoul to Mississippi, then to Georgia in sixth grade. He had searing experiences of discrimination.; The Park Village Shopping Center in Duluth, Ga., has an array of Asian stores. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Cam Ashling, a Democratic activist, lives in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta. Her yard has goats, turkeys and chickens, above, and political signs in abundance, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A21)

**Load-Date:** August 11, 2021

**End of Document**



[***A Racist Attack Was Caught on Camera. Nearly 45 Years Later, It Still Stings.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:606M-B7R1-DXY4-X0HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

A snippet of the documentary ''Rosedale: The Way It Is'' has ricocheted across the internet, upending for another generation New York City's narrative as a bastion of tolerance.

The video rolls on a sunny suburban street, and a group of black children bike toward what looks to them like a parade -- there's a small crowd, and an American flag. Suddenly, they're swarmed by a group of white children, who hurl racial epithets and rocks. Adults gathered nearby do nothing.

The black children had bicycled straight into a white supremacist rally.

The scene captured in 1975 by ''Bill Moyers Journal,'' a PBS documentary series, has echoes of the racist clashes more than a decade earlier in places like Selma, Ala., Birmingham, Ala., and Little Rock, Ark. But it unfolded in New York City, in the bedroom community of Rosedale in Queens, nearly a dozen years after the Civil Rights Act was made law.

Forty-five years later, that virulent two-minute, 20-second snippet of the documentary, ''Rosedale: The Way It Is,'' resurfaced online, shared last year by a graduate student, and boomeranged across the internet. Its quietly forgotten subject, a rash of firebombings of black families' homes in Queens, upended for a new generation the city's narrative as a bastion of tolerance and exposed its core falsehood: that racism is a scourge of elsewhere.

And it shocked the children even then: ''I never even knew people were like that,'' one of the black girls says after the attack in 1975 as the documentarian films, her pigtailed friend looking on. ''I've never experienced anything like that in my life.''

In recent weeks, the city's story line of a utopian melting pot has been further punctured as New York heaves with unrest over the systemic racism black people face, and the video has again gone viral.

As it ricocheted around the internet, racking up millions of views, provoking anguished discussion about the city's past, one line of questioning coalesced:

Who were those children? How did it shape them? Where are they now?

''I'm still here,'' Samantha Brown-Carter said. She was the girl in pigtails; now she is 55 years old. She sat for an interview in the home she grew up in, a neighborhood just north of where the episode unfolded nearly half a century ago.

''Was it traumatic? Will I always remember it? Yes,'' Ms. Brown-Carter said. ''But I never felt an urge to leave, never for any reason at all.''

She is one of five of the about a dozen black children in the PBS documentary that The New York Times was able to locate as part of an exhaustive, monthslong search that encompassed property records, elementary school yearbooks and local memory.

But while over 90 people linked to Rosedale were contacted, just one person identified any of the numerous unnamed white children or adults in the film -- a teenager who would later become her brother-in-law, the person said, and who has since died. The person asked that her name not be published, for fear of reprisals from her community.

The Rosedale of the 1970s was a predominantly white ***working-class*** neighborhood of about 25,000, home to civil service workers, police officers and firefighters of mainly Italian, Irish and Jewish descent. But like much of New York City at that time, demographics were shifting as black and immigrant families moved in and, in response, some white families headed out.

In 1974, Ormistan and Glenda Spencer, Trinidadian immigrants from London, moved their family into a Cape Cod house at 243-11 136th Avenue -- and unwittingly into a cresting battle of real estate and race. On New Year's Eve the next year, while the family was asleep at home, a pipe bomb was thrown through the home's window.

''In England, you hear about this happening in the South,'' Mr. Spencer told The Times shortly after the attack. ''But you just don't think it happens in New York City.''

Then it happened again: Arsonists set fire to another black family's home. Then again: A Molotov cocktail was chucked through the window of a home recently purchased by a black person. And there were still more attacks.

But the black children on that sunny afternoon in 1975, out for what they called a ''bike hike,'' had only a vague understanding of the social forces fomenting in Rosedale, the neighborhood beside their own of Cambria Heights.

They did not know that it had become a launchpad of ''white flight,'' the phenomenon of mass migration of white people from urban areas to the suburbs as nonwhite immigrants and black people moved in.

Or that some white residents of Rosedale instead entrenched, and used violence to do so.

The young friends had other things on their mind that day -- juicy burgers. They got on their bikes and pedaled toward the McDonald's on the other side of Rosedale. Partway there, the children spotted a crowd. Above the gathering flew an American flag.

''The last thing that I remember was someone saying, 'Oh, a parade!' And so we went down to go see the parade,'' said Mark Blagrove, who is now 57 and works in information technology sales and consulting. ''And I laugh about it until this day, because it was a parade,'' he said, ''to get the black people out of Rosedale.''

At the march and rally was ROAR: Return Our American Rights, a racist neighborhood group whose mission was to prevent black people from buying area homes. As police officers stood guard in front of the Spencers' home, white residents massed, chanting racist epithets. (Among their complaints was that the family had been given a police guard.)

''The American flag is the image when I think about that incident,'' said Renée Lipscomb-McDonald, now 58 years old and a social worker. ''That's the symbol that pulled us into that situation, because of the idea that we live in America, the American flag means good things.''

She began to cry. ''They took that beautiful image and turned it into something ugly for me,'' she said.

She straightened. ''I want the flag back.''

Mr. Moyers, who served as press secretary to President Lyndon B. Johnson, said he was drawn to Rosedale as a journalist because he was interested in the societal ramifications of the Johnson administration's efforts to put an end to segregation. Mr. Moyers and his camera crew set out to understand its impact and stumbled upon its real-world consequence on a street corner: the attack on their peers by children steeped in hate.

What he discovered in Queens, he said, was racism enmeshed with economic anxiety -- a belief that the newcomers would bring waves of crime and slash property values. Plus, there was a toxic fear held by white residents of losing their dominance, he said, something he sees echoed in the politics of today.

''We are in the last battle of white supremacy at the moment, and that was incipient in what was happening in Rosedale in the early 1970s,'' Mr. Moyers said. ''The past is very much alive today. Rosedale is being played out in a hundred different ways.''

Today Rosedale is 80 percent black and 5 percent white, and still a cozy commuter community of civil service workers and tidy, mowed lawns. It has seen little of the types of protests and marches that have engulfed much of the city in recent weeks, demanding the end of systemic racism and police brutality against black people.

But as the video has plastered Ms. Brown-Carter's Facebook feed, questions being raised across the city plague her: ''What I wonder about is those white children -- they grew up,'' she said. ''Did they become police officers? Or did their children become police officers?''

The incident still fills Ms. Lipscomb-McDonald with rage, both for the little girl she was, and in light of this era's similar struggles, how intractable racism seems. In recent days, she said, she has marched in Black Lives Matter protests near her home in Bel Air, Md., with her children. ''Which is beautiful,'' she said, ''and very sad that another generation has to take up the cause.''

But that cruel moment of rocks, bikes and brutal words has also impelled her forward, even informing her choice to become a social worker. ''My role is to provide hope,'' she said of her profession.

''Maybe that's the most significant lesson I got out of that day,'' Ms. Lipscomb-McDonald added. ''That no little girl will ride down the block and ever believe for a second that she's not worthy of respect.''

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ThanksSola OlosundeAdditional reporting by Susan C. Beachy. To watch the full video go to: nytimes.com/video

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/nyregion/racist-video-rosedale-queens.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/nyregion/racist-video-rosedale-queens.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mark as a child in the film. Mark and his friends rode their bikes into Rosedale, Queens, where white children shouted racist slurs at them.

Mark, 45 years later. ''That was like really the first where I was, like, wow, people do not like black people.''

Samantha as a child in the film. ''This little boy, he threw the rock. He tried to hit my sister, but he almost hit me.'' (A18)

Samantha, 45 years later. ''I did not understand, I was, like, who do you think you are? To say we can't come here. Like, how dare you?''

Renée as a child in the film. ''They will always do that. They always spit on us like we some kind of dogs. Ain't nothin' gonna change.''

Renée, 45 years later. ''I did not know what to do with those feelings.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONAH M. KESSEL/THE NEW YORK TIMES

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A19)

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[***Lost in America***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:611V-TYW1-JBG3-610G-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Joe Klein

**Body**

WHAT WERE WE THINKINGA Brief Intellectual History of the Trump EraBy Carlos Lozada

TRUMP ON TRIALThe Investigation, Impeachment, Acquittal and AftermathBy Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan

In 2015, Carlos Lozada, The Washington Post's Pulitzer Prize-winning book critic, took on a harrowing task: He read eight books ''written'' by Donald Trump. Soon, he expanded the mandate, reading everything he could about Trump and the Trump era -- 150 books in all. It was an act of transcendent masochism, but we should be grateful he did it because ''What Were We Thinking'' looks past the obvious and perverse -- that is, past Trump himself -- to the troublesome questions raised by the elevation of a soulless carnival barker to the nation's highest office. ''The books that matter most right now are not necessarily those revealing White House intrigue ... or official scandals,'' he writes. ''They are, instead, the books that enable and ennoble a national re-examination.'' And this, he believes, is a crucial moment for that re-examination. We have become a society ''that has forgotten its civics lessons or, remembering them still, has decided they don't matter.''

''What Were We Thinking'' is crisp, engaging and very smart. Lozada can be lacerating. The former F.B.I. director James Comey ''doesn't just quote Shakespeare but quotes himself quoting Shakespeare.'' Robin DiAngelo's best seller, ''White Fragility,'' reads like ''a pharmaceutical ad for treating whiteness.'' Beyond the snark, though, there is a simple, piercing clarity to many of Lozada's observations. The Mexican border wall ''is like Trump: big and bombastic, more artifice than utility, a blunt solution to a complex and ill-defined problem. ... You are on one side or the other, you are with him or against him.''

And that, he argues, is also the problem with most of the literature about the Trump presidency. There is nonstop righteousness in the ''resistance'' books of the left, which call for a national conversation ''but restrict ... the speakers'' and exclude ''anyone who fails to espouse the full worldview that the writers and activists champion.'' The conservatives writing about Trump are all ''in denial,'' even the Never Trumpers with their agonized mea culpas (which he calls meh culpas). ''The Never Trumpers are engaged in a worthy exercise -- yet it took the ... presidency of Donald Trump to make it happen. In a sense, the Never Trumpers are also the Only Trumpers. Only with the rise of Trump did they think to interrogate the conservative dogma they'd long defended.''

The writers Lozada admires, left and right, step beyond the usual polemics about ''fake news'' and ''identity politics'' and the #MeToo movement. The enduring irony of the Trump presidency may be that it brought national attention to, and action against, the systemic racism and casual misogyny that have crippled our society. Of the #MeToo canon, he writes, ''I found so much that I had not bothered to know'' about the brutality of male dominance. As a Peruvian immigrant, Lozada writes with great sensitivity about the sense of loss -- of home, of culture -- that accompanies the thrill of American opportunity for new arrivals. This leads him to favor identity politics as a transitional state, a way of finding ''individuality, through community.'' But, in a rare lapse, he fails to consider the insidious effects of writing racial advantage into law through programs like affirmative action and the creation of majority-minority electoral districts. Worthy as they may be, they've given ballast to white ***working-class*** tribalism.

More often, though, Lozada finds subtleties in areas we've assumed clear-cut. Take the president's mind-numbing spew of lies. Lozada praises the former New York Times book critic Michiko Kakutani for lambasting ''lefty academics who ... argued that truth is not universal but malleable, a reflection of economic, political and cultural forces.'' Or, as the philosopher Lee McIntyre put it, postmodernism is ''the godfather of post-truth.''

And here Lozada comes close to the core of the matter: Messing around with the notion of truth is a luxury that comes with affluence. We have spent the past 50 years undermining the basic institutions of society -- not just our sense of common purpose and identity, but also normative values like truth and duty and expertise. The politics of consumerism -- and grievance -- have overwhelmed the politics of unity and responsibility. Among Lozada's favorite books is the conservative thinker Yuval Levin's ''A Time to Build'': ''Popular culture compels us to ask: 'What do I want?' Institutions urge a different query, Levin explains: 'Given my role here, how should I act?' It is a relevant question -- perhaps the most relevant -- for this time and for this presidency.''

It is the question at the heart of ''Trump on Trial,'' another book from The Washington Post about a topic you're probably sick of: the impeachment of Donald Trump. Lozada would doubtless categorize ''Trump on Trial'' as a ''Chaos Chronicle.'' It is a day-by-day compendium of The Post's reporting on the Trump impeachment, written by the husband-and-wife team of Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan, and there aren't many ''reveals'' in it, unless you count the revelation that Representative Adam Schiff had a toothache when he read the articles of impeachment to the Senate. And yet, ''Trump on Trial'' doesn't plod; it is well written and the reporting is panoramic. Its theme insinuates itself gradually: The impeachment proceedings were a clear contest between those who believed in institutions -- like truth, expertise, the State Department, congressional budget power -- and those who wanted to tear them down.

You remember the story: Donald Trump tried to withhold military aid from Ukraine to force ''investigations'' of Hunter Biden's smarmy payday as a director of a Ukrainian energy company -- and also, of a cockamamie conspiracy theory about a Ukrainian oligarch harboring the Democratic Party's computer server. You may remember the players, especially the disciplined and eloquent representatives of the State Department and the National Security Council. ''Trump on Trial'' burrows into the so-called deep state, down to bureaucrats like the Pentagon's acting comptroller Elaine McCusker, ''a career civil servant'' who knew that the Ukraine military aid had to be spent by Sept. 30, 2019, or it would be voided, and ''wanted to make sure 100 percent that the law was followed.'' That is, she created institutional pressure to overturn Trump's suspension of the aid. (McCusker was forced out for doing her job.)

People like McCusker, Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and the N.S.C. expert Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman are the sort of civil servants Michael Lewis celebrated in his book about Trump's assault on the bureaucracy, ''The Fifth Risk,'' another of Lozada's favorites. They do due diligence, they adhere to protocol. Their truth is not postmodern. They do their jobs without fanfare; they do not turn their work into self-aggrandizing performance art. Their rigor is what makes our federal government legitimate and credible, despite its flaws.

Impeachment was a hard case. Trump's shenanigans were illegal, and definitely unseemly, but they didn't rise to the level of bipartisan horror necessary for a successful conviction. In the end, the Democrats probably did themselves more harm than good. But what ''Trump on Trial'' makes clear is that the Republican response was an all-out assault on regular order, expertise, law, diplomacy and the quotidian chores of holding a democracy together. I had forgotten how blatant it was. ''Elements of the Civil Service have decided that they, not the president, are really in charge,'' said Devin Nunes, the California Republican. Matt Gaetz, the Florida Republican, paraphrased what he thought was the Democrats' message: ''We the elite, we the permanent Washington, we the smart folks, have decided that ... this is not acceptable conduct.'' Or, as Trump told one of his rallies, ''We're dealing with people that don't respect you.'' The Michigan Democrat Elissa Slotkin, a former intelligence analyst and senior Defense Department official, saw herself in civil servants like Yovanovitch and Vindman: ''Their life was her life. ... It was an ethos shared by her friends, especially the ones who had sworn an oath in the military.'' Slotkin went back to the nation's founding documents: ''The framers had warned against the danger of America's leaders soliciting foreign interference in the country's internal affairs. Hadn't this president admitted to doing exactly that?''

There could not be a more obvious example of Yuval Levin's dialectic. The Republicans were all about ''What do I want?'' The Democrats worried, ''How should I act?'' The parties had traded their traditional places. ''The counterculture never died,'' Lozada writes of the alt-right movement, summarizing the views of the journalist Angela Nagle. ''It just switched sides. Transgression now lives on the right, dogmatism on the left.'' The Democrats have become traditionalists. The Republicans, a most illiberal group of libertarians, tear down the pillars of the temple. The former Trump adviser Steve Bannon's nihilism is the spiritual heir to Abbie Hoffman's jolly anarchy in the 1960s. What ''losers'' and ''suckers'' the traditionalists were! To read ''Trump on Trial'' in the context of ''What Were We Thinking'' is to be scalded. The pain is excruciating.

Carlos Lozada is a book critic, not a policy wonk. He doesn't propose specific solutions to our current state of disgrace, but he does offer a vision of American stability being eviscerated by the public's need to be entertained. This reminded me of the dichotomy that Machiavelli posited in ''The Discourses'': the contest between virtù and ozio. Virtù is the quality that keeps a republic strong: It is rigor and responsibility and intellectual achievement, albeit with a distressing tinge of militarism. Ozio is indolence; it is the laziness that overtakes a republic when it is not at war or in crisis. In America, we experienced 70 years of unprecedented peace and prosperity, without a perceived existential threat, from 1946 to 2016, a bacchanal of ozio. In the process, far too many of us lost the habits of citizenship. Truth became malleable. Morality became relative. Achievement became pass-fail -- and, more recently, just showing up. Rigor was for chumps. You didn't have to do anything to become famous, except be an ''influencer.'' And to be an influencer, you didn't need to train or study, although plastic surgery -- branding -- certainly helped. You didn't have to serve or sacrifice; that was for chumps, too. This was the America that elected Donald Trump president. What were we thinking? We weren't. Critical thinking was just too hard -- and another episode of ''Duck Dynasty'' or ''Keeping Up With the Kardashians'' always beckoned.Joe Klein is the author of seven books, including ''Primary Colors,'' ''Woody Guthrie: A Life'' and ''Charlie Mike.''WHAT WERE WE THINKINGA Brief Intellectual History of the Trump EraBy Carlos Lozada260 pp. Simon & Schuster. $28.TRUMP ON TRIALThe Investigation, Impeachment, Acquittal and AftermathBy Kevin Sullivan and Mary JordanEdited by Steve LuxenbergIllustrated. 532 pp. Scribner. $32.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/books/review/what-were-we-thinking-carlos-lozada.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/books/review/what-were-we-thinking-carlos-lozada.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Tyler Comrie FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Sun Belt Is Suddenly Looking a Little Less Red***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:611K-YKF1-DXY4-X3GT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns

**Body**

President Trump is fading nationally as he alienates women, seniors and suburbanites, polls show. But private G.O.P. surveys show he is in close races in solidly red states, too.

PHOENIX -- Cindy Bishop is the sort of voter who has some Republicans bracing for a wipeout next month.

Standing inside her garage, shielded from the 102-degree desert heat, Ms. Bishop, a 61-year-old medical professional, said she voted for Mr. Trump four years ago because ''he wasn't a politician.'' But then, she said, ''I got a taste of him and I'm like, 'God, he's disrespectful' -- there's so much about him I don't like.'' She is now leaning toward Joseph R. Biden Jr.

The inflammatory behavior that has alienated voters beyond his base has long posed the most significant impediment to Mr. Trump's re-election. But one week after he rampaged through the first presidential debate and then was hospitalized with the coronavirus, only to keep minimizing the disease as it spread through his White House, the president's conduct is not only undermining his own campaign but threatening his entire party.

New polls show Mr. Trump's support is collapsing nationally, as he alienates women, seniors and suburbanites. He is trailing not just in must-win battlegrounds but according to private G.O.P. surveys, he is repelling independents to the point where Mr. Biden has drawn closer in solidly red states, including Montana, Kansas and Missouri, people briefed on the data said.

Nowhere has Mr. Trump harmed himself and his party more than across the Sun Belt, where the electoral coalition that secured a generation of Republican dominance is in danger of coming apart.

''There are limits to what people can take with the irresponsibility, the untruthfulness, just the whole persona,'' said Jeff Flake, the former Republican senator from Arizona. Mr. Flake is crossing party lines to support Mr. Biden, who made his first visit of the general election here Thursday.

Many of the Sun Belt states seemingly within Mr. Biden's reach resisted the most stringent public-health policies to battle the coronavirus. As a result, states like Arizona, Georgia and Texas faced a powerful wave of infections for much of the summer, setting back efforts to revive commercial activity.

In Arizona, a low-tax, regulation-resistant state, the focus on reviving business helped drive the unemployment rate down to 5.9 percent in August, with some of that apparent improvement coming from people leaving the labor force in a state with a large hospitality sector that has suffered in the pandemic.

Still, Arizona continues to face a long climb to return to its pre-pandemic economy. Twice as many Arizona residents filed new claims for unemployment benefits at the end of September than they did at the previous time last year, the Labor Department reports.

Mr. Biden is mounting an assertive campaign and facing rising pressure to do more in the historically Republican region. He is buttressed by a fund-raising gusher for Democratic candidates, overwhelming support from people of color and defections from the G.O.P. among college-educated whites in and around cities like Atlanta, Houston and Phoenix.

''Cities in states like Arizona and Texas are attracting young people, highly-educated people, and people of color -- all groups that the national Republican Party has walked away from the last four years,'' said the Oklahoma City mayor, David F. Holt, a Republican. ''This losing demographic bet against big cities and their residents is putting Sun Belt states in play.''

Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona, a Republican who like Mr. Holt has won in increasingly forbidding environments, said his party needed to recognize an enduring verity about politics: ''It's a game of addition.''

Some of the states that appear effectively tied today, such as North Carolina and Georgia, could still prove difficult for Mr. Biden to carry. Few Democratic nominees have proven able to forge coalitions to tip these states and the president's appeal among ***working-class*** whites in the South will at least keep him competitive.

Even in South Carolina, Republicans have grown deeply concerned about Senator Lindsey Graham's re-election campaign, and Senator Mitch McConnell, the majority leader, has had several sobering conversations with Mr. Graham, according to Republicans familiar with the discussions.

The Senate Republican campaign arm has also intervened in Mr. Graham's imperiled campaign, with a handful of senior aides at the committee taking a more hands-on role.On Thursday, in a conference call with a group of lobbyists, Mr. McConnell vented that the party's Senate candidates are being financially overwhelmed because of small-dollar contributions to ActBlue, the online liberal fund-raising hub.

In some ways, the shifts in the Sun Belt have accelerated since Mr. Trump's nomination four years ago.

Even as he stunned Hillary Clinton in three crucial Great Lakes states, he lost Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico and fared worse in Arizona, Texas and Georgia than Mitt Romney had four years earlier.

Two years later, Democrats performed even better in a series of high-profile races across the region with college-educated white voters and people of color.

Now Republicans are at risk of that wave cresting again, and even higher.

''Racism and misogyny and demagoguery and being just hateful and cruel and intolerant are not things in the Southwest that play very well,'' said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, a Democrat. She said Republicans had left a wide space for her party in her region by clinging to ''messaging that's 40 years old'' on issues like immigration and climate.

If Mr. Biden wins by simply flipping back the Democratic-leaning Great Lakes states, Mr. Trump and his allies can pin the blame on the virus. But if Mr. Trump loses across the South and West, it would force a much deeper introspection on the right about Trump and Trumpism -- and their electoral future in the fastest-growing and most diverse part of the country.

''The Southern strategy has been flipped on its head,'' said Representative Darren Soto of Florida, a Democrat, alluding to the Nixon-era tactic of expanding the Republican coalition by winning in once-Democratic strongholds of the South.

This is part of the case that former Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas is making to Mr. Biden's campaign.

Polls show the presidential race in Texas is effectively tied, and congressional polling for both parties has found Mr. Biden running up significant leads across the state's once-red suburbs. A Biden victory there could be transformational, providing Democrats an opportunity to enlarge their House majority, shape redistricting and deliver a devastating psychological blow to Republicans.''Texas is really Biden's to lose if he invests now, and that must include his time and presence in the state,'' Mr. O'Rourke said in an interview. ''He can not only win our 38 electoral votes but really help down ballot Democrats, lock in our maps for 10 years, deny Trump the chance to declare victory illegally and send Trumpism on the run.''

Mr. O'Rourke said Mr. Biden heard him out and promised ''full consideration.'' For now, Mr. Biden's campaign is increasing its ad spending in the state and dispatching his wife, Jill, there next week. Kamala Harris, Mr. Biden's running mate, is expected to go to Texas in the coming days, according to Democrats familiar with the planning.

Texas's growth has been explosive: Over 1.5 million new voters have registered since 2016, a third of them in the diverse, transplant-filled counties that include San Antonio, Houston and Austin. The anger toward Mr. Trump has emboldened Democratic candidates to run more audacious campaigns.

In a Dallas-area House district held by a Republican who's retiring, the Democratic Party is sending mailers telling voters that their nominee will ''stand up to President Trump.'' Senator John Cornyn, running for re-election, has lamented privately that Mr. Trump is stuck in the low 40s in polling, holding back other Republicans, people familiar with his comments said.

Mr. Trump is at even greater risk in the next-largest red state in the South: Georgia. In the latest Republican polling, Mr. Trump has fallen several points behind Mr. Biden in the state, where 16 Electoral College votes, two Senate seats and several competitive House races are on the ballot.

''It feels like after the debate there was a real shift,'' said State Senator Jennifer Jordan, a Democrat from suburban Atlanta.

Ms. Jordan's district is exactly the kind of area that has swung away from Republicans in the Trump era. She said she believed Mr. Trump still had more ground to lose with the professional class and that his bout with the coronavirus was not helping.

''The fact that he has it is kind of a living example of how he has mismanaged and misjudged this virus,'' she said, adding, ''The Chamber of Commerce Republicans, business Republicans, who may have been on the fence, I think they're breaking now for Biden.''

The Trump campaign appears sensitive to that risk. Mr. Trump recently visited the state to unveil an economic plan for Black Americans, while Vice President Mike Pence addressed an evangelical political conference.

Brian Robinson, a Republican strategist, said his party was confronting a ''demographic bubble'' that had accelerated with the flight of white women.

''The G.O.P. has to stop that bleeding,'' Mr. Robinson said.

In the House, the Sun Belt appears to represent the area of greatest peril for the G.O.P., as Democrats make inroads not only in the suburbs but in outer-ring communities that are typically whiter, older and more conservative.

That was evident, quite literally, from the Glendale, Ariz., home of Hiral Tipirneni, an emergency room doctor who is challenging a Republican incumbent in an exurban district that Mr. Trump carried by 10 points.

Sitting in her outdoor courtyard with a view of the stucco sprawl enveloping greater Phoenix, Ms. Tipirneni made the case for why the daughter of Indian immigrants could win a seat long held by white Republican men.

''Our county is a good microcosm of our state and I think the state is becoming a good reflection of our whole country,'' she said of Maricopa County, which is now the fourth-largest county by population in the country.

After winning it by about three points in 2016, roughly the same as his statewide margin, Mr. Trump is now trailing in Maricopa by nine points, according to a New York Times/Siena College poll.

If the election here unfolds like many Arizona Republicans are dreading it might, they will in two years have lost the presidential race, both Senate seats, both chambers of the state legislature and watched as voters approved a ballot measure levying a surtax on the wealthy for increased education funding.

Jim Tankersley contributed reporting from Washington, D.C.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/09/us/politics/trump-biden-sun-belt.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/09/us/politics/trump-biden-sun-belt.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: In 2016, President Trump fared worse in Texas than the Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, did four years earlier. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15)

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[***Billionaire's Son Bets on Deep Pockets in Tight Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6060-3C01-JBG3-60RV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Dana Rubinstein

**Body**

Nita Lowey's decision to step down after three decades has created a seven-way free-for-all in Tuesday's Democratic primary.

In the suburban enclaves just north of New York City, a seven-way race to replace a retiring matriarch in the House of Representatives has devolved into something far less idyllic: a venomous fight between the son of a pharmaceutical billionaire and rivals who accuse him of trying to use his wealth to buy political power.

The high stakes may well explain the ferocity. The race represents a once-in-three-decades opportunity to win an open seat in a secure Democratic district, where incumbency is likely to grant the winner a lengthy tenure in Congress.

More than $7 million has already been spent on the contest, and more than half of that comes from one wealthy candidate who is trying to break away from a crowded pack.

Adam Schleifer, a former federal prosecutor in California, has spent more than $4 million on the race in the district, which covers Rockland County and part of Westchester. That's roughly $1 million more than the six other contenders combined.

Most of Mr. Schleifer's campaign war chest comes from his own pocket -- $3.7 million in total, a reflection of the wealth he derives from his father, Leonard Schleifer, whose company, Regeneron, boasts a $50 billion market capitalization. But he has received donations, too, including from real estate developers like Jeffrey Gural, a prominent Democratic fund-raiser.

Mr. Gural said that Mr. Schleifer, 38, ''understands the issues,'' but he acknowledged that a victory could raise prickly questions about the power of money.

''If he wins, it shows that you can buy an election,'' Mr. Gural said in a recent interview.

The contest is likely to decide who succeeds Representative Nita Lowey, the first woman to chair the House Appropriations Committee and a beloved figure among Democrats in the lower Hudson Valley district.

Last October, Ms. Lowey, facing a challenge from a progressive upstart, Mondaire Jones, announced her intention to retire after more than three decades in office. She has yet to make an endorsement in the race to succeed her.

At this point, the primary contest appears to be a tossup among four candidates: Mr. Schleifer, who, as an assistant U.S. attorney in California, helped prosecute the ''Varsity Blues'' case involving the actress Felicity Huffman; Mr. Jones, a former lawyer for the Westchester County Law Department who attended Harvard Law School after growing up poor in Rockland County; Evelyn Farkas, a former Obama administration deputy assistant secretary of defense who handled Russian policy and contends that the Kremlin is working against her; and David Carlucci, a state senator whose district includes parts of Rockland and Westchester Counties.

Mr. Carlucci's legislative background may actually hurt him: He is a former member of the now-disbanded Independent Democratic Conference, which had collaborated with Republicans in the State Legislature. The American Prospect, a progressive magazine, called him ''the Republican-in-Democrat's-Clothing.''

The recent protests against police violence are expected to help Mr. Jones, the best-known African-American candidate in the race. He has become the chosen candidate of the institutional left, winning the support of Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the New York Working Families Party.

A poll of 1,141 likely Democratic primary voters released on Tuesday found Mr. Jones leading the race with 25 percent of the vote, followed by Ms. Farkas and Mr. Schleifer tied at 14 percent each and Mr. Carlucci at 11 percent. Twenty-four percent of voters were undecided.

''It's definitely in flux,'' said Jim Williams, the Public Policy Polling analyst who conducted the survey, which he said was funded by local Democrats who oppose Mr. Carlucci's bid.

The candidates are generally in agreement on the issues, including the creation of a robust public health insurance option, although only Mr. Jones supports the creation of a single-payer health care system. They all back the Green New Deal and repealing the federal cap on residents' ability to deduct state and local taxes from their federal taxes. Several are campaigning on the promise of improving mass transportation options for Rockland County residents, whose access to Manhattan by rail is limited.

With not much separating the candidates on the issues, they have sought to distinguish themselves through their credentials, as well as through personal attacks.

Mr. Carlucci has characterized Ms. Farkas, Mr. Jones and Mr. Schleifer, all of whom returned full-time to the district relatively recently, as carpetbaggers. Mr. Jones, in turn, has labeled Ms. Farkas, Mr. Schleifer and Mr. Carlucci as being more akin to Republicans than Democrats. Other candidates routinely note that Ms. Farkas and Mr. Jones benefit from independent expenditures and donors from outside the district.

Mr. Schleifer's bountiful spending has prompted comparisons to the former New York City mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's failed presidential bid, and prompted one of the seven candidates, Asha Castleberry-Hernandez, to lament the laxity of campaign finance regulations that allow for a deluge of personal wealth and outside money.

''It doesn't have to be that way, especially for people who come from the ***working class*** who want to run,'' said Ms. Castleberry-Hernandez, a major in the U.S. Army Reserve who now teaches at Baruch College and is the other African-American in the contest. She has raised only $74,000 to run for the seat.

''It's just an undemocratic process,'' she said.

Mr. Schleifer said in a statement that his largely self-funded campaign meant that he did not ''rely on those outside interests,'' allowing him the freedom to execute his ''vision for a more cohesive, creative, and responsive government, guided by science, data, and a deep commitment to justice.''

Nonetheless, his liberal use of his wealth sparked a noteworthy contretemps during a debate hosted on Tuesday by the Business Council of Westchester.

After Ms. Farkas expressed concern ''about the big money sloshing around in this election,'' and Mr. Schleifer's unwillingness to divest from pharmaceutical stocks, Mr. Schleifer said she was acting like ''a snake.''

''All you know is the fog of the beltway,'' Mr. Schleifer said, referring to Ms. Farkas' decades-long career in Washington. ''You talk about being a staffer. You've been in the back rooms of Congress for so long that you can't see straight.''

The district encompasses Indian Point, the nuclear plant that helps power the downstate region and is in the process of shutting down. Not only will the district lose jobs, but questions remain about the safety of the decommissioning process.

While the district is known for its affluence, it contains significant pockets of poverty.

''Westchester and Rockland have two very different DNAs to them,'' said Allison Fine, a Westchester-based candidate who counts herself lucky to have a campaign manager from Rockland County well-versed in its intricacies.

''Rockland is not as wealthy as Westchester,'' she said. ''It has the largest community of Hasidic Jews, second only to Williamsburg. There's a lot of tension between the religious and secular communities there and they have very little economic growth, which is a huge problem. And then they have transportation problems. Can't get into the city.''

Some consider the Hasidic vote, which often is delivered in a bloc, as pivotal, and it's not clear yet which candidate will receive it.

''I think the two candidates that are putting in a lot of effort and getting support from voters in the Jewish community in Rockland are Buchwald, Schleifer,'' said Yossi Gestetner, a Town of Ramapo resident and the co-founder of the Orthodox Jewish Public Affairs Council, referring to Mr. Schleifer and David Buchwald, the assemblyman from Westchester.

During a recent visit to New Square and Kaser, towns with heavy Hasidic populations, several residents said they had received phone calls and mailers from Mr. Schleifer's campaign, but they had yet to develop much of an opinion about him.

Most of the contenders for this congressional seat are making their first run for elective office. Before he served as an assistant U.S. attorney, Mr. Schleifer worked as a former lawyer in Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's Department of Financial Services and in private practice. Ms. Farkas spent several years at the Department of Defense and as an employee of the Senate's Armed Services Committee.

Before serving as a county lawyer in Westchester, Mr. Jones had been in private practice and spent a year working as a fellow at the Department of Justice.

Ms. Fine, a former chairwoman of the NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation, is the other candidate with experience in public office: She spent two years as an elected trustee in Sleepy Hollow in the 1980s.

Mr. Carlucci and Mr. Buchwald, in contrast, are political veterans.

Mr. Buchwald, a former tax lawyer and physics major, has substantial institutional support from Westchester Democrats like George Latimer, the county executive. Mr. Buchwald helped write state legislation to give Congress access to President Donald Trump's state tax returns.

''All those things come together to create a solid skill set'' that would serve the residents of the lower Hudson Valley well, Mr. Buchwald said.

In an interview, Mr. Jones said Mr. Buchwald's institutional support would mean little to voters.

''People want to be inspired,'' Mr. Jones said. ''This is the United States Congress.''

Nate Schweber contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/nyregion/democratic-primary-house-ny.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/nyregion/democratic-primary-house-ny.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A seven-way Democratic primary in upstate New York appears to be a tossup among four candidates: Adam Schleifer, a former federal prosecutor and the son of a pharmaceutical billionaire, top with his wife, Nicole

and, from left, Mondaire Jones, a lawyer

David Carlucci, a state senator

and Evelyn Farkas, a former Obama administration official. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AL J. THOMPSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 21, 2020

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[***Trump’s Struggles Ripple Across the Sun Belt, Endangering G.O.P. Stronghold***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:611D-9RC1-JBG3-62DH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** President Trump is fading nationally as he alienates women, seniors and suburbanites, polls show. But private G.O.P. surveys show he is in close races in solidly red states, too.

**Body**

President Trump is fading nationally as he alienates women, seniors and suburbanites, polls show. But private G.O.P. surveys show he is in close races in solidly red states, too.

PHOENIX — Cindy Bishop is the sort of voter who has some Republicans bracing for a wipeout next month.

Standing inside her garage, shielded from the 102-degree desert heat, Ms. Bishop, a 61-year-old medical professional, said she voted for Mr. Trump four years ago because “he wasn’t a politician.” But then, she said, “I got a taste of him and I’m like, ‘God, he’s disrespectful’ — there’s so much about him I don’t like.” She is now leaning toward Joseph R. Biden Jr.

The inflammatory behavior that has alienated voters beyond his base has long posed the most significant impediment to Mr. Trump’s re-election. But one week after he rampaged through the first presidential debate and then was hospitalized with the coronavirus, only to keep minimizing the disease as it spread through his White House, the president’s conduct is not only undermining his own campaign but threatening his entire party.

New [*polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/20/us/politics/biden-trump-times-poll.html) show Mr. Trump’s support is collapsing nationally, as he alienates women, seniors and suburbanites. He is trailing not just in must-win battlegrounds but according to private G.O.P. surveys, he is repelling independents to the point where Mr. Biden has drawn closer in solidly red states, including Montana, Kansas and Missouri, people briefed on the data said.

Nowhere has Mr. Trump harmed himself and his party more than across the Sun Belt, where the electoral coalition that secured a generation of Republican dominance is in danger of coming apart.

“There are limits to what people can take with the irresponsibility, the untruthfulness, just the whole persona,” said Jeff Flake, the former Republican senator from [*Arizona*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/20/us/politics/biden-trump-times-poll.html). Mr. Flake is crossing party lines to support Mr. Biden, who made his first visit of the general election here Thursday.

Many of the Sun Belt states seemingly within Mr. Biden’s reach resisted the most stringent public-health policies to battle the coronavirus. As a result, states like Arizona, Georgia and Texas faced a powerful wave of infections for much of the summer, setting back efforts to revive commercial activity.

In Arizona, a low-tax, regulation-resistant state, the focus on reviving business helped drive the unemployment rate down to 5.9 percent in August, with some of that apparent improvement coming from people leaving the labor force in a state with a large hospitality sector that has suffered in the pandemic.

Still, Arizona continues to face a long climb to return to its pre-pandemic economy. Twice as many Arizona residents filed new claims for unemployment benefits at the end of September than they did at the previous time last year, the Labor Department reports.

Mr. Biden is mounting an assertive campaign and facing rising pressure to do more in the historically Republican region. He is buttressed by a fund-raising gusher for Democratic candidates, overwhelming support from people of color and defections from the G.O.P. among college-educated whites in and around cities like Atlanta, Houston and Phoenix.

“Cities in states like Arizona and Texas are attracting young people, highly-educated people, and people of color — all groups that the national Republican Party has walked away from the last four years,” said the Oklahoma City mayor, David F. Holt, a Republican. “This losing demographic bet against big cities and their residents is putting Sun Belt states in play.”

Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona, a Republican who like Mr. Holt has won in increasingly forbidding environments, said his party needed to recognize an enduring verity about politics: “It’s a game of addition.”

Some of the states that appear effectively tied today, such as North Carolina and Georgia, could still prove difficult for Mr. Biden to carry. Few Democratic nominees have proven able to forge coalitions to tip these states and the president’s appeal among ***working-class*** whites in the South will at least keep him competitive.

Even in South Carolina, Republicans have grown deeply concerned about Senator Lindsey Graham’s re-election campaign, and Senator Mitch McConnell, the majority leader, has had several sobering conversations with Mr. Graham, according to Republicans familiar with the discussions.

The Senate Republican campaign arm has also intervened in Mr. Graham’s imperiled campaign, with a handful of senior aides at the committee taking a more hands-on role.

On Thursday, in a conference call with a group of lobbyists, Mr. McConnell vented that the party’s Senate candidates are being financially overwhelmed because of small-dollar contributions to ActBlue, the online liberal fund-raising hub.

In some ways, the shifts in the Sun Belt have accelerated since Mr. Trump’s nomination four years ago.

Even as he stunned Hillary Clinton in three crucial Great Lakes states, he lost Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico and fared worse in Arizona, Texas and Georgia than Mitt Romney had four years earlier.

Two years later, Democrats performed even better in a series of high-profile races across the region with college-educated white voters and people of color.

Now Republicans are at risk of that wave cresting again, and even higher.

“Racism and misogyny and demagoguery and being just hateful and cruel and intolerant are not things in the Southwest that play very well,” said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, a Democrat. She said Republicans had left a wide space for her party in her region by clinging to “messaging that’s 40 years old” on issues like immigration and climate.

If Mr. Biden wins by simply flipping back the Democratic-leaning Great Lakes states, Mr. Trump and his allies can pin the blame on the virus. But if Mr. Trump loses across the South and West, it would force a much deeper introspection on the right about Trump and Trumpism — and their electoral future in the fastest-growing and most diverse part of the country.

“The Southern strategy has been flipped on its head,” said Representative Darren Soto of Florida, a Democrat, alluding to the Nixon-era tactic of expanding the Republican coalition by winning in once-Democratic strongholds of the South.

This is part of the case that former Representative Beto O’Rourke of Texas is making to Mr. Biden’s campaign.

[*Polls show the presidential race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/20/us/politics/biden-trump-times-poll.html) in Texas is effectively tied, and congressional polling for both parties has found Mr. Biden running up significant leads across the state’s once-red suburbs. A Biden victory there could be transformational, providing Democrats an opportunity to enlarge their House majority, shape redistricting and deliver a devastating psychological blow to Republicans.

“Texas is really Biden’s to lose if he invests now, and that must include his time and presence in the state,” Mr. O’Rourke said in an interview. “He can not only win our 38 electoral votes but really help down ballot Democrats, lock in our maps for 10 years, deny Trump the chance to declare victory illegally and send Trumpism on the run.”

Mr. O’Rourke said Mr. Biden heard him out and promised “full consideration.” For now, Mr. Biden’s campaign is increasing its ad spending in the state and dispatching his wife, Jill, there next week. Kamala Harris, Mr. Biden’s running mate, is expected to go to Texas in the coming days, according to Democrats familiar with the planning.

Texas’s growth has been explosive: Over 1.5 million new voters have registered since 2016, a third of them in the diverse, transplant-filled counties that include San Antonio, Houston and Austin. The anger toward Mr. Trump has emboldened Democratic candidates to run more audacious campaigns.

In a Dallas-area House district held by a Republican who’s retiring, the Democratic Party [*is sending mailers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/20/us/politics/biden-trump-times-poll.html)telling voters that their nominee will “stand up to President Trump.” Senator John Cornyn, running for re-election, has lamented privately that Mr. Trump is stuck in the low 40s in polling, holding back other Republicans, people familiar with his comments said.

Mr. Trump is at even greater risk in the next-largest red state in the South: Georgia. In the latest Republican polling, Mr. Trump has fallen several points behind Mr. Biden in the state, where 16 Electoral College votes, two Senate seats and several competitive House races are on the ballot.

“It feels like after the debate there was a real shift,” said State Senator Jennifer Jordan, a Democrat from suburban Atlanta.

Ms. Jordan’s district is exactly the kind of area that has swung away from Republicans in the Trump era. She said she believed Mr. Trump still had more ground to lose with the professional class and that his bout with the coronavirus was not helping.

“The fact that he has it is kind of a living example of how he has mismanaged and misjudged this virus,” she said, adding, “The Chamber of Commerce Republicans, business Republicans, who may have been on the fence, I think they’re breaking now for Biden.”

The Trump campaign appears sensitive to that risk. Mr. Trump recently visited the state to unveil an economic plan for Black Americans, while Vice President Mike Pence addressed an evangelical political conference.

Brian Robinson, a Republican strategist, said his party was confronting a “demographic bubble” that had accelerated with the flight of white women.

“The G.O.P. has to stop that bleeding,” Mr. Robinson said.

In the House, the Sun Belt appears to represent the area of greatest peril for the G.O.P., as Democrats make inroads not only in the suburbs but in outer-ring communities that are typically whiter, older and more conservative.

That was evident, quite literally, from the Glendale, Ariz., home of Hiral Tipirneni, an emergency room doctor who is challenging a Republican incumbent in an exurban district that Mr. Trump carried by 10 points.

Sitting in her outdoor courtyard with a view of the stucco sprawl enveloping greater Phoenix, Ms. Tipirneni made the case for why the daughter of Indian immigrants could win a seat long held by white Republican men.

“Our county is a good microcosm of our state and I think the state is becoming a good reflection of our whole country,” she said of Maricopa County, which is now the fourth-largest county by population in the country.

After winning it by about three points in 2016, roughly the same as his statewide margin, Mr. Trump is now trailing in Maricopa by nine points, according to a [*New York Times/Siena College poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/20/us/politics/biden-trump-times-poll.html).

If the election here unfolds like many Arizona Republicans are dreading it might, they will in two years have lost the presidential race, both Senate seats, both chambers of the state legislature and watched as voters approved a ballot measure levying a surtax on the wealthy for increased education funding.

Jim Tankersley contributed reporting from Washington, D.C.

PHOTO: In 2016, President Trump fared worse in Texas than the Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, did four years earlier. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15)

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Peeling Away the Layers Until Only Truth Remains***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61BT-S651-JBG3-61YN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1769 words

**Byline:** By Kyle Buchanan

**Body**

LOS ANGELES -- Had I misheard Anthony Hopkins?

Perhaps there was some sort of glitch on our Zoom call, or maybe the actual word that Hopkins meant to use had been obscured by his Welsh lilt. But then I heard him say it again. Twice!

''It was easy,'' he told me with a grin. ''Just so easy.''

We had been talking about something that didn't seem easy at all: his tour-de-force performance in the drama ''The Father'' (opening in theaters Dec. 18), in which Hopkins plays a London patriarch struggling with dementia. As the character finds himself unstuck in time and struggles to make sense of his surroundings, Hopkins flits back and forth from flinty to foggy with an astonishing grace that will almost certainly put him back in the Oscar race.

So how did this titan of stage and screen tackle such a weighty role? Hopkins shrugged his shoulders. ''It was an easy part to play,'' he said again, ''because it was such a good script.'' And it got even easier when Olivia Colman was cast as his put-upon daughter: ''When you watch Olivia and that face crumbles and the tears come out, you think, 'Oh, I don't need to act anymore.'''

I should note that this is not the kind of thing a performer will typically tell you, since an actor with even the slightest bit of awards buzz tends to wear his hardship like a distressed leather jacket. With practiced reluctance, the actor will mumble that he never broke character on set, that the conditions were arduous and that he could have died, should have died and may die just because you're forcing him to recount it.

Hopkins feels no such need to butch up the art of playing pretend: It's pointless trying to suffer for the sake of creating a role, he told me. After all, if you're an Oscar-winning actor with decades of expertise, and you've been handed a well-written script and an open-faced gem of a co-star ... well, shouldn't it be easy? And who is really being served when an actor is determined to make his job so difficult?

At 82, Hopkins is sometimes asked to advise young performers, and he's happy to hold court in a video call, telling them stories from his career with brisk, good-natured efficiency. (He's a natural for the format, lively and energetic: When he signed in to our call, he waved vigorously and said, ''It's Tony! Hello!'') But when those young actors wonder what more can be done to craft their performances, Hopkins invariably counsels them to do less.

''The thing is to become exposed in a way, to drop all the masks,'' Hopkins said. ''But it takes a bit of time peeling that away because we all want to hide.''

He grinned. ''I'll tell you a story I heard, which is that Spencer Tracy was in London with Katharine Hepburn, and they saw Laurence Olivier onstage doing 'Titus Andronicus.''' Olivier had worn heavy makeup and a false nose for the role, and according to Hopkins, the visiting American couple looked askance at his prosthetics: ''Tracy said to Olivier, 'Larry, tell me, who do you think they think you are? The audience knows it's you.'''

Certainly, the audience of ''The Father'' will know it's Hopkins -- the character is even named Anthony, and the decades we have spent marveling at the actor's quicksilver intelligence onscreen only makes his character's plight all the more poignant. Still, you shouldn't get the wrong idea. When Hopkins says it was easy to play a role this electrifying, that's not aw-shucks self-effacement. Quite the opposite, actually.

''I'm not going to be ultra-modest about this: You have to know how to turn on that electricity,'' he said. ''And I know how to switch it on. I've been doing it for a long time.''

FROM HIS HOME in the Pacific Palisades, where he has spent the last several months in quarantine, Hopkins likes to look up the coast and watch the cars. All of them are in such a hurry to get someplace. Once upon a time, he was impatient, too.

As a child growing up in a gray and gloomy suburb of Port Talbot in Wales, Hopkins was utterly undistinguished. He had no aptitude for school or sports, and his tough, ***working-class*** father regarded him skeptically. ''God bless him,'' Hopkins said, ''but I do remember him saying, 'Oh, you're hopeless.'''

A chance encounter with the actor Richard Burton, who had also grown up near Port Talbot and somehow become the toast of Hollywood, would help prod Hopkins toward performance. A gifted mimic, Hopkins saw plenty in Burton's trajectory that he was desperate to emulate.

''I wanted to be famous, I wanted to be rich,'' Hopkins said. ''I wanted to be successful, to make up for what I thought was an empty past. And I became all of those things.''

Some happened more quickly than others. After stints at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, Hopkins was invited in 1967 by Olivier to join the National Theater, where he became the star's understudy for a production of Strindberg's ''The Dance of Death.'' Asked to go on when Olivier was stricken with appendicitis, Hopkins ''walked away with the part of Edgar like a cat with a mouse between its teeth,'' Olivier wrote in his memoir.

It wasn't enough. ''I never let on to anyone about my ambitions, but I just wanted to come out to California and be in movies,'' Hopkins said.

That inclination for more, more, more extended to his performances, too: During a New York production of ''Equus,'' the director John Dexter discovered Hopkins had scribbled reams of subtext into the margins of his script. ''What is this rubbish?'' Dexter asked. ''Just learn the lines.'' Hepburn, who starred opposite Hopkins in his 1968 film breakthrough, ''The Lion in Winter,'' also advised him to keep it simple.

Hopkins obliged, though his private life was growing ever more complicated: He drank heavily, and anything he won in life became something he might then fritter away. One day, he woke up from a drunken stupor in an Arizona hotel room, with no memory of the journey that had led him there.

''I thought, 'Well, I've got to stop this because I'm either going to kill somebody or myself,''' Hopkins said. ''My life, from that moment on, took on new meaning.''

As Hopkins turned 38, he embraced sobriety. His manner became lighter, and his work became easier. Even his indelibly terrifying performance as Hannibal Lecter in ''The Silence of the Lambs'' (1991) was an ''easy one,'' Hopkins said: Rewatch the movie, and you're likely to notice how much Hopkins is having a ball. ''You have to play these things with humor,'' he said.

''The Silence of the Lambs'' brought Hopkins the A-list stardom he had long craved (as well as the best-actor Oscar), and for a while, he was like the dog that caught the car: There were some superb performances in the '90s in ''Howards End'' and ''The Remains of the Day,'' of course, and some fun flicks like ''The Edge,'' in which Hopkins went mano a mano with a bear, but the actor also dove into Hannibal Lecter sequels that paid diminishing returns, and was only too happy to accept green-screen gigs in the ''Thor'' and ''Transformers'' franchises.

Over the last few years, though, Hopkins has experienced something of a renaissance. He calls ''The Father'' the best part he's had in years, the culmination of a late-in-life hot streak that includes last year's ''The Two Popes,'' ''The Dresser'' opposite Ian McKellen, a star-studded film of ''King Lear'' and a season-long appearance in HBO's ''Westworld.''

But he no longer ascribes such victories to the talent and ambition that used to burn a hole in his stomach -- now, it all seems more like good fortune or kismet, and he's simply been blessed to be the beneficiary. ''I look back on it, and I think, 'It's all a dream, anyway,''' he said, with another good-natured shrug. ''Of that I am convinced. To me, it's an illusion, that's all.''

AT HIS AGE, with his formidable résumé, Hopkins is delighted to continue letting the air out of his own tires. Ego is a serpent, he told me twice, and vanity is simply another thing that must fall away if one is to be of any real use as an actor, or even as a person.

''I don't know much about anything,'' he said, ''except I know that what I do now is not of any importance, in the scheme of things.'' At home with his wife, Stella, he pursues pleasures that have nothing to do with his acting career, whether it's reading ''Bleak House'' on his iPad, practicing Brahms on the piano or letting the cat jump in his lap at lunchtime: ''I feel at peace. I've lived a long life.''

Sometimes Stella will capture a moment of Zen and post it to his social-media accounts; a recent tweet of Hopkins in his backyard, half-smiling as the sun lit up his blue eyes, was captioned, ''Stay present. One day at a time.'' The tweet earned more than 134,000 likes. ''I'm quite popular on it,'' he said, eyes twinkling.

He will turn 83 on New Year's Eve. ''I know I'm getting old,'' he said. ''I take care of myself, I'm fit and strong. But there are no guarantees. Look at Sean Connery.''

Did the tragic contours of ''The Father'' prompt him to think back on his own life, or to mull how the past commingling with the present can really take your breath away? Sort of. When Hopkins recently rewatched the movie, all he could see in his performance was his own father, the tough old baker who passed away in 1981.

In fact, while shooting one particularly emotional scene near the film's end, Hopkins began to weep. He asked the director Florian Zeller to give him some time to recover before shooting the next take -- he knew he'd overplayed it, but he couldn't help himself. His gaze had alighted on a simple prop, a pair of reading glasses, that reminded him of his late father.

''I'm going to get choked up thinking about it,'' he said.

When his father died, Hopkins found in his room a similar pair of glasses sitting next to a road map of America. The baker's plans to travel would never come to fruition. ''It's heartbreaking,'' he said. ''He worked hard all his life and finally, at the end, you think, 'Well, that's it.' I remember standing there at his bed and thinking about myself, 'You're not so hot, either. There he is, and one day it will be you.'''

But hopefully, no day soon. Hopkins is a big believer in forward momentum, in getting up and moving on, and he only briefly touches on past tragedies in order to pick up the lesson learned and take it wherever he's going. As we parted, I asked Hopkins where that might be. What more did he hope to accomplish in his 80s?

He smiled. There was one thing. A simple thing, really.

''To go on for another 20 years,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/movies/anthony-hopkins-the-father.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/movies/anthony-hopkins-the-father.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From top: the actor Anthony Hopkins in 2018

with Olivia Colman in his new film, ''The Father''

and in the title role, which requires him to pivot back and forth from flinty to foggy as a London patriarch struggling with dementia. ''You have to know how to turn on that electricity,'' Hopkins said. ''And I know how to switch it on. I've been doing it for a long time.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS)

**Load-Date:** November 22, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Fireworks, and Tempers, Are Blowing Up at Night***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6060-3C01-JBG3-60YS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1518 words

**Byline:** By Corey Kilgannon and Juliana Kim

**Body**

The city received 1,737 fireworks complaints in the first half of June, 80 times as many as it got in the same period last year.

New York, an already-jittery city transformed by the coronavirus pandemic and protests against police brutality and systemic racism, now has its own cacophonous soundtrack: illegal fireworks being set off in soaring numbers from late afternoon until the wee hours of the morning.

For some people, the fireworks serve as a release after months of boredom and seclusion in cramped apartments. For others, they are a celebration of hard-fought strides made during the demonstrations, and a show of defiance toward the police.

But not everyone is enamored by the pyrotechnics. In the first half of June, 1,737 complaints about fireworks came into the city's 311 system, 80 times as many as the 21 in the same period last year.

''These are not your normal kids playing with fireworks,'' said Michael Ford, a piano teacher in Manhattan's Inwood neighborhood. ''These are real explosives, like Macy's-style fireworks.''

Mr. Ford said that those who were firing off the explosives made it impossible for him to walk his dogs at night.

''People scream out their windows at them, but they just laugh,'' he said, adding that he and his neighbors had called 911 as well as 311, but that the police had not responded.

''I think it's a lot of people who have been pent-up and need to blow off steam,'' he continued. ''But it's just adding whole other layer of anxiety.''

In Brooklyn's gentrifying Flatbush section -- which has recorded hundreds of complaints, among the most of any neighborhood in the city -- the daily fireworks are exposing divisions over race and class, and provoking debates about what should be reported to the police.

In Harlem, the noise lasts until 1 a.m., and ranges from the pops of firecrackers to the booms of louder rockets. An officer who answered the phone at the 32nd Precinct station house on Wednesday night said that the police were being inundated with complaints.

''It's as bad as anything I can remember,'' said Adrian Benepe, a former city parks commissioner who lives on the Upper West Side.

''The police have had their hands full with major issues -- demonstrations, looting and Covid -- and they just don't have the time to respond to quality-of-life issues like this,'' Mr. Benepe said.

As of Thursday, the Police Department said it had made 26 seizures of fireworks and eight arrests and had issued 22 fireworks-related summonses so far this year. There have also been 5,947 firework-related 911 calls, compared with 1,590 for the same period in 2019.

The department would not comment on the current enforcement of fireworks laws.

While they are illegal to buy, sell or ignite in New York, fireworks are an entrenched tradition of the city's streets, especially in ***working-class*** neighborhoods. They are generally sold from duffel bags or car trunks and set off in the days before July 4.

But this year, the unauthorized displays began at least a month earlier than usual, as other warm-weather get-togethers were halted by social-distancing rules.

And because of the virus outbreak, it remained unclear what the city's traditional Macy's 4th of July Firework Show would look like this year.

As measured by community board district, Flatbush and Inwood had the most 311 complaints about fireworks in the first half of June: 421 in Flatbush, up from two in the same period last year, and 250 in Inwood, up from just one.

On Monday evening in Flatbush, onlookers gathered to watch rockets that soared above rooftops and exploded in bursts of color. Ashley Rios, 27, and Kenya Smith, 26, sat on a stoop with their young daughters, who were not scared by the thunderous booms.

''They're the ones that wanted to come out and see them,'' Ms. Rios said.

But other residents said the fireworks were adding to the city's unrest, while depriving them of sleep, upsetting pets and posing a safety issue. Messages posted on social media attested to such attitudes.

''Does Astoria sound like a war zone to anyone else?'' one Queens resident tweeted recently.

This year, setting off fireworks in June has extra meaning, said a young man who was launching rockets with three friends on Wednesday night in Brooklyn's Crown Heights section.

''We're basically celebrating the fact that we survived'' the coronavirus and the quarantine, said the man, Djani, 24, who asked to be identified by only his first name because of the illicit nature of what he was doing.

''You know when you have a storm and finally the rain is letting up?'' he said. ''I guess it's comparable to letting out of some aggression. People have been inside.''

He also said the fireworks were a sign of defiance toward the police, ''because this is illegal but we're still doing it.''

When a young woman approached Djani and his friends, asking them to stop because the noise was disrupting her sleep and frightening her dog, they complied.

The night before, a video emerged of a fireworks display seemingly set off by firefighters in the same Brooklyn neighborhood. The Fire Department said it was investigating the matter.

The pyrotechnics have taken a physical toll, as well.

Early Wednesday in the Bronx, police officers responding to a report of gunshots instead found a teenager who had been struck in the chest while lighting off fireworks. He was hospitalized in stable condition.

In Brooklyn, a 33-year-old man was igniting fireworks inside his apartment around 5 a.m. Wednesday when a rocket backfired and struck him, the police said. He was in the hospital in critical condition.

The city has a long and storied history of illicit fireworks. For decades, Inwood residents have gathered around Dyckman Street for an unsanctioned competition among neighborhood blocks that mixes rebellion with celebration.

In the 1970s and 1980s, one of the largest fireworks displays in the city could be found in Ozone Park, Queens, where it was the highlight of the lavish Fourth of July block parties funded by the mob boss John J. Gotti outside his social club.

The Dyckman competitions have continued to grow over the years, said Stephen Feldheim, the president of the 34th Precinct Community Council, who described them as ''a cat-and-mouse game'' between the participants and the police.

The Inwood fireworks have ''increased significantly'' this year, Mr. Feldheim said.

''It's been going on for weeks, since the beginning of June,'' he said, adding that police officers might be reluctant to respond to fireworks complaints now because ''they'll be targeted for police violence and not be backed by City Hall and the district attorneys for doing their job.''

''City Hall doesn't consider fireworks real crime anymore,'' Mr. Feldheim added. ''So these guys can blow stuff up and get off scot-free.''

Contacted about the fireworks surge, a spokeswoman for Mayor Bill de Blasio said that officials had ''noticed an increase in incidents'' and would ''work with communities across the city and the N.Y.P.D. to address this serious safety issue.''

In Flatbush, the fireworks have raised questions about gentrification.

When police officers showed up last weekend to crack down on the explosives in a part of the area with many black and Hispanic residents, some people assumed it was a response to a petition created by residents of Ditmas Park, a historic district in the neighborhood, that urged the city to put a ''a peaceful stop to the illegally launched fireworks that have been disrupting our sleep and our lives for weeks.''

Equality for Flatbush, which calls itself a ''people of color-led, multinational grass-roots organization that does anti-police repression, affordable housing and anti-gentrification/anti-displacement organizing,'' lashed out at a now-deleted Facebook group, Peaceful Ditmas Park, and a law professor who helped write the petition.

Equality for Flatbush said Peaceful Ditmas Park was ''a majority-white Facebook group where pro-gentrification and white supremacist sentiment is highly prevalent'' and called the law professor, Irina Manta, a ''Ditmas Park Karen,'' using what has become shorthand for an entitled white woman.

The organization also put out a statement calling summertime fireworks ''a culturally accepted norm of Brooklyn'' and ''an act of resistance and a show of solidarity with the global #BlackLivesMatter rebellion.''

Ms. Manta, a Hofstra University law professor, said in a brief interview that the petition had called for civilians or mediators, not the police, to bring a stop to the fireworks. She said that the petition was never submitted to city officials, and that she never contacted the police or mayor's office.

Ms. Manta said she had received a death threat and harassing phone calls.

The fireworks are likely to continue.

In the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn on Thursday, a young man who had just set off a rocket advised onlookers to return on Friday night for more.

Jeffery C. Mays and Sean Piccoli contributed reporting.Jeffery C. Mays and Sean Piccoli contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/nyregion/fireworks-every-night-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/nyregion/fireworks-every-night-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: In the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, fireworks are exposing tensions along race and class lines. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 21, 2020

**End of Document**



[***New Woe for a Jittery N.Y.C.: Illegal Fireworks Going Off All Night***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:605K-MJF1-DXY4-X3SS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 19, 2020 Friday 07:21 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1508 words

**Byline:** Corey Kilgannon and Juliana Kim

**Highlight:** The city received 1,737 fireworks complaints in the first half of June, 80 times as many as it got in the same period last year.

**Body**

The city received 1,737 fireworks complaints in the first half of June, 80 times as many as it got in the same period last year.

New York, an already-jittery city transformed by the coronavirus pandemic and protests against police brutality and systemic racism, now has its own cacophonous soundtrack: illegal [*fireworks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/la-fireworks-explosion.html) being set off in soaring numbers from late afternoon until the wee hours of the morning.

For some people, the fireworks serve as a release after months of boredom and seclusion in cramped apartments. For others, they are a celebration of hard-fought strides made during the demonstrations, and a show of defiance toward the police.

But not everyone is enamored by the pyrotechnics. In the first half of June, 1,737 [*complaints about fireworks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/la-fireworks-explosion.html) came into the city’s 311 system, 80 times as many as the 21 in the same period last year.

“These are not your normal kids playing with fireworks,” said Michael Ford, a piano teacher in Manhattan’s Inwood neighborhood. “These are real explosives, like Macy’s-style fireworks.”

Mr. Ford said that those who were firing off the explosives made it impossible for him to walk his dogs at night.

“People scream out their windows at them, but they just laugh,” he said, adding that he and his neighbors had called 911 as well as 311, but that the police had not responded.

“I think it’s a lot of people who have been pent-up and need to blow off steam,” he continued. “But it’s just adding whole other layer of anxiety.”

In Brooklyn’s gentrifying Flatbush section — which has recorded hundreds of complaints, among the most of any neighborhood in the city — the daily fireworks are exposing divisions over race and class, and provoking debates about what should be reported to the police.

In Harlem, the noise lasts until 1 a.m., and ranges from the pops of firecrackers to the booms of louder rockets. An officer who answered the phone at the 32nd Precinct station house on Wednesday night said that the police were being inundated with complaints.

“It’s as bad as anything I can remember,” said Adrian Benepe, a former city parks commissioner who lives on the Upper West Side.

“The police have had their hands full with major issues — demonstrations, looting and Covid — and they just don’t have the time to respond to quality-of-life issues like this,” Mr. Benepe said.

As of Thursday, the Police Department said it had made 26 seizures of fireworks and eight arrests and had issued 22 fireworks-related summonses so far this year. There have also been 5,947 firework-related 911 calls, compared with 1,590 for the same period in 2019.

The department would not comment on the current enforcement of fireworks laws.

While they are illegal to buy, sell or ignite in New York, fireworks are an entrenched tradition of the city’s streets, especially in ***working-class*** neighborhoods. They are generally sold from duffel bags or car trunks and set off in the days before July 4.

But this year, the unauthorized displays began at least a month earlier than usual, as other warm-weather get-togethers were halted by social-distancing rules.

And because of the virus outbreak, it remained unclear what the city’s traditional Macy’s 4th of July Firework Show would look like this year.

As measured by community board district, Flatbush and Inwood had the most 311 complaints about fireworks in the first half of June: 421 in Flatbush, up from two in the same period last year, and 250 in Inwood, up from just one.

On Monday evening in Flatbush, onlookers gathered to watch rockets that soared above rooftops and exploded in bursts of color. Ashley Rios, 27, and Kenya Smith, 26, sat on a stoop with their young daughters, who were not scared by the thunderous booms.

“They’re the ones that wanted to come out and see them,” Ms. Rios said.

But other residents said the fireworks were adding to the city’s unrest, while depriving them of sleep, upsetting pets and posing a safety issue. Messages posted on social media attested to such attitudes.

“Does Astoria sound like a war zone to anyone else?” one Queens resident tweeted recently.

This year, setting off fireworks in June has extra meaning, said a young man who was launching rockets with three friends on Wednesday night in Brooklyn’s Crown Heights section.

“We’re basically celebrating the fact that we survived” the coronavirus and the quarantine, said the man, Djani, 24, who asked to be identified by only his first name because of the illicit nature of what he was doing.

“You know when you have a storm and finally the rain is letting up?” he said. “I guess it’s comparable to letting out of some aggression. People have been inside.”

He also said the fireworks were a sign of defiance toward the police, “because this is illegal but we’re still doing it.”

When a young woman approached Djani and his friends, asking them to stop because the noise was disrupting her sleep and frightening her dog, they complied.

The night before, a [*video emerged of a fireworks display seemingly set off by firefighters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/la-fireworks-explosion.html) in the same Brooklyn neighborhood. The Fire Department said it was investigating the matter.

The pyrotechnics have taken a physical toll, as well.

Early Wednesday in the Bronx, police officers responding to a report of gunshots instead found a teenager who had been struck in the chest while lighting off fireworks. He was hospitalized in stable condition.

In Brooklyn, a 33-year-old man was igniting fireworks inside his apartment around 5 a.m. Wednesday when a rocket backfired and struck him, the police said. He was in the hospital in critical condition.

The city has a long and storied [*history*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/la-fireworks-explosion.html) of illicit fireworks. For decades, Inwood residents have gathered around Dyckman Street for an [*unsanctioned competition*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/la-fireworks-explosion.html) among neighborhood blocks that mixes rebellion with celebration.

In the 1970s and 1980s, one of the largest [*fireworks displays*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/la-fireworks-explosion.html) in the city could be found in Ozone Park, Queens, where it was the highlight of the lavish Fourth of July block parties funded by the mob boss John J. Gotti outside his social club.

The Dyckman competitions have continued to grow over the years, said Stephen Feldheim, the president of the 34th Precinct Community Council, who described them as “a cat-and-mouse game” between the participants and the police.

The Inwood fireworks have “increased significantly” this year, Mr. Feldheim said.

“It’s been going on for weeks, since the beginning of June,” he said, adding that police officers might be reluctant to respond to fireworks complaints now because “they’ll be targeted for police violence and not be backed by City Hall and the district attorneys for doing their job.”

“City Hall doesn’t consider fireworks real crime anymore,” Mr. Feldheim added. “So these guys can blow stuff up and get off scot-free.”

Contacted about the fireworks surge, a spokeswoman for Mayor Bill de Blasio said that officials had “noticed an increase in incidents” and would “work with communities across the city and the N.Y.P.D. to address this serious safety issue.”

In Flatbush, the fireworks have raised questions about gentrification.

When police officers showed up last weekend to crack down on the explosives in a part of the area with many black and Hispanic residents, some people assumed it was a response to a petition created by residents of Ditmas Park, a historic district in the neighborhood, that urged the city to put a “a peaceful stop to the illegally launched fireworks that have been disrupting our sleep and our lives for weeks.”

Equality for Flatbush, which calls itself a “people of color-led, multinational grass-roots organization that does anti-police repression, affordable housing and anti-gentrification/anti-displacement organizing,” lashed out at a now-deleted Facebook group, Peaceful Ditmas Park, and a law professor who helped write the petition.

Equality for Flatbush said Peaceful Ditmas Park was “a majority-white Facebook group where pro-gentrification and white supremacist sentiment is highly prevalent” and called the law professor, Irina Manta, a “Ditmas Park Karen,” using what[*has become shorthand for an entitled white woman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/la-fireworks-explosion.html).

The organization also put out a statement calling summertime fireworks “a culturally accepted norm of Brooklyn” and “an act of resistance and a show of solidarity with the global #BlackLivesMatter rebellion.”

Ms. Manta, a Hofstra University law professor, said in a brief interview that the petition had called for civilians or mediators, not the police, to bring a stop to the fireworks. She said that the petition was never submitted to city officials, and that she never contacted the police or mayor’s office.

Ms. Manta said she had received a death threat and harassing phone calls.

The fireworks are likely to continue.

In the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn on Thursday, a young man who had just set off a rocket advised onlookers to return on Friday night for more.

Jeffery C. Mays and Sean Piccoli contributed reporting.

PHOTO: In the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, fireworks are exposing tensions along race and class lines. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 1, 2021

**End of Document**



[***In Trump’s Marathon Briefings, the Answers and the Message Are Often Contradictory; white house memo***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YM7-Y2J1-JBG3-60CW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1404 words

**Byline:** Peter Baker

**Highlight:** The president does not need adversaries to dispute his statements. He does that all by himself.

**Body**

The president does not need adversaries to dispute his statements. He does that all by himself.

WASHINGTON — President Trump left little room for doubt. “We’re going to put a hold on money spent to the W.H.O.,” he said, referring to the World Health Organization. “We’re going to put a very powerful hold on it.”

But when he was asked a bit later whether it was the right time to [*delay money for the health agency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) in the middle of a pandemic, he denied that he said he would. “I’m not saying that I’m going to do it,” he said during his news briefing on Tuesday. “But we’re going to look at it.”

“You did say you were going to do it,” a reporter pointed out.

“No, I didn’t,” he said. “I said we’re going to look at it.”

Mr. Trump does not need adversaries to dispute his statements — he does that all by himself. In the course of his daily briefings on the coronavirus pandemic, the president has routinely contradicted himself without ever acknowledging that he does so. In the process, he sends confusing signals that other politicians, public health officials and the rest of the country are left to sort out.

Mr. Trump has always been a president of contradictions: a New York mogul fond of ostentatious shows of wealth who appeals to rural ***working-class*** voters. A populist whose main recreation is golfing at one of his exclusive clubs. A self-avowed deal maker who ends up mired in gridlock. A publicity hound who cannot get enough of the news media even as he denounces it as the [*“enemy of the people.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html)

That did not start when he arrived in the White House three years ago, of course.

Over his decades in the public spotlight, Mr. Trump has been a little of everything, whatever he felt he needed to be depending on the moment. He has switched political parties at least five times, proclaimed himself [*“very pro-choice”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) before becoming [*an ardent opponent of abortion rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html), [*supported an assault rifle ban*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) before casting himself as a [*vocal champion of the Second Amendment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html), proposed increasing taxes on the rich before cutting taxes on the rich and [*boasted of raunchy exploits with women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) before courting the evangelical vote.

But the advent of these daily briefings over the past month — sessions that stretch for an hour, 90 minutes or even two hours — have put the conflicts on display in a particularly stark way. The longer a briefing goes, it seems, the more likely the president is to waver from one message to the next. And then at the next briefing, the message may be different all over again, but always captured on camera and therefore difficult to deny or explain away.

The briefings have grown longer since they started, and Mr. Trump’s share of the time at the lectern has as well. Since mid-March, the average length of the briefings has grown from 61 minutes to 105, with the president’s speaking time increasing from 20 minutes per session to 53, according to [*Factba.se*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html), an organization that collects and analyzes data on the Trump administration. In the course of 28 coronavirus events, Mr. Trump has spoken a total of 18\xC2 hours.

The president’s words matter because, as he himself likes to note, [*the ratings for his briefings have been high*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html), and for many Americans, they are the main source of their information about the pandemic.

His shifting assessments of the seriousness of the virus over recent months have been well documented. Initially, he likened it to an ordinary flu that would “miraculously” go away, then he later called it [*“the worst thing that the country has probably ever seen”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) and declared “war” against the virus. Then he aimed to reopen the country by Easter, before retreating and declaring “hard days” ahead.

The crossed signals over cutting finances for the W.H.O., however, showed that his contradictions can take place over the course of days or even within the same briefing. Only five days before vowing to review the health organization’s response to the pandemic, he blasted Congress for setting up a panel to review his own administration’s response to it, saying such an investigation “during a pandemic is really a big waste of vital resources, time, attention.”

During Tuesday’s session, he launched into a long broadside against the evils of mail-in voting, which he called “a very dangerous thing for this country.” Only after a reporter pointed it out did he acknowledge that he has mailed in votes himself — as recently last month for Florida’s primary.

How did he reconcile that? “Because I’m allowed to,” he said. “Well, that’s called ‘out of state.’ You know, why I voted? Because I happen to be in the White House and I won’t be able to go to Florida to vote.”

How is that different from others who cannot go in person or do not want to risk their health? To that, he said, “You get thousands and thousands of people sitting in somebody’s living room, signing ballots all over the place.”

The president has also swung radically in his views of governors and reporters, one day praising them, the next day castigating them. “I really think the media has been very fair,” he said at a briefing last month. By Monday, he no longer thought so. “I wish we had a fair media in this country, and we really don’t,” he said as he denounced one journalist as a “third-rate reporter” and called another one’s question “horrid.”

What remains unclear is whether Mr. Trump does not remember saying things that he later denies saying or is trying to impose his own reality. During [*a telephone interview last month with Sean Hannity on Fox News*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html), Mr. Trump assailed Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York for saying he needed 30,000 to 40,000 ventilators, suggesting that was exaggerated.

“I have a feeling that a lot of the numbers that are being said in some areas are just bigger than they’re going to be,” the president said. “I don’t believe you need 40,000 or 30,000 ventilators.”

When a reporter at [*a briefing three days later*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) started a question by noting that “you’ve said repeatedly that you think that some of the equipment that governors are requesting, they don’t actually need,” Mr. Trump cut her off.

“I didn’t say that,” he insisted. “I didn’t say that.”

He has also pivoted back and forth in his view of China’s handling of the virus, which broke out there before coming to the United States. At first, he praised Beijing. “China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus,” [*he wrote on Twitter on Jan. 24*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html). “The United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency.”

A couple of weeks later, he spoke with President Xi Jinping of China [*and afterward praised him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) as “strong, sharp and powerfully focused on leading the counterattack on the Coronavirus.”

But then in mid-March, after a Chinese official [*floated a conspiracy theory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html) that “it might be US army who brought the epidemic” to China, Mr. Trump lashed out, referring to the “Chinese virus” and blaming Beijing for not being transparent, as he had previously said it was.

“It could have been stopped in its tracks,” Trump said of the virus at the White House briefing on March 19. “Unfortunately, they didn’t decide to make it public. But the whole world is suffering because of it.”

His team echoed the theme, from his secretary of state to his family. “Anyone praising China’s ‘leadership’ in responding that the virus should be scorned for being the authoritarian/communist propagandist that they are,” Donald Trump Jr., the president’s eldest son, [*wrote on Twitter on March 26.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html)

Late that same night, however, his father spoke by telephone with Mr. Xi and then praised China’s leadership.

“Just finished a very good conversation with President Xi of China,” [*Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter an hour after midnight*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-who.html). “Discussed in great detail the CoronaVirus that is ravaging large parts of our Planet. China has been through much &amp; has developed a strong understanding of the Virus. We are working closely together. Much respect!”

By Tuesday, though, China was the foil again as Mr. Trump assailed the World Health Organization for its handling of the pandemic — the first time he had raised the W.H.O. on his own in all of the coronavirus briefings. The W.H.O.’s main sin, in his view, was that it was too “China-centric.”

“Everything seems to be very biased toward China,” Mr. Trump said. “That’s not right.”

At least as of Tuesday.

PHOTO: The daily news briefing on Tuesday at the White House. Officials are often left to sort out some of President Trump’s statements. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Lamb's 2018 Rust Belt Win Serves as Lesson for Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60M3-HHK1-JBG3-640M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Reid J. Epstein

**Body**

Throughout his campaign, Joe Biden has repeatedly returned to the same themes and strategies that supported Mr. Lamb to a surprise victory in a district that Donald Trump carried by about 20 points in 2016.

MT. LEBANON, Pa. -- When Joseph R. Biden Jr. came to the Pittsburgh suburbs in 2018 to stump for Conor Lamb's long shot special election campaign, he made a pitch directly to the sort of blue-collar union workers who had abandoned the Democratic Party when Hillary Clinton was on the ballot.

''I don't know all of you personally, but I know you,'' Mr. Biden said at a rally a week before Mr. Lamb became the first Democrat to flip a Republican House seat during Donald Trump's presidency. ''I know this state. I know this region. I know what it's made up of. I know the values that underpin all of what you believe in -- family, community, again, not leaving anybody behind.''

Two and a half years later, Mr. Biden is preparing for a virtual party convention, beginning on Monday, that will formally install him as the Democratic Party's 2020 presidential nominee. He arrived at this moment with a sizable lead over President Trump in the polls, using a playbook first employed to success by Mr. Lamb two years ago, and then borrowed by dozens of Democrats during the midterm elections later that year.

Mr. Biden has repeatedly returned to the same themes and strategies that supported Mr. Lamb to a surprise, if razor-thin, victory in a district that Mr. Trump carried by about 20 points in 2016 -- and where Democrats were so insignificant that they had not fielded a candidate since 2012.

Mr. Lamb's victory showed Democrats how to prevail in Republican territory during the Trump era: focus on kichen-table issues; inspire defections from college-educated suburban voters -- especially women -- who had been core Republican voters for decades; and offer conservative-leaning voters a sober, reassuring alternative to a chaotic president.

It helped that Mr. Lamb was a Marine veteran and a former federal prosecutor -- a résumé of service to the country that he and fellow Democrats used to contrast themselves with Mr. Trump and Republicans who came from the business world.

Mr. Biden has likewise used his decades of experience in the Senate and eight years as vice president to highlight his own public service, while reminding audiences that he regularly ranked among the least-wealthy senators to demonstrate his commitment to the middle class.

Though Mr. Trump twice traveled to Pennsylvania to hold rallies for Mr. Lamb's opponent, Mr. Lamb, seeking to distance himself from his party's left-leaning brand, turned away entreaties from nearly all ambitious national Democrats interested in stumping for him -- all except for Mr. Biden, with whom he spent a day traversing the district speaking to union workers.

''There are a lot of people who voted for me in 2018, not so much for reasons of policy or party, but just reasons of change,'' Mr. Lamb said from atop a picnic table during an outdoor interview this past week in a park near his home in Mt. Lebanon, a suburb. ''People were unsatisfied with how things were going, and I promised that I would do my job differently than the guy you had before me. And I think that's what Vice President Biden is basically doing.''

There is no guarantee that Mr. Biden can replicate Mr. Lamb's path to victory. Mr. Trump has retained devout loyalty from Republican voters. A November presidential contest will drive turnout far higher than in the special election in which Mr. Lamb won his surprise victory, or the 2018 midterm elections when Democrats won a sweeping triumph in the nation's suburbs.

When Mr. Lamb won in March 2018, he served notice for Democrats aiming to wrest control of the House and give the party control of at least one lever of the federal government. The answer to defeating Trump-aligned Republican candidates was not to emphasize the president's erratic, divisive tenure in the Oval Office. Instead Democratic candidates focused narrowly on policies affecting voters' lives, like protecting provisions in the Affordable Care Act and casting Republicans as a party pandering to corporations and the very rich, attacking the 2017 tax cut that Republican Party leaders had intended to use as the tent pole achievement for their midterm campaigns.

During his remarks at Mr. Lamb's rally, Mr. Biden called the tax cut ''obscene.''

''It's really hard to screw up a tax cut, but they managed to do it,'' said Meredith Kelly, who was then the communications director for the House Democrats' campaign arm. ''It set a narrative that fit very nicely into what Biden has done.''

In Congress, Mr. Lamb is a rank-and-file Democrat who has not rocked the boat or voted against the party's leadership on any significant issues. At home, he's cultivated an image of a Democrat focused on Pennsylvania jobs above all else -- a sentiment he says Mr. Biden has echoed.

''No matter what side of an issue my party was on when I went to Washington, I would be fighting for their jobs no matter what,'' Mr. Lamb said. ''How many times did Vice President Biden use the word 'jobs' in his speech about energy and climate change? He used the word 'jobs' a million times. He was talking about climate change, but kept reminding people that this is a policy that's about their jobs. And I think, to me, that was him taking that lesson too, that that's ultimately what people care about the most.''

When Mr. Biden's presidential campaign began, he ran on a platform that was far less flashy than his top rivals, progressives like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. He wasn't for a single-payer health care system or adding extra Supreme Court justices or funding an array of new federal programs with a wealth tax on millionaires.

Instead Mr. Biden's platform looked a lot like what Mr. Lamb ran on in 2018: protecting Social Security, Medicare and health care while opposing tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy. And even though he's adopted an array of more liberal-leaning positions since becoming the presumptive nominee, Mr. Biden is still viewed as a politician most concerned with ***working-class*** Americans.

''People say the same thing about Conor and Joe,'' said Representative Mike Doyle, a Democrat whose district abuts Mr. Lamb's. ''Here in Western P.A., someone will say he's a regular guy. That was a Trump plus-20 district, and he won it because he stuck to the things the people in Western Pennsylvania really care about and because people thought he was an average guy. He's a regular guy. He's one of them, and Joe's one of them.''

Polls show that in addition to suburban voters, Mr. Biden is having success in breaking Republicans' longtime lock on older voters. A Fox News poll of Pennsylvania last month found Mr. Biden leading Mr. Trump by seven percentage points among voters 65 or older. Exit polls in 2016 found Mr. Trump won older voters by a 10-point margin.

Ralph Perkins, an 89-year-old retired mining engineer from Canonsburg, Pa., 20 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, said he was likely to vote for Mr. Biden after casting a ballot for every Republican presidential nominee since Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952.

The one thing that could lead him to vote a second time for Mr. Trump, Mr. Perkins said, would be if Mr. Biden supported defunding the police. But after calling the local Washington County Democratic chairman, Ben Bright, Mr. Perkins said his fears were allayed.

''Biden, I think he's very much superior to Trump,'' Mr. Perkins said. ''Do I think he's perfect? I'm not head over heels for him, but I think he's fine.''

Mr. Bright, who began volunteering for the party after Mr. Trump's 2016 victory and became the county chairman in 2018, said Mr. Biden appeals to the same type of voters who crossed party lines to back Mr. Lamb.

''The main issues that Democrats stand for now are what Conor ran on,'' Mr. Bright said. ''Affordable health care, good-paying jobs for middle class people, strengthening unions and better public education.''

Mr. Lamb's 2020 Republican opponent, Sean Parnell, an Army veteran, out-raised him by more than $270,000 during the three-month period ending on June 30. Still, Mr. Lamb is favored to win re-election in the district, which was redrawn in his favor by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after his March 2018 victory.

Republicans discount Mr. Lamb's victory as an aberration, the result of a flawed opponent who failed to raise a significant amount of money and Mr. Lamb's squeaky-clean image that, they say, has been tarnished by more than two years of voting for Democratic priorities in the House.

Rick Saccone, the Republican state legislator who lost to Mr. Lamb, ''wasn't the best candidate we could have fielded,'' said Rob Gleason, a former chairman of the Pennsylvania Republican Party.

Mr. Saccone, who during the campaign called himself ''Trump before Trump was Trump'' in an attempt to appeal to the president's supporters, said the anti-Trump energy in Pennsylvania would make it ''tough'' for the president to win the state again. He attributed his own loss to Mr. Lamb's refusal to embrace some of the Democrats' more liberal positions on the environment and social issues.

''When they had a choice between a conservative Republican and someone who looked like a conservative Democrat, they went with the Democrat,'' Mr. Saccone said.

In the interview last week, Mr. Lamb was clear about why he embraced the support from Mr. Biden, and few others.

''Although everyone knows he's a Democrat, he really understands western Pennsylvania,'' Mr. Lamb said. ''I couldn't think of anybody on a national stage that kind of speaks the language of western Pennsylvania better than him. And I think he helped us draw attention to the fact that I was kind of a Democrat of the old school and someone that people can trust to fight for them.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/16/us/politics/joe-biden-conor-lamb-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/16/us/politics/joe-biden-conor-lamb-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Conor Lamb won a surprise House victory in March 2018. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSS MANTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2020

**End of Document**



[***In Trump's Marathon Briefings, Contradictory Messages and Answers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YMC-9XM1-DXY4-X0XD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Peter Baker

**Body**

The president does not need adversaries to dispute his statements. He does that all by himself.

WASHINGTON -- President Trump left little room for doubt. ''We're going to put a hold on money spent to the W.H.O.,'' he said, referring to the World Health Organization. ''We're going to put a very powerful hold on it.''

But when he was asked a bit later whether it was the right time to delay money for the health agency in the middle of a pandemic, he denied that he said he would. ''I'm not saying that I'm going to do it,'' he said during his news briefing on Tuesday. ''But we're going to look at it.''

''You did say you were going to do it,'' a reporter pointed out.

''No, I didn't,'' he said. ''I said we're going to look at it.''

Mr. Trump does not need adversaries to dispute his statements -- he does that all by himself. In the course of his daily briefings on the coronavirus pandemic, the president has routinely contradicted himself without ever acknowledging that he does so. In the process, he sends confusing signals that other politicians, public health officials and the rest of the country are left to sort out.

Mr. Trump has always been a president of contradictions: a New York mogul fond of ostentatious shows of wealth who appeals to rural ***working-class*** voters. A populist whose main recreation is golfing at one of his exclusive clubs. A self-avowed deal maker who ends up mired in gridlock. A publicity hound who cannot get enough of the news media even as he denounces it as the ''enemy of the people.''

That did not start when he arrived in the White House three years ago, of course.

Over his decades in the public spotlight, Mr. Trump has been a little of everything, whatever he felt he needed to be depending on the moment. He has switched political parties at least five times, proclaimed himself ''very pro-choice'' before becoming an ardent opponent of abortion rights, supported an assault rifle ban before casting himself as a vocal champion of the Second Amendment, proposed increasing taxes on the rich before cutting taxes on the rich and boasted of raunchy exploits with women before courting the evangelical vote.

But the advent of these daily briefings over the past month -- sessions that stretch for an hour, 90 minutes or even two hours -- have put the conflicts on display in a particularly stark way. The longer a briefing goes, it seems, the more likely the president is to waver from one message to the next. And then at the next briefing, the message may be different all over again, but always captured on camera and therefore difficult to deny or explain away.

The briefings have grown longer since they started, and Mr. Trump's share of the time at the lectern has as well. Since mid-March, the average length of the briefings has grown from 61 minutes to 105, with the president's speaking time increasing from 20 minutes per session to 53, according to Factba.se, an organization that collects and analyzes data on the Trump administration. In the course of 28 coronavirus events, Mr. Trump has spoken a total of 18½ hours.

The president's words matter because, as he himself likes to note, the ratings for his briefings have been high, and for many Americans, they are the main source of their information about the pandemic.

His shifting assessments of the seriousness of the virus over recent months have been well documented. Initially, he likened it to an ordinary flu that would ''miraculously'' go away, then he later called it ''the worst thing that the country has probably ever seen'' and declared ''war'' against the virus. Then he aimed to reopen the country by Easter, before retreating and declaring ''hard days'' ahead.

The crossed signals over cutting finances for the W.H.O., however, showed that his contradictions can take place over the course of days or even within the same briefing. Only five days before vowing to review the health organization's response to the pandemic, he blasted Congress for setting up a panel to review his own administration's response to it, saying such an investigation ''during a pandemic is really a big waste of vital resources, time, attention.''

During Tuesday's session, he launched into a long broadside against the evils of mail-in voting, which he called ''a very dangerous thing for this country.'' Only after a reporter pointed it out did he acknowledge that he has mailed in votes himself -- as recently last month for Florida's primary.

How did he reconcile that? ''Because I'm allowed to,'' he said. ''Well, that's called 'out of state.' You know, why I voted? Because I happen to be in the White House and I won't be able to go to Florida to vote.''

How is that different from others who cannot go in person or do not want to risk their health? To that, he said, ''You get thousands and thousands of people sitting in somebody's living room, signing ballots all over the place.''

The president has also swung radically in his views of governors and reporters, one day praising them, the next day castigating them. ''I really think the media has been very fair,'' he said at a briefing last month. By Monday, he no longer thought so. ''I wish we had a fair media in this country, and we really don't,'' he said as he denounced one journalist as a ''third-rate reporter'' and called another one's question ''horrid.''

What remains unclear is whether Mr. Trump does not remember saying things that he later denies saying or is trying to impose his own reality. During a telephone interview last month with Sean Hannity on Fox News, Mr. Trump assailed Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York for saying he needed 30,000 to 40,000 ventilators, suggesting that was exaggerated.

''I have a feeling that a lot of the numbers that are being said in some areas are just bigger than they're going to be,'' the president said. ''I don't believe you need 40,000 or 30,000 ventilators.''

When a reporter at a briefing three days later started a question by noting that ''you've said repeatedly that you think that some of the equipment that governors are requesting, they don't actually need,'' Mr. Trump cut her off.

''I didn't say that,'' he insisted. ''I didn't say that.''

He has also pivoted back and forth in his view of China's handling of the virus, which broke out there before coming to the United States. At first, he praised Beijing. ''China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus,'' he wrote on Twitter on Jan. 24. ''The United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency.''

A couple of weeks later, he spoke with President Xi Jinping of China and afterward praised him as ''strong, sharp and powerfully focused on leading the counterattack on the Coronavirus.''

But then in mid-March, after a Chinese official floated a conspiracy theory that ''it might be US army who brought the epidemic'' to China, Mr. Trump lashed out, referring to the ''Chinese virus'' and blaming Beijing for not being transparent, as he had previously said it was.

''It could have been stopped in its tracks,'' Trump said of the virus at the White House briefing on March 19. ''Unfortunately, they didn't decide to make it public. But the whole world is suffering because of it.''

His team echoed the theme, from his secretary of state to his family. ''Anyone praising China's 'leadership' in responding that the virus should be scorned for being the authoritarian/communist propagandist that they are,'' Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son, wrote on Twitter on March 26.

Late that same night, however, his father spoke by telephone with Mr. Xi and then praised China's leadership.

''Just finished a very good conversation with President Xi of China,'' Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter an hour after midnight. ''Discussed in great detail the CoronaVirus that is ravaging large parts of our Planet. China has been through much & has developed a strong understanding of the Virus. We are working closely together. Much respect!''

By Tuesday, though, China was the foil again as Mr. Trump assailed the World Health Organization for its handling of the pandemic -- the first time he had raised the W.H.O. on his own in all of the coronavirus briefings. The W.H.O.'s main sin, in his view, was that it was too ''China-centric.''

''Everything seems to be very biased toward China,'' Mr. Trump said. ''That's not right.''

At least as of Tuesday.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-news-briefings.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-news-briefings.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The daily news briefing on Tuesday at the White House. Officials are often left to sort out some of President Trump's statements. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***When the Dream of Owning a Home Became a Nightmare***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5X9N-V9P1-JBG3-6326-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** A federal program to encourage black homeownership in the 1970s ended in a flood of foreclosures.

**Body**

A federal program to encourage black homeownership in the 1970s ended in a flood of foreclosures.

When tens of thousands of African-Americans held the keys to their first homes in the early 1970s as part of a new federal program that encouraged black homeownership, they thought they were about to fulfill the American dream. Instead they got an American nightmare.

The story begins with the urban uprisings of the late 1960s, which were reactions to decades of poverty, racism and a lack of opportunity. According to the Kerner Commission, a major cause was government-sponsored housing segregation that had confined African-Americans to rental housing in urban neighborhoods while subsidizing white flight to the suburbs. Black people, too, wanted to enjoy the benefits of homeownership and the uprisings pressured Washington to take that seriously.

Richard Nixon gave voice to a shift in government policy in 1968 [*when he declared*](https://books.google.com/books?id=SccmnYp57ssC&amp;pg=PA15467&amp;lpg=PA15467&amp;dq=%22People+who+own+their+own+homes+don%E2%80%99t+burn+their+neighborhoods.++Rather+in+pride+and+self-interest,+they+turn+to+fixing+up+their+communities+and+making+them+livable+for+themselves+and+their+neighborhoods.%E2%80%9D&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=zH8oQ3PV4p&amp;sig=ACfU3U0wLBWr6-fIHpOTa5pvRLuqY818KA&amp;hl=en&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=2ahUKEwiGosPqw6blAhUBvFkKHRP6DHYQ6AEwAHoECAEQAQ#v=onepage&amp;q=%22People%20who%20own%20their%20own%20homes%20don%E2%80%99t%20burn%20their%20neighborhoods.%20%20Rather%20in%20pride%20and%20self-interest%2C%20they%20turn%20to%20fixing%20up%20their%20communities%20and%20making%20them%20livable%20for%20themselves%20and%20their%20neighborhoods.%E2%80%9D&amp;f=true) that “people who own their own homes don’t burn their neighborhoods.” The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 created policies that let low-income black renters, long excluded from conventional mortgages and other standard ways of financing homes, become homeowners.

At the core of the law were three components: A down payment cost only $200; a buyer’s mortgage was linked to her income, not her house’s value; and the interest rate on the loan, subsidized by the federal government, was capped at 1 percent.

It was a boon — at least for banks and the real estate industry.

The Federal Housing Administration backed mortgages arranged through this program and bankers didn’t have to worry about foreclosures or defaults because if buyers fell behind on their payment, Washington would simply pay off the loan. An unprecedented number of black renters in Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago and other urban centers became homeowners.

But the program was troubled from the start. The conditions that allowed for homeownership also set the groundwork for fraud. Racist exclusion gave way to predatory inclusion.

Speculators bought decrepit or even condemned houses on the cheap and then quickly flipped them. F.H.A. appraisers, often part-time real estate agents, would sometimes pocket bribes to inflate the value of the house.

Meanwhile, bankers signed off on bloated appraisals because Washington absorbed the risk. These bankers made money on both the fees to make the loan and the closing costs to sell the house, so they cared only about issuing a huge number of mortgages, which they’d package and resell. It didn’t matter to them whether a house went into foreclosure.

In turn, black buyers were paying more for homes that were older and shoddier than the ones their white peers were buying in the suburbs. As a result, the nation’s first programs to encourage black homeownership ended in the 1980s with tens of thousands of foreclosures. The push to uplift black homeownership had turned into a gold mine for real estate agents and mortgage lenders. And champions of deregulation could point to it as an example of the dangers of government intervention.

One of the Americans who saw their hopes of owning a home shattered was Janice Johnson, a black single mother on welfare and living about as far from the lily-white suburbs as a person could get. She and her 8-year-old son had lived in a decaying apartment, in a building that had recently been condemned by city officials, in a ***working-class*** black neighborhood in Northeast Philadelphia.

Facing eviction, Ms. Johnson needed to quickly find a new place to live. Her mother told her of an apartment for rent in the same neighborhood. Instead the landlord suggested that she buy a house there through the new HUD program.

Ms. Johnson bought her first home in September 1970. But days after she moved in, the sewer line broke, spewing wastewater all over the basement floor. The electricity was sporadic and haphazard. There were holes in the foundation. The windows were nailed shut and inoperable. The floorboards in her dining room were so rotten, she feared her table would fall through the floor.

The crumbling structure of the house was not the wors­­­­­­­t of it.

The day before Halloween, Ms. Johnson’s son woke up to find a rat in his bed. Rats were everywhere, including in the kitchen and bathroom, entering the house through holes in the basement, where they made their nests.

She called the real estate agent who sold her the house to complain. He sent workmen out a couple of times, and they even patched the failing plaster in her dining room; but soon after, the agent reminded her that the problems in her house were “homeowner’s business.”

The details of Ms. Johnson’s woes come from a court case; it’s unclear how her story ends.

There were thousands of cases like hers from Memphis to Minneapolis and they made front-page news. The Chicago Tribune even won a Pulitzer Prize in 1975 for its coverage of this crisis. Generous government subsidies had helped the real estate and banking industries overcome their reluctance to sell and lend to African-Americans. But of course they never stopped believing blacks presented a threat to property values, perpetuating the real estate industry’s segregationist practices.

While the policies created by the Housing and Urban Development Act did not immediately change the practices or the beliefs within the real estate industry — or among agents working for the Federal Housing Administration — it did allow for the participation of broader networks of real estate operatives and lenders that circulated billions of new dollars throughout the urban housing market.

This public-private partnership in the production of low-income housing tethered the public agencies of HUD and the F.H.A. to real estate brokers, mortgage bankers and homebuilders. These close relationships made it unlikely that anti-discrimination laws would be aggressively enforced. This allowed banks and real estate agents to continue to illegally steer black buyers away from neighborhoods with better housing at better prices.

One reason for the reluctance to push industry to obey federal laws was that federal workers eventually wanted jobs in the more lucrative private real estate industry. Another was that too much regulation could prompt the private partners to take their business far from the red tape of government.

The recruiting of thousands of poor black women as homeowners was strategic for an industry in search of new customers — and underlined the dubiousness of the program.

Real estate brokers and mortgage bankers valued black women like Janice Johnson precisely because they were poor, desperate and likely to fall behind on their payments. The HUD-F.H.A. guarantee to pay lenders in full for the mortgage of any home in foreclosure transformed risk from a reason for exclusion into an incentive for inclusion. Banks could profit from being repaid for inflated mortgages, and profit again when the foreclosed property was resold to another poor family that qualified for a government-guaranteed mortgage.

When the federal government guaranteed Ms. Johnson’s mortgage, it became implicated in the shoddy business practices of private sector agents bent on profiting from the desperation of low-income urban residents. A legacy of the failure of the program is that it contributed to the conditions that eventually allowed for the widespread use of subprime loans. Indiscriminate F.H.A. lending that resulted in mass foreclosures in the 1970s helped cement the perception of black neighborhoods as dilapidated and deteriorating — which became the basis for declaring a place, or even a person, subprime.

Racial discrimination persisted in the new market because it was good business, not simply because the industry was stuck in its old ways. Our failure to fully recognize this history has meant that housing policy continues to uncritically revolve around market-based solutions even as black homeownership rates fall to historic lows.

It’s hard to uproot these predatory practices because race has been so important to the real estate industry’s bottom line. At the very least, Washington must renew its commitment to aggressively enforce its own civil rights laws and ruthlessly punish offenders. This could finally undo the ways that racial inequality has continued to find value in our housing market.

This essay is adapted from the author’s book “[*Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*](https://books.google.com/books?id=SccmnYp57ssC&amp;pg=PA15467&amp;lpg=PA15467&amp;dq=%22People+who+own+their+own+homes+don%E2%80%99t+burn+their+neighborhoods.++Rather+in+pride+and+self-interest,+they+turn+to+fixing+up+their+communities+and+making+them+livable+for+themselves+and+their+neighborhoods.%E2%80%9D&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=zH8oQ3PV4p&amp;sig=ACfU3U0wLBWr6-fIHpOTa5pvRLuqY818KA&amp;hl=en&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=2ahUKEwiGosPqw6blAhUBvFkKHRP6DHYQ6AEwAHoECAEQAQ#v=onepage&amp;q=%22People%20who%20own%20their%20own%20homes%20don%E2%80%99t%20burn%20their%20neighborhoods.%20%20Rather%20in%20pride%20and%20self-interest%2C%20they%20turn%20to%20fixing%20up%20their%20communities%20and%20making%20them%20livable%20for%20themselves%20and%20their%20neighborhoods.%E2%80%9D&amp;f=true).”

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jamiel Law FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Henry Louis Gates Jr. on What Really Happened at Obama's 'Beer Summit'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y5M-4MF1-JBG3-62BN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By David Marchese

**Body**

Henry Louis Gates Jr. is one of a handful of academics who have crossed over into something approaching true celebrity. Which is apparently what happens when you've written and edited dozens of books of popular history; had a guiding hand in 18 major documentaries on black history, the most recent of which was ''Who Killed Malcom X?''; and spent six seasons uncovering the genealogical mysteries of famous people as host of PBS's ''Finding Your Roots.'' Gates's desire to reach beyond the ivory tower -- in addition to writing landmark works of literary criticism like ''The Signifying Monkey,'' he's the director of Harvard's Hutchins Center for African and African-American Research -- was motivated by some very personal feelings. ''My brother asked me once,'' says Gates, 69, recalling a time when he and his work were less well known, '''When are you going to write a book that Daddy and Mama can read?'''

There's no arguing that popular storytelling and factual scholarship can be combined in useful ways. What I'm curious about is your opinion on the limits, if there are any, of that combination. It's an excellent question. It took a long time for black scholars and filmmakers to feel comfortable representing black historical figures in three dimensions. Take Harriet Tubman. Students think Harriet Tubman was basically leading a train of slaves out of Grand Central Station. But I think the number she saved was closer to 70 -- which was a lot, by the way. Or: The myth that our ancestors were kidnapped by your ancestors, David, is just untrue. The fantasy is that my 10th-great-grandmother and -grandfather were out on a picnic and some white people jumped out of the bushes and they ended up on a plantation in Virginia. That's not how it happened. But one of the things that I've dedicated my career to is showing that black people are just as complex, positively and negatively, as anybody else. For years, the mythos that undergirded black history was that the slaves were the victims of European dominance. But really it was the Europeans who were selling guns to African kings, who engaged in wars against other Africans in order to defeat them and then sell the victims to Europeans. I remember once I was asked to consult on a project about Martin Luther King. I said, ''You can't do hagiography anymore.'' King was complicated. He had affairs and doubts. He was a flawed person but also a great man, and showing him in his full complexity would make for a better film than pretending he was a walking saint. But the historian who was involved in this project said: ''Too many racists. They're not ready for that.''

Was conciliatory thinking along the lines of ''racists aren't ready for that'' in your head in 2009 when you were dealing with the incident with the Cambridge police? Oh, yeah. President Obama made an innocent comment that the arrest was stupid, which it was. Then all of a sudden all these racists are beating up on him. My whole attitude was channeled through the desire to protect our first black president. But there was another motivation. I thought that it would be hubristic and dishonest if I compared what happened to me to what happens to black people in the inner city. I thought, If I didn't have the protections of class and status --

The outcome would've been very different. Right. When the policeman, Sgt. Crowley, and I met, I said, ''Why did you arrest me?'' He said, ''I was afraid that I wasn't going to be able to go home to my wife, because I was convinced that your partner was upstairs and he was going to come down and blow me away.'' He told me he had gotten a call: ''Two black guys are breaking into this house.'' One of them answers the door -- me -- when he rang the bell, and I'm stepping over suitcases, because I'd just come back from a trip. Unbeknown to me, one pattern of thievery is bringing empty suitcases to a house. So the officer saw a black face, he saw the suitcases: That's part of a profile. I was what Barbara Johnson calls ''an already-read text.'' He couldn't hear me, couldn't see me. Well, that might be related to police excesses and abuses, but it's a far end of the scale, and I was able to reverse what happened to me, unlike an Eric Garner. So my whole reaction to my arrest was determined by two things: The attacks on President Obama and my own determination not to claim too much for my own victimization.

Then when you actually had the ''beer summit,'' did President Obama say anything helpful, or was that whole thing pro forma? Oh, that's interesting. I was at Martha's Vineyard, and I had been getting instructions from the White House, through Glenn Hutchins. They told me not to wear a bespoke suit. ''We don't want it to be about class.'' All of the sudden I was the upper-class black person against the ***working class***. I go, ''I'm the victim!'' They go, ''No, don't wear one of those suits.'' I go: ''These are the only suits I have. I'm not going out to Sears and Roebuck and buying a suit.'' Then they go, ''Do not fly down in a private plane.'' Glenn Hutchins owns a private plane. Glenn's a billionaire. He's one of my best friends. The only way we could get to Washington was on Glenn's plane, because there was fog. Anyway, we got to the White House, and we and Sgt. Crowley's family all got to the library at the same time. I walked over to Sgt. Crowley. He had his kids there, and I said to them: ''Hi, I'm Professor Gates. Hope you come to Harvard one day. Maybe you'll take one of my classes.'' Then I said to him, ''Can I have a word with you?'' He and I went off and did the beer summit ourselves. I said, ''Look, I don't know about you, man, but I just want this to go away.'' He goes, ''This is a nightmare.'' I said to him: ''The president has come under attack. Racism's coming out of the floor. I'm sure you're a decent person. I forgive you. Let's move on.'' He goes, ''That would be the best thing that could happen.'' I said, ''Maybe we could find a way to lecture about it.'' He laughed and said, ''Anything I can do to get off the beat.'' I realized he was funny. I think that gay people have a sense of who's homophobic. I think that Jewish people have a sense of who's anti-Semitic. I definitely think black people -- I could walk out there and tell you, ''That [expletive] is a racist.''

And you're saying you didn't get that vibe from Sgt. Crowley? I didn't get that vibe from him. When we were called into the Oval Office, I said to the president, ''Mr. President, we had a great conversation in the library.'' He said, ''Oh, it sounds like it's all settled.'' The actual beer summit was us doing small talk. And the reason Joe Biden was there is that the Cambridge police had insisted that because there were going to be two black guys at the table, they wanted two white guys at the table! They had sent somebody involved in the Cambridge police structure to be there. As we were walking out to the Rose Garden, somehow that guy got pushed to the side, and Joe Biden jumped in the line. That's what nobody ever figured out: Why is Biden at the table? He was there to be the second white guy.

As far as you can tell, how much is Biden's appeal to black voters solely about his association with Obama? Biden, wisely, has wrapped his arms so tightly around Barack Obama that they're inextricably intertwined, at least in his speeches. He's polling so positively among black people because of the Obama residue. But that could change overnight. I haven't endorsed any candidate, because I have too many friends. Elizabeth Warren was my colleague. I did Bernie Sanders's family tree. In 2018, I got an award in Delaware, along with Joe Biden and Ron Chernow. I spent a whole evening with Biden, and I liked him. All of this is to say that I have been sort of watching the field. But, I mean, I'm going to vote for whatever Democrat emerges. I want to say this right, because I haven't said this to anybody: Among all the candidates, the person who I believe could stand toe-to-toe, strongest and longest with Donald Trump is Mike Bloomberg.

Why? Who do you think his constituency is? I know Mike Bloomberg socially. Every summer I go to a dinner on Martha's Vineyard with Mike Bloomberg. I've argued with him about policies that I didn't like. He is enormously intelligent and capable. When he was mayor, I watched him. He could wear it lightly. It's not like Jimmy Carter with the weight of the world on him. I think that he's tough, and I think he could take on the bully Donald Trump. Very few people can stand up to a bully. Mike's got some bully in him. I think he's good.

''Stop and frisk'' isn't too much of a problem for him? He faces two problems that he has to overcome. He has already apologized for ''stop and frisk,'' but he has to put it behind him, and also the Central Park Five. What the city and the legal structure did to those five boys was shameful. The mayor has to put that behind him. If he's successful doing that, I think black people want him, because he is smart, sensitive, strong. I think he cares about health care. He understands the economic system. This is not an endorsement. But I would support him if he got the nomination.

Something I see your guests do on ''Finding Your Roots'' is framing their narratives as triumphant ones, and I'd say a similar form of exceptionalism shapes how a lot of Americans think of the country's past. In what way does our propensity for that kind of thinking inhibit our ability to fully reckon with subjects -- like racism and slavery -- that don't easily fit into a narrative of exceptionalism? Because that tension is obviously at the root of the conflict over, for example, the removal of Confederate monuments. I feel as if you and I are sitting here, we're having coffee, and we hear this noise, and these zombies come out of the floor, and the zombie is white supremacy. We thought these [expletive] were dead. I'm trying to use the popularity of ''Finding Your Roots'' to get these political messages in there without being a scold. I am trying to deconstruct notions of racial purity. There is no racial purity. We are all diverse. Showing diversity is important to me politically, and insofar as we can achieve that, our series has an educational value for the larger country, particularly at a time when we're at Redemption redux.

We understand the Redemption era now as a white response to the gains black people made during Reconstruction. Is it too simplistic to say that the energy driving the current moment is also a reaction to black progress and Obama's becoming president? I've spent a lot of time thinking about your question, and I don't know the answer. If we're sitting around in a bar with a bunch of black people, they could say, ''Barack and Michelle drove all the white people totally out of their minds.'' I think that's partly true. The other thing, though, is that between Martin Luther King's death and now, the black middle class has doubled and the black upper-middle class has quadrupled. But simultaneously, if you look at the wages of white workers -- the chance of your kids doing better than you if you were in the white ***working class***, that's over. So you might look at a black family in the White House, all these black people who joined the upper-middle class, and there's a kind of collective ''What the [expletive]?''

Which you're saying resulted in resentment? It's the curve of rising expectations. When it's interrupted, people go nuts. After World War II, G.I.s got mortgages so they could live in the suburbs and buy a house, buy a car, then a TV. Their kids could go to college. Their grandchildren could be doctors. That was the promise of America. That promise is over. That drives people crazy, and then they target, they objectify, they need a scapegoat. So it's not just Michelle and Barack. They are part of the larger phenomenon. To go from them to Trump is a seismic revolution that is the result of a collapse of expectation.

You mentioned college: I went back and read ''Loose Canons,'' and there's a line in there in which you say that college students are too old to form but not too old to challenge. How does a line like that resonate today, when challenging students can seem like such a fraught proposition? Political correctness is heinous if it comes from a person on the left or the right or a person of color or a white person. Let's take a hot-button issue. I wrote the introduction to the 50th-anniversary edition of Albert Murray's ''The Omni-Americans,'' and there was this paragraph I wrote last summer that I saw when I was cleaning out my Word files on my iPad. In it I said, ''Only people not familiar with this history of slavery or Ta-Nehisi Coates's recent work would wonder if there was an economic disadvantage to African Americans subsequent to the Civil War because of slavery and then because of the rollbacks of Reconstruction.'' I said, ''However, reasonable people could disagree about reparations. But,'' I continued, ''there are few people today who have the courage to stand up within the community and say, 'I genuinely think reparations is a mistake.''' Now I'm not saying that's my position. But I'm saying you will find nobody black standing up and criticizing reparations -- it's very rare -- because they're afraid that students are going to boycott them or that they'll be called an Uncle Tom. That's not right. We fall apart, particularly in the academy, when we succumb to or perpetuate that kind of intellectual bullying.

What is your position on reparations? I do believe that it's impossible for any rational person not to understand the cost of 400 years of slavery and then another century of Jim Crow. We have to find ways to compensate for that cost. Affirmative action, to me, is a form of reparations. So is health care -- Obamacare or a variant. And there's reform of public education. One of the most radical things we could do to reform public-school education would be to equalize the amount of money spent per student in every school. That is never going to happen, but that would constitute a radical shift. Those are my three big principles of reparations, and two of the three affect poor people in general. But I'm a scholar of African and African-American history. There were palpable costs to antiblack racism that have had profound effects on the state of black America. These effects are cumulative, and somebody has to do something about it.

In terms of your own writing, you're a long way from the guy who made his name with a dense academic book like ''The Signifying Monkey.'' Something like ''Stony the Road'' is written in much simpler language with much less jargon. How do you make sense of that evolution? ''The Signifying Monkey'' is my tenure book. I was just trying to get tenure. I was trying to be a bridge between the black tradition and poststructuralism and deconstruction. Then I got tenure, and as far as the evolution of my own prose, once you get tenure, you could write films, you could do anything. A crucial point came when I gave a lecture at Howard University. A friend of mine invited me down to deliver my essay called ''Binary Oppositions in Chapter 1 of 'Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.''' I thought I was introducing structuralism. When I was done, I expected a standing ovation. The first question I got was: ''Yeah, brother. All we want to know is, was Booker T. Washington an Uncle Tom or not?'' That had a profound effect on me. I have an ego. I want the audience to be with me. That's what you see in my evolution.

David Marchese is a staff writer and the Talk columnist for the magazine.

This interview has been edited and condensed from two conversations.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/magazine/henry-louis-gates-jr-on-what-really-happened-at-obamas-beer-summit.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/magazine/henry-louis-gates-jr-on-what-really-happened-at-obamas-beer-summit.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAMADI DOUMBOUYA) (MM13)

Henry Louis Gates Jr. addressing a class at Harvard in 1996. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BLANDING/THE BOSTON GLOBE, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MM14)

The White House ''beer summit,'' held in the Rose Garden in 2009: from left, Vice President Joe Biden, Gates, Sgt. James Crowley and President Barack Obama. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA ROBERTS/BLOOMBERG, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MM16)

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[***How Biden Could Learn From Conor Lamb’s Victory in Trump Country***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60KX-DRX1-JBG3-6275-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Throughout his campaign, Joe Biden has repeatedly returned to the same themes and strategies that supported Mr. Lamb to a surprise victory in a district that Donald Trump carried by about 20 points in 2016.

**Body**

Throughout his campaign, Joe Biden has repeatedly returned to the same themes and strategies that supported Mr. Lamb to a surprise victory in a district that Donald Trump carried by about 20 points in 2016.

MT. LEBANON, Pa. — When Joseph R. Biden Jr. [*came to the Pittsburgh suburbs*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?442166-1/vice-president-biden-campaigns-conor-lamb-pennsylvania) in 2018 to stump for Conor Lamb’s long shot special election campaign, he made a pitch directly to the sort of [*blue-collar union workers*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?442166-1/vice-president-biden-campaigns-conor-lamb-pennsylvania) who had abandoned the Democratic Party when Hillary Clinton was on the ballot.

“I don’t know all of you personally, but I know you,” Mr. Biden said at a rally a week before Mr. Lamb became the first Democrat to flip a Republican House seat during [*Donald Trump’s*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?442166-1/vice-president-biden-campaigns-conor-lamb-pennsylvania) presidency. “I know this state. I know this region. I know what it’s made up of. I know the values that underpin all of what you believe in — family, community, again, not leaving anybody behind.”

Two and a half years later, Mr. Biden is preparing for a virtual party convention, beginning on Monday, that will formally install him as the Democratic Party’s 2020 presidential nominee. He arrived at this moment with a sizable lead over President Trump in the polls, using a playbook first employed to success by Mr. Lamb two years ago, and then borrowed by dozens of Democrats during the midterm elections later that year.

Mr. Biden has repeatedly returned to the same themes and strategies that supported Mr. Lamb to a surprise, if razor-thin, victory in a district that Mr. Trump carried by about 20 points in 2016 — and where Democrats were so insignificant that they had not fielded a candidate since 2012.

Mr. Lamb’s victory showed Democrats how to prevail in Republican territory during the Trump era: focus on kichen-table issues; inspire defections from college-educated suburban voters — especially women — who had been core Republican voters for decades; and offer conservative-leaning voters a sober, reassuring alternative to a chaotic president.

It helped that Mr. Lamb was a Marine veteran and a former federal prosecutor — a résumé of service to the country that he and fellow Democrats used to contrast themselves with Mr. Trump and Republicans who came from the business world.

Mr. Biden has likewise used his decades of experience in the Senate and eight years as vice president to highlight his own public service, while reminding audiences that he regularly ranked among the least-wealthy senators to demonstrate his commitment to the middle class.

Though Mr. Trump twice traveled to Pennsylvania to hold rallies for Mr. Lamb’s opponent, Mr. Lamb, seeking to distance himself from his party’s left-leaning brand, turned away entreaties from nearly all ambitious national Democrats interested in stumping for him — all except for Mr. Biden, with whom he spent a day traversing the district speaking to union workers.

“There are a lot of people who voted for me in 2018, not so much for reasons of policy or party, but just reasons of change,” Mr. Lamb said from atop a picnic table during an outdoor interview this past week in a park near his home in Mt. Lebanon, a suburb. “People were unsatisfied with how things were going, and I promised that I would do my job differently than the guy you had before me. And I think that’s what Vice President Biden is basically doing.”

There is no guarantee that Mr. Biden can replicate Mr. Lamb’s path to victory. Mr. Trump has retained devout loyalty from Republican voters. A November presidential contest will drive turnout far higher than in the special election in which Mr. Lamb won his surprise victory, or the 2018 midterm elections when Democrats won a sweeping triumph in the nation’s suburbs.

When Mr. Lamb won in March 2018, he served notice for Democrats aiming to wrest control of the House and give the party control of at least one lever of the federal government. The answer to defeating Trump-aligned Republican candidates was not to emphasize the president’s erratic, divisive tenure in the Oval Office. Instead Democratic candidates focused narrowly on policies affecting voters’ lives, like protecting provisions in the Affordable Care Act and casting Republicans as a party pandering to corporations and the very rich, attacking the 2017 tax cut that Republican Party leaders had intended to use as the tent pole achievement for their midterm campaigns.

During his remarks at Mr. Lamb’s rally, Mr. Biden called the tax cut “obscene.”

“It’s really hard to screw up a tax cut, but they managed to do it,” said Meredith Kelly, who was then the communications director for the House Democrats’ campaign arm. “It set a narrative that fit very nicely into what Biden has done.”

In Congress, Mr. Lamb is a rank-and-file Democrat who has not rocked the boat or voted against the party’s leadership on any significant issues. At home, he’s cultivated an image of a Democrat focused on Pennsylvania jobs above all else — a sentiment he says Mr. Biden has echoed.

“No matter what side of an issue my party was on when I went to Washington, I would be fighting for their jobs no matter what,” Mr. Lamb said. “How many times did Vice President Biden use the word ‘jobs’ in his speech about energy and climate change? He used the word ‘jobs’ a million times. He was talking about climate change, but kept reminding people that this is a policy that’s about their jobs. And I think, to me, that was him taking that lesson too, that that’s ultimately what people care about the most.”

When Mr. Biden’s presidential campaign began, he ran on a platform that was far less flashy than his top rivals, progressives like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. He wasn’t for a single-payer health care system or adding extra Supreme Court justices or funding an array of new federal programs with a wealth tax on millionaires.

Instead Mr. Biden’s platform looked a lot like what Mr. Lamb ran on in 2018: protecting Social Security, Medicare and health care while opposing tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy. And even though he’s adopted an array of more liberal-leaning positions since becoming the presumptive nominee, Mr. Biden is still viewed as a politician most concerned with ***working-class*** Americans.

“People say the same thing about Conor and Joe,’’ said Representative Mike Doyle, a Democrat whose district abuts Mr. Lamb’s. “Here in Western P.A., someone will say he’s a regular guy. That was a Trump plus-20 district, and he won it because he stuck to the things the people in Western Pennsylvania really care about and because people thought he was an average guy. He’s a regular guy. He’s one of them, and Joe’s one of them.”

Polls show that in addition to suburban voters, Mr. Biden is having success in breaking Republicans’ longtime lock on older voters. [*A Fox News poll of Pennsylvania last month*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?442166-1/vice-president-biden-campaigns-conor-lamb-pennsylvania) found Mr. Biden leading Mr. Trump by seven percentage points among voters 65 or older. [*Exit polls in 2016*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?442166-1/vice-president-biden-campaigns-conor-lamb-pennsylvania) found Mr. Trump won older voters by a 10-point margin.

Ralph Perkins, an 89-year-old retired mining engineer from Canonsburg, Pa., 20 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, said he was likely to vote for Mr. Biden after casting a ballot for every Republican presidential nominee since Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952.

The one thing that could lead him to vote a second time for Mr. Trump, Mr. Perkins said, would be if Mr. Biden supported defunding the police. But after calling the local Washington County Democratic chairman, Ben Bright, Mr. Perkins said his fears were allayed.

“Biden, I think he’s very much superior to Trump,” Mr. Perkins said. “Do I think he’s perfect? I’m not head over heels for him, but I think he’s fine.”

Mr. Bright, who began volunteering for the party after Mr. Trump’s 2016 victory and became the county chairman in 2018, said Mr. Biden appeals to the same type of voters who crossed party lines to back Mr. Lamb.

“The main issues that Democrats stand for now are what Conor ran on,” Mr. Bright said. “Affordable health care, good-paying jobs for middle class people, strengthening unions and better public education.”

Mr. Lamb’s 2020 Republican opponent, Sean Parnell, an Army veteran, out-raised him by more than $270,000 during the three-month period ending on June 30. Still, Mr. Lamb is favored to win re-election in the district, which was redrawn in his favor by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after his March 2018 victory.

Republicans discount Mr. Lamb’s victory as an aberration, the [*result of a flawed opponent*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?442166-1/vice-president-biden-campaigns-conor-lamb-pennsylvania) who failed to raise a significant amount of money and Mr. Lamb’s squeaky-clean image that, they say, has been tarnished by more than two years of voting for Democratic priorities in the House.

Rick Saccone, the Republican state legislator who lost to Mr. Lamb, “wasn’t the best candidate we could have fielded,” said Rob Gleason, a former chairman of the Pennsylvania Republican Party.

Mr. Saccone, who during the campaign called himself “Trump before Trump was Trump” in an attempt to appeal to the president’s supporters, said the anti-Trump energy in Pennsylvania would make it “tough” for the president to win the state again. He attributed his own loss to Mr. Lamb’s refusal to embrace some of the Democrats’ more liberal positions on the environment and social issues.

“When they had a choice between a conservative Republican and someone who looked like a conservative Democrat, they went with the Democrat,” Mr. Saccone said.

In the interview last week, Mr. Lamb was clear about why he embraced the support from Mr. Biden, and few others.

“Although everyone knows he’s a Democrat, he really understands western Pennsylvania,” Mr. Lamb said. “I couldn’t think of anybody on a national stage that kind of speaks the language of western Pennsylvania better than him. And I think he helped us draw attention to the fact that I was kind of a Democrat of the old school and someone that people can trust to fight for them.”

PHOTO: Conor Lamb won a surprise House victory in March 2018. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSS MANTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Does an Intellectual History of the Trump Era Exist? It Does Now; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:610S-D6S1-JBG3-61N4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1879 words

**Byline:** Joe Klein

**Highlight:** Joe Klein reviews that book, Carlos Lozada’s “What Were We Thinking,” as well as two Washington Post journalists’ account of the impeachment and its aftermath.

**Body**

WHAT WERE WE THINKING

A Brief Intellectual History of the Trump Era

By Carlos Lozada

TRUMP ON TRIAL

The Investigation, Impeachment, Acquittal and Aftermath

By Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan

In 2015, Carlos Lozada, The Washington Post’s Pulitzer Prize-winning book critic, took on a harrowing task: He read eight books “written” by Donald Trump. Soon, he expanded the mandate, reading everything he could about Trump and the Trump era — 150 books in all. It was an act of transcendent masochism, but we should be grateful he did it because “What Were We Thinking” looks past the obvious and perverse — that is, past Trump himself — to the troublesome questions raised by the elevation of a soulless carnival barker to the nation’s highest office. “The books that matter most right now are not necessarily those revealing White House intrigue … or official scandals,” he writes. “They are, instead, the books that enable and ennoble a national re-examination.” And this, he believes, is a crucial moment for that re-examination. We have become a society “that has forgotten its civics lessons or, remembering them still, has decided they don’t matter.”

“What Were We Thinking” is crisp, engaging and very smart. Lozada can be lacerating. The former F.B.I. director James Comey “doesn’t just quote Shakespeare but quotes himself quoting Shakespeare.” Robin DiAngelo’s best seller, “White Fragility,” reads like “a pharmaceutical ad for treating whiteness.” Beyond the snark, though, there is a simple, piercing clarity to many of Lozada’s observations. The Mexican border wall “is like Trump: big and bombastic, more artifice than utility, a blunt solution to a complex and ill-defined problem. … You are on one side or the other, you are with him or against him.”

And that, he argues, is also the problem with most of the literature about the Trump presidency. There is nonstop righteousness in the “resistance” books of the left, which call for a national conversation “but restrict … the speakers” and exclude “anyone who fails to espouse the full worldview that the writers and activists champion.” The conservatives writing about Trump are all “in denial,” even the Never Trumpers with their agonized mea culpas (which he calls meh culpas). “The Never Trumpers are engaged in a worthy exercise — yet it took the … presidency of Donald Trump to make it happen. In a sense, the Never Trumpers are also the Only Trumpers. Only with the rise of Trump did they think to interrogate the conservative dogma they’d long defended.”

The writers Lozada admires, left and right, step beyond the usual polemics about “fake news” and “identity politics” and the #MeToo movement. The enduring irony of the Trump presidency may be that it brought national attention to, and action against, the systemic racism and casual misogyny that have crippled our society. Of the #MeToo canon, he writes, “I found so much that I had not bothered to know” about the brutality of male dominance. As a Peruvian immigrant, Lozada writes with great sensitivity about the sense of loss — of home, of culture — that accompanies the thrill of American opportunity for new arrivals. This leads him to favor identity politics as a transitional state, a way of finding “individuality, through community.” But, in a rare lapse, he fails to consider the insidious effects of writing racial advantage into law through programs like affirmative action and the creation of majority-minority electoral districts. Worthy as they may be, they’ve given ballast to white ***working-class*** tribalism.

More often, though, Lozada finds subtleties in areas we’ve assumed clear-cut. Take the president’s mind-numbing spew of lies. Lozada praises the former New York Times book critic Michiko Kakutani for lambasting “lefty academics who … argued that truth is not universal but malleable, a reflection of economic, political and cultural forces.” Or, as the philosopher Lee McIntyre put it, postmodernism is “the godfather of post-truth.”

And here Lozada comes close to the core of the matter: Messing around with the notion of truth is a luxury that comes with affluence. We have spent the past 50 years undermining the basic institutions of society — not just our sense of common purpose and identity, but also normative values like truth and duty and expertise. The politics of consumerism — and grievance — have overwhelmed the politics of unity and responsibility. Among Lozada’s favorite books is the conservative thinker Yuval Levin’s [*“A Time to Build”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/18/opinion/sunday/institutions-trust.html): “Popular culture compels us to ask: ‘What do I want?’ Institutions urge a different query, Levin explains: ‘Given my role here, how should I act?’ It is a relevant question — perhaps the most relevant — for this time and for this presidency.”

It is the question at the heart of “Trump on Trial,” another book from The Washington Post about a topic you’re probably sick of: the impeachment of Donald Trump. Lozada would doubtless categorize “Trump on Trial” as a “Chaos Chronicle.” It is a day-by-day compendium of The Post’s reporting on the Trump impeachment, written by the husband-and-wife team of Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan, and there aren’t many “reveals” in it, unless you count the revelation that Representative Adam Schiff had a toothache when he read the articles of impeachment to the Senate. And yet, “Trump on Trial” doesn’t plod; it is well written and the reporting is panoramic. Its theme insinuates itself gradually: The impeachment proceedings were a clear contest between those who believed in institutions — like truth, expertise, the State Department, congressional budget power — and those who wanted to tear them down.

You remember the story: Donald Trump tried to withhold military aid from Ukraine to force “investigations” of Hunter Biden’s smarmy payday as a director of a Ukrainian energy company — and also, of a cockamamie conspiracy theory about a Ukrainian oligarch harboring the Democratic Party’s computer server. You may remember the players, especially the disciplined and eloquent representatives of the State Department and the National Security Council. “Trump on Trial” burrows into the so-called deep state, down to bureaucrats like the Pentagon’s acting comptroller Elaine McCusker, “a career civil servant” who knew that the Ukraine military aid had to be spent by Sept. 30, 2019, or it would be voided, and “wanted to make sure 100 percent that the law was followed.” That is, she created institutional pressure to overturn Trump’s suspension of the aid. (McCusker was forced out for doing her job.)

People like McCusker, Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and the N.S.C. expert Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman are the sort of civil servants Michael Lewis celebrated in his book about Trump’s assault on the bureaucracy, “The Fifth Risk,” another of Lozada’s favorites. They do due diligence, they adhere to protocol. Their truth is not postmodern. They do their jobs without fanfare; they do not turn their work into self-aggrandizing performance art. Their rigor is what makes our federal government legitimate and credible, despite its flaws.

Impeachment was a hard case. Trump’s shenanigans were illegal, and definitely unseemly, but they didn’t rise to the level of bipartisan horror necessary for a successful conviction. In the end, the Democrats probably did themselves more harm than good. But what “Trump on Trial” makes clear is that the Republican response was an all-out assault on regular order, expertise, law, diplomacy and the quotidian chores of holding a democracy together. I had forgotten how blatant it was. “Elements of the Civil Service have decided that they, not the president, are really in charge,” said Devin Nunes, the California Republican. Matt Gaetz, the Florida Republican, paraphrased what he thought was the Democrats’ message: “We the elite, we the permanent Washington, we the smart folks, have decided that … this is not acceptable conduct.” Or, as Trump told one of his rallies, “We’re dealing with people that don’t respect you.” The Michigan Democrat Elissa Slotkin, a former intelligence analyst and senior Defense Department official, saw herself in civil servants like Yovanovitch and Vindman: “Their life was her life. … It was an ethos shared by her friends, especially the ones who had sworn an oath in the military.” Slotkin went back to the nation’s founding documents: “The framers had warned against the danger of America’s leaders soliciting foreign interference in the country’s internal affairs. Hadn’t this president admitted to doing exactly that?”

There could not be a more obvious example of Yuval Levin’s dialectic. The Republicans were all about “What do I want?” The Democrats worried, “How should I act?” The parties had traded their traditional places. “The counterculture never died,” Lozada writes of the alt-right movement, summarizing the views of the journalist Angela Nagle. “It just switched sides. Transgression now lives on the right, dogmatism on the left.” The Democrats have become traditionalists. The Republicans, a most illiberal group of libertarians, tear down the pillars of the temple. The former Trump adviser Steve Bannon’s nihilism is the spiritual heir to Abbie Hoffman’s jolly anarchy in the 1960s. What “losers” and “suckers” the traditionalists were! To read “Trump on Trial” in the context of “What Were We Thinking” is to be scalded. The pain is excruciating.

Carlos Lozada is a book critic, not a policy wonk. He doesn’t propose specific solutions to our current state of disgrace, but he does offer a vision of American stability being eviscerated by the public’s need to be entertained. This reminded me of the dichotomy that Machiavelli posited in “The Discourses”: the contest between virtù and ozio. Virtù is the quality that keeps a republic strong: It is rigor and responsibility and intellectual achievement, albeit with a distressing tinge of militarism. Ozio is indolence; it is the laziness that overtakes a republic when it is not at war or in crisis. In America, we experienced 70 years of unprecedented peace and prosperity, without a perceived existential threat, from 1946 to 2016, a bacchanal of ozio. In the process, far too many of us lost the habits of citizenship. Truth became malleable. Morality became relative. Achievement became pass-fail — and, more recently, just showing up. Rigor was for chumps. You didn’t have to do anything to become famous, except be an “influencer.” And to be an influencer, you didn’t need to train or study, although plastic surgery — branding — certainly helped. You didn’t have to serve or sacrifice; that was for chumps, too. This was the America that elected Donald Trump president. What were we thinking? We weren’t. Critical thinking was just too hard — and another episode of “Duck Dynasty” or “Keeping Up With the Kardashians” always beckoned.

Joe Klein is the author of seven books, including “Primary Colors,” “Woody Guthrie: A Life” and “Charlie Mike.” WHAT WERE WE THINKING A Brief Intellectual History of the Trump Era By Carlos Lozada 260 pp. Simon & Schuster. $28. TRUMP ON TRIAL The Investigation, Impeachment, Acquittal and Aftermath By Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan Edited by Steve Luxenberg Illustrated. 532 pp. Scribner. $32.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Tyler Comrie FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Anthony Hopkins Makes It Look Simple. (And Maybe It Should Be.)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61B5-8WW1-DXY4-X0RN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1813 words

**Byline:** Kyle Buchanan

**Highlight:** In the dementia drama “The Father,” the 82-year-old actor turns in a career-capping performance and yet claims, “No acting required.”

**Body**

LOS ANGELES — Had I misheard [*Anthony Hopkins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html)

Perhaps there was some sort of glitch on our Zoom call, or maybe the actual word that [*Hopkins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) meant to use had been obscured by his Welsh lilt. But then I heard him say it again. Twice!

“It was easy,” he told me with a grin. “Just so easy.”

We had been talking about something that didn’t seem easy at all: his tour-de-force performance in the drama [*“The Father”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) (opening in theaters Dec. 18), in which Hopkins plays a London patriarch struggling with dementia. As the character finds himself unstuck in time and struggles to make sense of his surroundings, Hopkins flits back and forth from flinty to foggy with an astonishing grace that will almost certainly put him back in the Oscar race.

So how did this titan of stage and screen tackle such a weighty role? Hopkins shrugged his shoulders. “It was an easy part to play,” he said again, “because it was such a good script.” And it got even easier when [*Olivia Colman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) was cast as his put-upon daughter: “When you watch Olivia and that face crumbles and the tears come out, you think, ‘Oh, I don’t need to act anymore.’”

I should note that this is not the kind of thing a performer will typically tell you, since an actor with even the slightest bit of awards buzz tends to wear his hardship like a distressed leather jacket. With practiced reluctance, the actor will mumble that he never broke character on set, that the conditions were arduous and that he could have died, should have died and may die just because you’re forcing him to recount it.

Hopkins feels no such need to butch up the art of playing pretend: It’s pointless trying to suffer for the sake of creating a role, he told me. After all, if you’re an Oscar-winning actor with decades of expertise, and you’ve been handed a well-written script and an open-faced gem of a co-star … well, shouldn’t it be easy? And who is really being served when an actor is determined to make his job so difficult?

At 82, Hopkins is sometimes asked to advise young performers, and he’s happy to hold court in a video call, telling them stories from his career with brisk, good-natured efficiency. (He’s a natural for the format, lively and energetic: When he signed in to our call, he waved vigorously and said, “It’s Tony! Hello!”) But when those young actors wonder what more can be done to craft their performances, Hopkins invariably counsels them to do less.

“The thing is to become exposed in a way, to drop all the masks,” Hopkins said. “But it takes a bit of time peeling that away because we all want to hide.”

He grinned. “I’ll tell you a story I heard, which is that Spencer Tracy was in London with Katharine Hepburn, and they saw Laurence Olivier onstage doing ‘Titus Andronicus.’” Olivier had worn heavy makeup and a false nose for the role, and according to Hopkins, the visiting American couple looked askance at his prosthetics: “Tracy said to Olivier, ‘Larry, tell me, who do you think they think you are? The audience knows it’s you.’”

Certainly, the audience of “[*The Father*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html)” will know it’s Hopkins — the character is even named Anthony, and the decades we have spent marveling at the actor’s quicksilver intelligence onscreen only makes his character’s plight all the more poignant. Still, you shouldn’t get the wrong idea. When Hopkins says it was easy to play a role this electrifying, that’s not aw-shucks self-effacement. Quite the opposite, actually.

“I’m not going to be ultra-modest about this: You have to know how to turn on that electricity,” he said. “And I know how to switch it on. I’ve been doing it for a long time.”

FROM HIS HOME in the Pacific Palisades, where he has spent the last several months in quarantine, Hopkins likes to look up the coast and watch the cars. All of them are in such a hurry to get someplace. Once upon a time, he was impatient, too.

As a child growing up in a gray and gloomy suburb of Port Talbot in Wales, Hopkins was utterly undistinguished. He had no aptitude for school or sports, and his tough, ***working-class*** father regarded him skeptically. “God bless him,” Hopkins said, “but I do remember him saying, ‘Oh, you’re hopeless.’”

A chance encounter with the actor Richard Burton, who had also grown up near Port Talbot and somehow become the toast of Hollywood, would help prod Hopkins toward performance. A gifted mimic, Hopkins saw plenty in Burton’s trajectory that he was desperate to emulate.

“I wanted to be famous, I wanted to be rich,” Hopkins said. “I wanted to be successful, to make up for what I thought was an empty past. And I became all of those things.”

Some happened more quickly than others. After stints at the Royal Welsh College of Music &amp; Drama in Cardiff and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, Hopkins was invited in 1967 by Olivier to join the National Theater, where he became the star’s understudy for a production of Strindberg’s [*“The Dance of Death.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) Asked to go on when Olivier was stricken with appendicitis, Hopkins “walked away with the part of Edgar like a cat with a mouse between its teeth,” Olivier wrote in his memoir.

It wasn’t enough. “I never let on to anyone about my ambitions, but I just wanted to come out to California and be in movies,” Hopkins said.

That inclination for more, more, more extended to his performances, too: During a [*New York production of “Equus,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) the director John Dexter discovered Hopkins had scribbled reams of subtext into the margins of his script. “What is this rubbish?” Dexter asked. “Just learn the lines.” Hepburn, who starred opposite Hopkins in his 1968 film breakthrough, [*“The Lion in Winter,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) also advised him to keep it simple.

Hopkins obliged, though his private life was growing ever more complicated: He drank heavily, and anything he won in life became something he might then fritter away. One day, he woke up from a drunken stupor in an Arizona hotel room, with no memory of the journey that had led him there.

“I thought, ‘Well, I’ve got to stop this because I’m either going to kill somebody or myself,’” Hopkins said. “My life, from that moment on, took on new meaning.”

As Hopkins turned 38, he embraced sobriety. His manner became lighter, and his work became easier. Even his indelibly terrifying performance as Hannibal Lecter in “The Silence of the Lambs” (1991) was an “easy one,” Hopkins said: Rewatch the movie, and you’re likely to notice how much Hopkins is having a ball. “You have to play these things with humor,” he said.

“The Silence of the Lambs” brought Hopkins the A-list stardom he had long craved (as well as the best-actor Oscar), and for a while, he was like the dog that caught the car: There were some superb performances in the ’90s in “Howards End” and “The Remains of the Day,” of course, and some fun flicks like “The Edge,” in which Hopkins went [*mano a mano with a bear*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html), but the actor also dove into Hannibal Lecter sequels that paid diminishing returns, and was only too happy to accept green-screen gigs in the “Thor” and “Transformers” franchises.

Over the last few years, though, Hopkins has experienced something of a renaissance. He calls “The Father” the best part he’s had in years, the culmination of a late-in-life hot streak that includes last year’s “[*The Two Popes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html),” [*“The Dresser”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) opposite Ian McKellen, a star-studded film of “[*King Lear*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html)” and a season-long appearance in HBO’s “Westworld.”

But he no longer ascribes such victories to the talent and ambition that used to burn a hole in his stomach — now, it all seems more like good fortune or kismet, and he’s simply been blessed to be the beneficiary. “I look back on it, and I think, ‘It’s all a dream, anyway,’” he said, with another good-natured shrug. “Of that I am convinced. To me, it’s an illusion, that’s all.”

AT HIS AGE, with his formidable résumé, Hopkins is delighted to continue letting the air out of his own tires. Ego is a serpent, he told me twice, and vanity is simply another thing that must fall away if one is to be of any real use as an actor, or even as a person.

“I don’t know much about anything,” he said, “except I know that what I do now is not of any importance, in the scheme of things.” At home with his wife, Stella, he pursues pleasures that have nothing to do with his acting career, whether it’s reading “Bleak House” on his iPad, practicing Brahms on the piano or letting the cat jump in his lap at lunchtime: “I feel at peace. I’ve lived a long life.”

Sometimes Stella will capture a moment of Zen and post it to his social-media accounts; a [*recent tweet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/movies/anthony-hopkins-chadwick-boseman-oscars.html) of Hopkins in his backyard, half-smiling as the sun lit up his blue eyes, was captioned, “Stay present. One day at a time.” The tweet earned more than 134,000 likes. “I’m quite popular on it,” he said, eyes twinkling.

He will turn 83 on New Year’s Eve. “I know I’m getting old,” he said. “I take care of myself, I’m fit and strong. But there are no guarantees. Look at Sean Connery.”

Did the tragic contours of “The Father” prompt him to think back on his own life, or to mull how the past commingling with the present can really take your breath away? Sort of. When Hopkins recently rewatched the movie, all he could see in his performance was his own father, the tough old baker who passed away in 1981.

In fact, while shooting one particularly emotional scene near the film’s end, Hopkins began to weep. He asked the director Florian Zeller to give him some time to recover before shooting the next take — he knew he’d overplayed it, but he couldn’t help himself. His gaze had alighted on a simple prop, a pair of reading glasses, that reminded him of his late father.

“I’m going to get choked up thinking about it,” he said.

When his father died, Hopkins found in his room a similar pair of glasses sitting next to a road map of America. The baker’s plans to travel would never come to fruition. “It’s heartbreaking,” he said. “He worked hard all his life and finally, at the end, you think, ‘Well, that’s it.’ I remember standing there at his bed and thinking about myself, ‘You’re not so hot, either. There he is, and one day it will be you.’”

But hopefully, no day soon. Hopkins is a big believer in forward momentum, in getting up and moving on, and he only briefly touches on past tragedies in order to pick up the lesson learned and take it wherever he’s going. As we parted, I asked Hopkins where that might be. What more did he hope to accomplish in his 80s?

He smiled. There was one thing. A simple thing, really.

“To go on for another 20 years,” he said.

PHOTOS: From top: the actor Anthony Hopkins in 2018; with Olivia Colman in his new film, “The Father”; and in the title role, which requires him to pivot back and forth from flinty to foggy as a London patriarch struggling with dementia. “You have to know how to turn on that electricity,” Hopkins said. “And I know how to switch it on. I’ve been doing it for a long time.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SONY PICTURES CLASSICS)

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Propping Up a City They Couldn't Afford to Flee***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6053-5761-DXY4-X4P9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1493 words

**Byline:** By Winnie Hu and Nate Schweber

**Body**

While the coronavirus slowed most of the city to a crawl, commuting in the Mount Hope neighborhood of the Bronx increased because of all the essential workers living there.

The sidewalks of Mount Hope fill up early with essential workers.

The health care and construction workers come out first, followed by the delivery drivers, grocery store clerks, security guards, building porters and countless others.

They make their home in this hilltop neighborhood of 53,000 in the Bronx that has been an anchor against the coronavirus. From there, they disperse to all corners of the borough, the city and beyond to provide the services that other people count on in a global health crisis.

As New York City begins reopening, nothing has really changed in Mount Hope. Many residents never stopped going to their jobs. Not when confronted by the dangers of the virus. Not when looting broke out during the protests for racial justice over the death of George Floyd. Not when many other New Yorkers began working from home, and others altogether fled the wealthiest neighborhoods in Manhattan.

The only time that Albertha Johnson, 47, has been able to stay home from her job as a supervisor for the city's Human Resources Administration, the nation's largest social services agency, was when she got the virus in April.

After two weeks off to recover, it was back to her office in Harlem where people come in for help, from domestic abuse victims to those suffering from mental illness who may become violent.

''The type of work I decided to do requires hands-on,'' she said. ''You can't tell somebody 'stop hitting somebody' from home. I choose it because I like what I do.''

The sheer number of essential workers in Mount Hope who cannot work from home is most likely why it was the only neighborhood in the city where the total number of commuting trips actually increased during the height of the pandemic, when New York came to a virtual standstill.

The average number of weekday commutes in Mount Hope, which sits about a mile and a half north of Yankee Stadium, rose 4 percent in April from the same month the previous year, according to an analysis by StreetLight Data, a transportation data analytics company. Across the city, commutes fell 34 percent. The analysis was based primarily on the movements of millions of cellphones around the city combined with census and other data.

Nearly all of Mount Hope's population is black or Hispanic, according to an analysis of census data by Social Explorer, a research company. The median annual household income in the neighborhood is $30,706, compared with $38,085 for the Bronx, and $60,762 for New York City.

Essential workers are also concentrated in other parts of the city, including the Queens neighborhoods of South Jamaica, where there was virtually no change in total commuting trips, and Woodside, where there was a 5 percent decrease. Another neighborhood with many essential workers, East Harlem in Manhattan, had a 7 percent decrease.

In contrast, commuting trips declined by nearly 60 percent in Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill in Brooklyn, and in East Midtown and Turtle Bay in Manhattan. The analysis included trips by car, bus, subway, bike and walking.

In New York City, many essential workers who have shouldered the burden of the pandemic put in long, hard hours for not much money.

There are more than 1 million of these front-line workers who provide health care and social services, keep the subway and buses running, make deliveries, clean buildings, and stock shelves at groceries and pharmacies, according to a report by City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer.

In the Bronx, the borough with the highest Covid-19 death rate, many essential workers say they lacked adequate defenses against the virus. They were not provided with enough masks and protective gear and had limited access to testing and medical care until well after the outbreak had taken hold.

State and city officials have acknowledged the challenges they faced early on, but say that they have vastly expanded testing in the Bronx and have provided enormous amounts of protective gear, like face masks.

Health officials are increasingly looking at how and why people are getting sick, including what jobs they have. Many doctors and public health experts believe that front-line workers are at higher risk because they often spend hours around other people and cannot always maintain social distancing.

Mount Hope falls within two ZIP codes, 10453 and 10457, that each had more than 2,000 reported coronavirus cases as of June 9, and ranked within the top 25 ZIP codes in the city in terms of the number of cases, though it did not have especially high rates of cases per capita, according to a New York Times analysis of health data.

Ruben Diaz Jr., the Bronx borough president, said the borough has attracted many essential workers partly because of its efforts to create thousands of new jobs in recent years. The Bronx's unemployment rate dipped to 4.7 percent in February before the coronavirus crisis exploded; it soared to 16.5 percent in April, compared with 14.6 percent for the city as a whole.

''These are the soldiers we were putting on the front-line with no ammunition and no body armor to fight the enemy,'' Mr. Diaz said.

Many Bronx neighborhoods are now struggling not only with the health impacts of the virus, but also the economic fallout as workers have been laid off.

''It's a double whammy,'' said Jonathan Bowles, the executive director of the Center for an Urban Future. ''These are hard-luck neighborhoods. They're really dealing with it from both sides. I don't know how they're coping.''

The center found in a recent report that 1 in 4 people who live in the Bronx neighborhoods of Mount Hope, Morris Heights and Fordham South worked in industries decimated by layoffs -- restaurants, hotels, retail and personal care services.

Mount Hope has drawn lower-income workers and families to the west Bronx with affordable rents in aging apartment buildings and houses, and ready access to subway and bus lines. The streets are lined with family-owned pharmacies, hair and nail salons, cellphone stores, bodegas and specialty shops selling halal and African foods.

Mount Hope residents commute an average of 41 minutes to work, the same as the citywide average, according to the Social Explorer analysis, and about 26 percent of neighborhood residents have commutes of an hour or more. Only about 5 percent normally work at home.

John Carter, who has diabetes, said he was so scared of getting the virus that he took two weeks of vacation so he could stay home from his job as a cook in Brooklyn. But when that ended, he said, his boss told him, ''You have to come to work -- or.''

Mr. Carter added, ''You know what the 'or' means.''

''You talk about essential workers, putting their lives on the line, why can't we be treated like humans?'' said Mr. Carter, 44, who has to take three subway lines to work.

The virus has also rattled his neighbor, Roy Lee-Bey, who now wears rubber gloves to deliver bottled water from his truck. ''People need water,'' said Mr. Bey, 46, who earns $63,000 a year. ''And you never know when you're going to be in need of assistance.''

Ms. Johnson, the supervisor at the city's social services agency, has spent part of her federal stimulus check on taxi rides to her job in Harlem. She usually takes the subway but wanted to minimize her exposure to the virus.

She started coughing anyway and went to a doctor. He told her it was probably allergies. When she didn't get better, she saw another doctor, who tested her for Covid-19. She was positive.

Ms. Johnson, a single mother of one daughter, said she moved to Mount Hope 18 years ago and could never afford to leave. Her dream is to buy a house in New Jersey. ''This area is collectively a ***working-class*** neighborhood,'' she said. ''We can't save money. We can't afford to sacrifice to get better.''

Jennifer Lutchman, a nurses's aide who immigrated from Guyana, begins her day by checking her own temperature before getting on a bus to go to work.

''My patients are very scared and I've hardly had a good night's sleep,'' said Ms. Lutchman, 41, who has watched people around her get sick.

Ms. Lutchman earns $19 an hour, barely enough to support her family. Her husband, a security guard, was laid off from the Disney store in Times Square during the pandemic.

When the protests erupted, she worried about getting home before the city curfew, which has since been lifted. All night long, she heard police and ambulance sirens and helicopters whirring above. Her father's pharmacy in the middle of Mount Hope was ransacked by looters.

But her patients needed her, she said, so she kept going to work.

''We don't know what's out there and we're putting ourselves at risk,'' she said. ''We don't know what we're bringing home to our families.''

Elaine Chen contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/16/nyregion/mount-hope-bronx-coronavirus-essential-workers.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/16/nyregion/mount-hope-bronx-coronavirus-essential-workers.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ROY LEE-BEY, a delivery truck driver.

JENNIFER LUTCHMAN, a nurse's aide. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AL J. THOMPSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A5)

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2020

**End of Document**



[***David E. Kelley Is Back on Network TV With ‘Big Sky’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:619S-HTB1-DXY4-X2N9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1742 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Vineyard

**Highlight:** The ABC drama is a female-centric thriller, like Kelley’s HBO drama “The Undoing.” In an interview, the prolific creator discusses his affinity for such shows and for Hugh Grant’s sexy ad-libs.

**Body**

The ABC drama is a female-centric thriller, like Kelley’s HBO drama “The Undoing.” In an interview, the prolific creator discusses his affinity for such shows and for Hugh Grant’s sexy ad-libs.

David E. Kelley has been around long enough to know that his current hot streak could go cold any day now.

“Some shows stick, and some shows don’t,” he said last week. “There have been a couple of stickers of late.”

The [*prolific*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) television producer first established himself in the 1980s as a master of [*courtroom drama*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) and bizarre twists on “L.A. Law” — remember the famous [*elevator shaft*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) scene? — before riding a second wave of TV hits in the 1990s. In 1999, he became the only showrunner to win Emmys for best comedy (“[*Ally McBeal*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking)”) and best drama (“[*The Practice*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking)”) in the same year.

But after a string of flops on network television (“Snoops,” “Girls Club”), Kelley switched over to streaming and cable. Mostly drifting away from the law-firm dramas with which he first made his mark — though “Goliath,” on Amazon, followed a rogue lawyer played by Billy Bob Thornton — he started adapting novels. This opened a new vein of hits with prestige psychological thrillers such as HBO’s “[*Big Little Lies*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking)” and “[*The Undoing*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking),” both murder mysteries starring Nicole Kidman that wallow in the scandalous lives of coastal elites.

Now he’s back on network with “Big Sky,” a 10-episode series premiering Tuesday on ABC. While it, too, is a murder mystery, the show otherwise seems a little outside Kelley’s usual jurisdiction, at least on the surface. Based on a [*series of four*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) books by C.J. Box, the story is set in Montana (the show is shot in Vancouver) and centers on small-town, ***working-class*** people. One such person is a [*long-haul truck driver*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) named Ronald Pergram (played by Brian Geraghty), who thinks of himself as a hero but is actually a predator who tasers and kidnaps female and gender-fluid characters. An ex-rodeo rider turned rookie private investigator named Cassie Dewell (Kylie Bunbury) is in pursuit.

“There was something delicious about this young de facto law enforcement officer in the Wild West,” Kelley said. “In a world where resources are thin and calls for help are often not answered, she’s out there on her own, to a certain extent, fighting the bad guys.” (And the good guys, too, at times — it’s complicated.)

Kelley has been both praised and [*criticized*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) for his depictions of women, the criticisms aimed primarily at the flighty, neurotic characters like Ally McBeal, as well as at the various [*vixens*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) and [*sexy sideki*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*cks*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) who have populated his shows. With “Big Sky,” Kelley is bringing darker cable and streaming sensibilities to broadcast television (including some of his trademark twists and heavy themes, like sex trafficking), but it won’t be a steady onslaught of violence against defenseless women. “This is not a damsels-in-distress series,” he promised.

In a phone interview, Kelley talked about adapting “Big Sky” and “The Undoing,” which concludes its six-episode run on Nov. 29, and the connections between the two shows. These are edited excerpts from the conversation, which include mild spoilers for “The Undoing” if you’re still catching up.

“Big Sky” isn’t your usual sort of story, or your usual kind of milieu. What made you want to adapt these books, especially since you’ve [*said*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) before that you didn’t want to do serial killer shows?

You’re right. I thought “Dexter” was brilliant. And I loved “The Sopranos” — Tony Soprano killed people. If it’s a series where you’re going to be spending a long time with these people, they can become very real in your head. To live in that world with those people, it helps for our own survival to like them, if not love them. And I never saw myself as a person who could live inside the head of that kind of depravity.

If you look at the evolution or metamorphosis of Ronald Pergram, I think he’s probably a bit more vulnerable in the television version. He was riveting in the book, scary even, but I think we unearthed a little more of his humanity. He’s not all evil. If we’re successful, the audience will be both afraid of Ronald but also feel for him. And John Carroll Lynch is so good at channeling State Trooper Rick Legarski that it’s both amusing and horrifying at the same time.

You burn through nearly half of the first Cassie Dewell book, “The Highway,” in the first episode. What’s the pacing of this show going to be like?

We’ll probably go through two books in the first season, with the second story line involving another kind of high-octane cat-and-mouse chase with Cassie and a drug cartel. Then we’ll move on to the third book. And then we’ll send C.J. Box smoothies so he can keep writing more books! [Laughs.] Although knowing C.J., he’d probably prefer a good strong cup of coffee and then a day on the river where he can recharge. We’ll go through C.J.’s books as he writes them, and we’ll probably go beyond that, too, just because series television is the beast that eats script after script after script, and you’ve got to keep feeding that beast.

We’re expanding C.J.’s world, and ultimately, what I think will make the series distinctive is that we’ll use these high-octane cases to unearth the very human vulnerabilities and fragile complexities of our characters.

You address the current pandemic in “Big Sky,” but we see no one wearing a mask. Why? Did you worry about what message that might send?

That’s a tricky question, and it has nothing to do with politics. I’m a mask wearer myself, and I would happily have characters wear masks. But we’re mindful of the fact that when people turn on a show at 10 o’clock at night, their main mission is to be entertained, not educated, schooled or lectured. People are looking for a little bit of escape from the bad news.

So we acknowledge that we’re living in pandemic times, but we’re not delving into it in a real way because if we were, then you would never see the actors’ faces, and we pay a lot of money for those faces. Fortuitously, it is a show that is outside most of the time, in big wide-open spaces. I didn’t have to scratch my head and think, “How are we going to shoot this during Covid?”

“The Highway” starts off with a betrayal. Without giving too much away, you changed the nature of that betrayal in “Big Sky” so that our introduction to your two female leads ends up with them caught up in a physical altercation. Were you ever worried that this might seem like a catfight?

I was. In fact, one of the tone notes for that fight is that it shouldn’t be like there are two women fighting over a man. It was described on the page like they’re two hockey players who dropped their gloves and are just looking to assert dominion. It’s two strong women not backing down from each other. I hope it comes across on the screen that even if the men thump their chests more, the women in Montana are tougher than the men. In Episode 3, Ronald says, “We kidnapped the wrong teenagers,” and boy, did they, because these young girls, Grace [Jade Pettyjohn] and Danielle [Natalie Alyn Lind], they’re tough. There is a certain ferocity to all of the women.

Does Grace (Nicole Kidman) on “The Undoing” share that ferocity? So far, it’s hard to tell.

She is definitely ferocious, too, but she’s a victim of her own ferocity as well. Her perseverance and power to cling to a narrative or a version of the world is pretty unflinching. It’s not necessarily a good thing.

Both “Big Sky” and “The Undoing” are female-centric thrillers, with male sociopaths who bring chaos into the women’s lives and love triangles with married men that are resolved, intentionally or not, by murder.

I don’t think I was drawn to that recipe. [Laughs.] But who knows! We’re the last people to understand ourselves. But I take your point, and I’ll write about something different for the next one.

For me, it started with loving both books and then going, “What if this could be translated to the screen?” With “Big Sky,” we’re sticking more closely to the architecture of the book series. For “The Undoing,” I kept wondering, “What if the character of Jonathan came back?” That question started haunting me, and that was my springboard for an adaptation where we do deviate from the book. [The director] Susanne Bier and I both loved the part of the book where Grace was rebuilding herself after her world fell apart. But for the purposes of this run, it was more about the thriller aspect. Who knows? If we did the extended life of Grace Fraser beyond this season of “The Undoing,” maybe we’d get into that reconstruction part.

That could have potential, the way “Big Little Lies” started out as a limited series and then got a second season. And Susanne Bier [*has said*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) you’ve been joking about doing a second season.

I don’t anticipate doing that; I think “The Undoing” is going to be a one-off. I wouldn’t do it without Susanne Bier, and she’s getting pretty busy now. But my point was that it wasn’t so much of a rejection of the second half of the book. We just concluded that for this limited series, the place where it would live and thrive best was in the psychological-suspense-whodunit-thriller genre.

At one point, Jonathan (Hugh Grant) seductively asks a showering Grace, “Would you like to be washed?,” a line that has captured people’s [*attention*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) and [*imagination*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking). You’ve said before that you often come up with dialogue while in the shower, did this scene originate there as well?

The shower is where it usually starts, and there is a science to that. There’s a default part of our brain which tends to be activated when we’re doing things that are completely unrelated to what we’re supposed to be concentrating on. So I’ve learned to surrender to that and reach for those ideas as well as the shampoo.

But that was not even my line. That was the vulgarity of Hugh Grant! And “Shall I get my rubber gloves?” was written by Hugh, too. He had a few choice ad-libs, and a lot of them made the cut. He’s a very clever man.

On Twitter, viewers have made cases for [*virtually*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*every*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*character*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*on the*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*show*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*being*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*the*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) [*killer*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking). Even Jean Hanff Korelitz, who wrote the novel the show is based on, [*wonders*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking) if you changed it from her [*version*](https://www.primetimer.com/features/the-ultimate-david-e-kelley-ranking).

[Laughs.] And being old, I’ve forgotten it myself.

PHOTO: In “Big Sky,” Ronald Pergram (Brian Geraghty, left, pictured with Jesse James Keitel), thinks of himself as a hero but is actually a predator — an atypical kind of premise for a show by David E. Kelley. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Darko Sikman/ABC FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***The Hugmobile: Tales of Resilience in the Pandemic***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61KM-7XG1-JBG3-61TF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Brazil

Making Distance Disappear

''I am yearning for your hug,'' wrote the third grader. A few months into quarantine, his teacher, Maura Cristina Silva, could tell that her vivacious students were starting to buckle.

They had become 57 tiny boxes on a computer screen, leaving her with shaky and poorly lit glimpses into the toll the pandemic was taking on a cluster of families in Padre Miguel, a ***working-class*** district in western Rio de Janeiro.

Students with learning disabilities were falling behind, as were those who did not have their own computers.

But the text from the unhugged student, which came four months after their public school had been abruptly shuttered, got to Ms. Silva. The child had used the word saudade, a Portuguese term that conveys feelings of longing and melancholy.

Ms. Silva wondered if she could find a way to safely embrace her students.

Her first idea was to use a transparent shower curtain fitted out with four plastic sleeves -- but sanitizing it after each embrace seemed impractical.

Then she came up with the idea of a pandemic ''hugging kit'' -- disposable raincoats, surgical gloves, face masks and hand sanitizer.

The response from parents was resounding: How soon could she drop by?

She rolled out the hugging operation in late July, renting a sound truck and driving from door to door, blasting a classroom playlist her students loved.

''Distance can't destroy what we have built,'' Ms. Silva, 47, said on a recent rainy afternoon after visiting three students. ''I needed to show them that our bonds are still alive, even if I'm not able to hold them every morning.''

The kids beamed as Ms. Silva draped herself and each student in plastic with a surgeon's precision. Then she wrapped her arms around each one and lifted them off the ground for a long, tender embrace.

Yasmim Vitória de Oliveira said she missed the museum outings and classroom pajama parties that Ms. Silva used to organize.

''She's playful and she lets us have fun,'' the 9-year-old said.

Ms. Silva said that once the pandemic passes, she will hug her students with abandon, never again taking for granted the healing power of touch.

''In a moment of tragedy, we've been able to share moments of love,'' Ms. Silva said. ''That is very powerful.''

ERNESTO LONDOÑO and MANUELA ANDREONI

India

'It Tore Me Up'

When India's lockdown hit Pradeep Sahu, a wealthy construction contractor, knew exactly what was going to happen.

For years, Mr. Sahu had worked closely with migrant laborers in Surat, an industrial city on India's western coast, and he knew how tenuous their lives were. They lived 10 to a room, sleeping wall to wall, and toiled away in textile factories with zero savings. They barely had access to a toilet.

When all the factories closed in March, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers ran out of food. The state government was slow to help. Many workers were desperate to go back to their home state of Odisha, a thousand miles away, but had no way of getting there.

So Mr. Sahu, 48, who also hails from Odisha, became a one-man aid organization.

Tapping his business contacts, he pressured the government and secured rations for thousands. He organized train tickets. He found a family living in a garage who hadn't bathed in days, and took them back to his home.

''My mental condition was one of a mad person,'' Mr. Sahu said. ''When I visited their habitats, my fellow men cried, 'We have not eaten in days.' It tore me up. It made me angry and frustrated.''

A spiritual man, Mr. Sahu works in an office that feels like a temple. In the background, Hindu chants run in an endless loop.

When asked why he felt so motivated to help, Mr. Sahu paused. The answer was so obvious.

''Who else would take care of them?'' he said.

JEFFREY GETTLEMAN and SUHASINI RAJ

Italy

The Calling

When an Italian bookstore appealed for volunteers to read stories or poems to elderly and homebound people locked in by the virus, they figured a few bookworms might heed the call.

''We wanted to reach people who are isolated in this moment and might be feeling alone,'' said Samanta Romanese, who works at the Ubik bookstore, a local institution in the northeastern seaport city of Trieste.

The idea was that Ms. Romanese and her three co-workers -- and with luck a few volunteers -- would read to people for around 20 minutes over the phone during breaks, and on days off. ''We were thinking small,'' she said.

But the response was overwhelming.

After the bookstore issued its appeal late last month, more than 150 volunteers signed up. Some were Italians living as far away as the Netherlands and England. Some were members of a theater company that itself has been sidelined by the virus.

Ms. Romanese said she reached out to local health authorities, parishes, social services and the Red Cross to identify potential people to read to. Volunteers and listeners chat a little, read a little.

Ms. Romanese said she had been inspired by a story she'd read on social media about a Madrid librarian who was reading to the elderly during the pandemic.

In France, Paméla Boittiaux, a librarian in the northern city of Douai, had a similar idea. She set up surprise phone readings of book excerpts, poems and short stories over several lockdowns this year. ''We managed to stay connected to our readers, but more importantly to keep a sense of purpose,'' Ms. Boittiaux said.

Ms. Romanese's initiative in Trieste was timed to coincide with Christmas, but is now open-ended.

''In a world that is becoming increasingly inhumane and dehumanizing, in a moment made more difficult by this virus, I believe that it is fundamental to remain human, to reach out, to really look out for one another,'' she said.

ELISABETTA POVOLEDO and AURELIEN BREEDEN

Belarus

Out of Many, One

When I first met Dr. Andrei Vitushka, it was in a Minsk hospital courtyard in August, and he had just gotten out of jail.

How he had ended up there, stuffed into a six-man cell with as many as 31 other people for three days, spoke to the arbitrary terror faced by the country's pro-democracy protesters. Dr. Vitushka, 42, and his wife had come to a police station hoping to find their detained teenage son; instead, they were locked up themselves.

In November, Dr. Vitushka, one of Minsk's best-known neonatologists, was told he would lose his job at a state hospital, a move widely seen as retribution for his openly anti-government stance. But when I checked in with him a few weeks later by text, he was upbeat. ''All in all, I'm healthy and I'm free, which by today's standards is quite something,'' he said.

The doctor is just one of many Belarusians who remain optimistic after perhaps the most trying year of their lives. Their authoritarian president, Aleksandr G. Lukashenko, dismissed the coronavirus as a bug to be cured by a daily glass of vodka, refusing to enact any social-distancing measures. Then he declared himself the winner of a blatantly falsified election, and cracked down on protests in the most intense wave of police violence Belarus had seen in three decades of post-Soviet independence.

But even as the president wouldn't act to check the spread of the virus, community groups sprang up and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help equip hospitals. A grass-roots movement, from tech workers to soccer fans, came together to push for voluntary social distancing -- a ''people's quarantine,'' some called it. One tech company, on Dr. Vitushka's advice, bought about 30 coffee machines to equip intensive care units.

After the August election, some of these groups raised millions of dollars for the victims of police violence and state repression, further energizing the protests and helping build a sense of community.

''All these authoritarian, totalitarian regimes rely on everyone being on their own,'' Dr. Vitushka told me. ''And here we all came together in the face of a threat.''

For now, Mr. Lukashenko remains in power. But Dr. Vitushka is convinced that this year's pain -- both for him and for his country -- has been worth it. Sooner or later, he says, political change will come.

''We're living through an intense coming-of-age period,'' he said. ''If I had the choice to go through all of this again or not, I would say that we had to go through it. We had to get on this path.''

ANTON TROIANOVSKI

China

Wuhan's 'Old Cat'

He has fostered more than 100 stray cats over 14 years in his home in Wuhan, China. But never had Shuai Lihua's love for the creatures been put to the test as it was early this year when the pandemic broke out in his hometown.

On Jan. 23, Mr. Shuai, 43, watched with alarm as a flood of messages poured into his phone from panicked cat owners. Earlier that day, the Chinese government had locked down Wuhan, in a desperate push to stop the spread of the virus. Millions of residents who had left for what they thought would be a short trip suddenly found themselves stranded outside the city. Many had left only a week's worth of food and water for their cats at home. Please, they begged, could he help?

At the time, very little was known about a virus that would go on to infect tens of millions around the world. The normally bustling metropolis had suddenly gone quiet. Most of Wuhan's residents had barricaded themselves inside their homes out of fear.

But Mr. Shuai, who goes by the nickname Lao Mao or ''Old Cat,'' did not hesitate. ''I just knew that I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I didn't do anything,'' he recalled. ''It's not every day that loving cats becomes a life-or-death matter.''

Almost every day for nearly three months, Mr. Shuai crisscrossed the city from morning to night. He wore a protective suit, goggles and a mask, and carried bags of cat food and a list of addresses. When there were no spare keys or digital locks, Mr. Shuai had no choice but to get creative and, well, catlike, climb over walls, scale fire escapes, shinny up rusty pipes and crawl through windows.

Over 10 weeks, he and other volunteers made around 2,000 house calls to feed and care for hundreds of cats -- and one rabbit. In April, when the lockdown was lifted, many of the cat owners came by the animal shelter where Mr. Shuai works to drop off small gifts and say thank you.

''It was worth it, not just for the cats, but also so that the owners could have some peace of mind,'' Mr. Shuai said. ''Looking back at that time now, it all just feels like a dream.''

AMY QIN

Bolivia

And Tea, Too

The women were about to give birth, but were terrified of the virus, and of the hospitals where infected people were being treated. And so from across central Bolivia, they called for help. Justina Calle Flores responded.

For months, Ms. Calle Flores, a midwife in the city of Cochabamba, traveled to the women's homes to attend to them, risking infection so her patients wouldn't have to. She traveled for hours by car, motorbike and foot, arriving with her face mask and gloves, as well as bunches of rosemary she used to make teas to ease labor.

In all, Ms. Calle Flores, 57, has helped more than 200 women give birth during the pandemic, far more than she delivers in a normal year.

Sometimes they cried and pulled at her braids. Almost always, a new child in their arms, they thanked her profusely, telling her they would have had to do it alone if she had not arrived.

The death toll from the coronavirus in Bolivia has been particularly high. But Ms. Calle Flores, a midwife for 25 years and a devout Christian, continued her work out of a sense of duty.

''I wasn't afraid to die,'' she said. ''Dying for me is a blessing, because I'm on the Lord's path.''

JULIE TURKEWITZ

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/world/a-flying-elephant-a-teachers-hugs-12-tales-of-pandemic-resilience.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/world/a-flying-elephant-a-teachers-hugs-12-tales-of-pandemic-resilience.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: BRAZIL: Maura Cristina Silva got a bouquet on a visit to her student Laisa Ribeiro da Silva in Rio de Janeiro this month. ''Our bonds are still alive,'' she said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DADO GALDIERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

ITALY: Samanta Romanese at the Ubik bookstore in Trieste. She started a reading program ''to reach people who are isolated in this moment.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCESCA VOLPI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

CHINA: Shuai Lihua fed hundreds of cats almost daily in the silence of lockdown in Wuhan in the early weeks of the pandemic.

BELARUS: Dr. Andrei Vitushka, who was briefly jailed in August, in Minsk last week. ''Here we all came together in the face of a threat,'' he said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YAHUEN YERCHAK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

INDIA: Pradeep Sahu became a oneman aid group for migrant laborers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PRADEEP SAHU)

BOLIVIA Justina Calle Flores, a midwife, visited mothers-to-be at home. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA JUSTINA CALLE FLORES)

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2020

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[***Jon Ossoff, a Democrat, Narrowly Misses Outright Win in Georgia House Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5NBS-W2F1-DXY4-X2S7-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Mr. Ossoff, who is making his first bid for elective office, will face Karen Handel, a Republican, in a runoff election in June.

**Body**

ROSWELL, Ga. — [*Jon Ossoff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html), a Democrat making his first bid for elective office, [*narrowly missed winning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html) outright in a heavily conservative House district in Georgia on Wednesday, throwing a scare into Republicans in a special congressional election that was seen as an early referendum on President Trump.

Mr. Ossoff received 48.1 percent of the vote, just short of the 50 percent threshold needed to win the seat, and he will face Karen Handel, the top Republican vote-getter, in a June runoff.

A documentary filmmaker and former congressional staff member, Mr. Ossoff, 30, had hoped to avert a runoff in the Sixth District, a Republican-dominated section of the Atlanta suburbs that had been represented by Tom Price, who is now Mr. Trump’s [*health and human services secretary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html). But despite his financial advantage — Mr. Ossoff had raised $8.3 million, more than quadruple that of the next-closest candidate — and a highly energized liberal base, a majority was just out of reach in a district that has not sent a Democrat to Congress since the Carter administration.

Mr. Ossoff released a statement early Wednesday after the race was called.

“This is already a remarkable victory,” he said. “We defied the odds, shattered expectations, and now are ready to fight on and win in June.”

Mr. Ossoff’s strong showing will ensure that national Democrats continue to compete here and will increase pressure on the party to contest a special House election next month in Montana that it has so far ignored. Combined with Democrats’ [*better-than-expected performance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html) in a special House election in Kansas last week, the Georgia result will be an immediate boon to Democratic groups, lifting their fund-raising and bolstering candidate recruitment efforts, while sobering Republicans who are assessing whether to run in Mr. Trump’s first midterm election. Already, Republican candidates and outside groups have had to spend over $7 million against Democrats in a series of deeply conservative districts.

Early Wednesday, Mr. Trump, who had posted a number of Twitter messages on the contest in the last few days, claimed a victory for Republicans before the race was called.

As Mr. Ossoff faces Ms. Handel in a head-to-head race on June 20, it is unclear whether he will be able to sustain the success he enjoyed on Tuesday, in an 18-person field. Ms. Handel, who received just under 20 percent of the vote, is a former Georgia secretary of state and is viewed as an establishment-friendly Republican. While she has struggled in her two most recent campaigns, losing primaries for governor and senator, she will receive the full support of a party that dominates Georgia politics, as well as nearly unlimited resources from Washington Republicans, in the runoff.

Ms. Handel, 55, has portrayed herself as a Trump supporter, though she was less fervent in her backing for him than were the other Republican candidates in the race, who adopted Mr. Trump’s catchphrases and style in an attempt to stand out.

The intense Republican competition and liberal enthusiasm lifted Democratic hopes that they could snatch a surprise victory.

“We are certainly going for an outright win here today,” Mr. Ossoff told CNN on Tuesday before the polls closed.

Much as they did in last week’s race in Kansas, Democrats initially got their hopes up after promising early-vote returns were posted soon after polls closed. But as the Election Day results trickled in, it became clear that those early and absentee ballots, reflecting their fired-up base, would not be sufficient to match the Republicans’ structural advantage in the district.

On Tuesday night, hundreds of Ossoff supporters crammed into a ballroom at a Crowne Plaza hotel. Cries of delight erupted as early returns flashed on big television screens. But many attendees were cautiously optimistic, with an emphasis on caution.

Janice Owens, 60, a project manager who had been knocking on doors and making calls for Mr. Ossoff, said she and others would not feel the effort was wasted if Mr. Ossoff failed to avert a runoff.

“I don’t think anybody thinks it’s for naught,” she said. “Because we’re not giving up.” If anything, the Ossoff campaign showed how Democrats had been successful, even in this Republican-friendly chunk of suburbia, in converting an enthusiastic but inchoate anti-Trump movement into a real political force.

Ms. Handel took the stage at a lightly attended victory party of her own shortly after 11 p.m. to claim her spot in the runoff — and urge Republicans to unify to stop Democrats’ effort to “steal a seat.”

Ms. Handel, battling a few bouts of feedback from a microphone, invoked the “great legacy” of a district that she noted had produced the former House Speaker [*Newt Gingrich*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html), Senator [*Johnny Isakson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html) and Mr. Price.

But she made no mention of Mr. Trump. Ms. Handel dismissed her opponent as a “young man” beholden to national liberals and vowed to “kick a little Ossoff.”

The contest here effectively represented the first performance review at the ballot box for Mr. Trump and the Republican Congress among the sort of upscale voters who were left without a political home last fall. Mr. Price’s former district is the most highly educated Republican-controlled district in the country. And while the president won here in Atlanta’s booming northern suburbs, he did so by just a single point four years after [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html) romped to a 23-point victory.

For all of the attention lavished on the ***working class*** — Rust Belt voters who flocked to Mr. Trump’s campaign — voters who have flourished in the 21st-century economy will prove more crucial when it comes to the fight for control of Congress next year. If Democrats are to have a chance at recapturing the House, they will have to win over the dominant constituency here: suburbanites who only grudgingly cast a presidential ballot in November and have no deep affinity for either Mr. Trump or the Democrats.

None of the major Republican contenders pointedly distanced themselves from the president — they did not dare anger the partisans most likely to vote in a spring special election — but most of them did not make him central to their appeals, either.

With Republican Party officials worried that Democratic enthusiasm might be enough for Mr. Ossoff to get more than 50 percent of the vote and win the seat outright, though, Mr. Trump eventually did weigh in on the contest. He recorded a robocall delivered Monday to Republican voters in the district, warning that Mr. Ossoff would “raise your taxes, destroy your health care and flood our country with illegal immigrants.” And he posted on Twitter a series of messages similarly criticizing Mr. Ossoff while prodding Republicans to “[*force runoff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html).”

Mr. Ossoff walked a careful line when it came to Mr. Trump. He opened his bid with donor-tailored appeals to “Make Trump Furious” and continued similar targeted advertising throughout his campaign. But he also sought to cast himself as a consensus-oriented moderate focused on the district, dismissing Mr. Trump’s late intervention as so much noise from Washington.

Sensing an opportunity to deliver an early blow to Mr. Trump, and nudged ahead by an animated base hungry to register its fury, Democrats aggressively competed to win outright on Tuesday and avert a more directly partisan runoff. In addition to Mr. Ossoff’s astounding $8.3 million haul through the end of March, the House Democratic campaign arm poured money and staff into the district.

Republicans were as fractured as Democrats were unified, with political veterans such as Ms. Handel on the ballot as well as newcomers who saw an opportunity at a moment when the party seemed to be in flux.

The Republican field was divided over the [*failed bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html), but it treated the issue delicately in what amounted to a concession that what was once the safest stance in a Republican primary — demanding full repeal of President Barack Obama’s health care law — was not so clear-cut any longer.

In an illustration of how nationalized the race became, 95 percent of Mr. Ossoff’s fund-raising haul was from out of state, and even more was from outside the district, where the candidate himself does not reside (though he grew up there).

Republicans blistered him on this score and much else, a kitchen-sink campaign that totaled $5 million yet also stirred muttering within the party about why there had not been a more coherent approach to a district they knew would be competitive, given Mr. Trump’s weakness here. But the unrelenting Republican assault eventually paid off, raising Mr. Ossoff’s negative ratings and nudging conservative voters to show up for an unusual spring election.

Jonathan Martin reported from Roswell, and Richard Fausset from Atlanta.

PHOTO: Jon Ossoff, a Democratic candidate, spoke to supporters at an event in Sandy Springs, an Atlanta suburb, on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kevin D. Liles for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Related Articles**

* [*5 Takeaways as Georgia House Race Heads to Overtime*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html)

1. [*Ron Estes, a Republican, Survives Tight House Race to Win Kansas Seat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/10/us/politics/jon-ossoff-georgia-senate.html)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***‘Agent Sonya,’ by Ben Macintyre: An Excerpt***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60V9-V871-JBG3-63V3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 15, 2020 Tuesday 10:00 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 2622 words

**Highlight:** An excerpt from “Agent Sonya,” by Ben Macintyre

**Body**

If you had visited the quaint English village of Great Rollright in 1945, you might have spotted a thin, dark-haired and unusually elegant woman emerging from a stone farmhouse called The Firs, and climbing on to her bicycle. She had three children and a husband, Len, who worked in the nearby aluminium factory. She was friendly but reserved, and spoke English with a faint accent. She baked excellent cakes. Her neighbours in the Cotswolds knew little about her.

They did not know that the woman they called ‘Mrs Burton’ was really Colonel Ursula Kuczynski of the Red Army, a dedicated communist, a decorated Soviet military intelligence officer and a highly-trained spy who had conducted espionage operations in China, Poland and Switzerland, before coming to Britain on Moscow’s orders. They did not know that her three children each had a different father, nor that her husband was also a secret agent. They were unaware that she was a German Jew, a fanatical opponent of Nazism who had spied against the fascists during the Second World War and was now spying on Britain and America in the new Cold War. They did not know that in the outdoor privy behind The Firs, Mrs Burton had constructed a powerful radio transmitter tuned to Soviet intelligence headquarters in Moscow. The villagers of Great Rollright did not know that in her last mission of the war, Mrs Burton had infiltrated communist spies into a top-secret American operation parachuting anti-Nazi agents into the dying Third Reich. These “Good Germans” were supposedly spying for America; in reality, they were working for Colonel Kuczynski of Great Rollright.

But Mrs Burton’s most important undercover job was one that would shape the future of the world: she was helping the Soviet Union to build the atom bomb.

[ Return to the review of [*“Agent Sonya.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/15/books/review/agent-sonya-ben-macintyre.html)]

For years, Ursula had run a network of communist spies deep inside Britain’s atomic weapons research programme, passing on information to Moscow that would eventually enable Soviet scientists to assemble their own nuclear device. She was fully engaged in village life; her scones were the envy of Great Rollright. But in her parallel, hidden life she was responsible, in part, for maintaining the balance of power between East and West and (she believed) preventing nuclear war by stealing the science of atomic weaponry from one side to give to the other. When she hopped on to her bike with her ration book and carrier bags, Mrs Burton (or, more precisely, Beurton) was going shopping for lethal secrets.

Ursula Kuczynski was a mother, housewife, novelist, expert radio technician, spymaster, courier, saboteur, bomb-maker, Cold Warrior and secret agent, all at the same time.

Her codename was ‘Sonya’. This is her story.

\*

On 1 May, 1924, a Berlin policeman smashed his rubber truncheon into the back of a 16-year-old girl, and helped to forge a revolutionary.

For several hours, thousands of Berliners had been marching through the city streets in the May Day parade, the annual celebration of the working classes. Their number included many communists, including a large youth delegation.

At the head of the communist group marched a slim girl wearing a worker’s cap, two weeks short of her 17th birthday. This was Ursula Kuczynski’s first street demonstration.

The parade was turning into Mittelstrasse, when the police charged.

Ursula was sent sprawling on the pavement. She looked up to find a burly policeman towering over her. There were sweat patches under the arms of his green uniform. The man grinned, raised his truncheon, and brought it down with all his force into the small of her back.

Her first sensation was one of fury, followed by the most acute pain she had ever experienced; and then a furious determination not to be cowed. “I continued with the demonstration,” she later wrote, “not knowing yet that it was a decision for life.”

The Kuczynski family was rich, influential, contented and, like every other Jewish household in Berlin, utterly unaware that within a few years their world would be swept away by war, revolution and systematic genocide.

Ursula Maria was the second of Robert and Berta Kuczynski’s six children, a gawky child, inquisitive and restless in a way her mother found perfectly exhausting, with a shock of dark, wiry hair. At night, she wrote: poems, short stories, tales of adventure and romance. Denied an academic education, she poured her energies into her imagined world. Her childish writings reflected a craving for excitement, a sense of theatre, a love of the absurd. Ursula was always the central character in her own stories.

Absorbing her father’s left-wing political instincts, shocked by the human degradation she witnessed on the streets of Berlin, appalled by the rise of fascism and entranced by the swirling new ideas of social equality, class war and revolution, Ursula was drawn inexorably to communism.

A few weeks before her 19th birthday, Ursula joined the KPD, the largest communist party in Europe, whose paramilitary wing was locked in escalating conflict with the Nazi brownshirts. The communists prepared for battle. Ursula obtained a Luger semi-automatic pistol, and taught herself to shoot. When the revolution came, she would be ready.

[ Return to the review of [*“Agent Sonya.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/15/books/review/agent-sonya-ben-macintyre.html)]

One afternoon Ursula joined a group of young leftists for an afternoon of swimming and sunbathing at a lakeside outside Berlin. Ursula later recalled the moment. “I turn around, and there is a man in his mid-twenties, well groomed, with a soft slouch, a clever, almost beautiful face. He looks at me. His eyes are wide, and dark brown, he is a Jew.”

Rudolf Hamburger was an architecture student and almost the ideal boyfriend, save for one problem: he was not a communist, yet. I believe that, if we stay together, it is only a matter of time until he joins the party,” she told her brother. They married in October 1929.

The young couple were happy, jobless, broke and, in Ursula’s case, extremely busy fomenting rebellion. In the economic chaos of Weimar Germany, architectural work was hard to find. So, early in 1930, Rudi applied for a job with the British-run Shanghai Municipal Council, building government buildings in the Chinese city.

Ursula was initially uncertain. Would she be deserting the revolution by leaving Germany? “Communism is international, I can also work in China,” she naively told the comrades.

Ursula had no notion of the political firestorm she was heading into. There was indeed a Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai, but it was outlawed, persecuted and facing annihilation.

Shanghai in 1930 had a good claim to be the most socio-economically divided city on earth, a place where the distance between rich and poor was not so much a gap, as a yawning gulf. Part colony, part Chinese city, it was home to 50,000 foreigners surrounded by almost three million Chinese, most living in abject squalor. The international community included British, Americans, French, Germans, Portuguese, Indians, White Russians, Japanese and others, some of them penniless refugees, others new-minted plutocrats of staggering wealth.

Simultaneously glamorous and seedy, shiny and grotty, Shanghai was home to a teeming international throng of beggars, millionaires, prostitutes, fortune-tellers, gamblers, journalists, gangsters, aristocrats, warlords, artists, pimps, bankers, smugglers and spies.

While the expats danced and dallied, below the surface of Shanghai society a brutal, semi-secret spy war was under way. Agents of China’s nationalist government spied on home-grown and foreign communists. The underground communists spied on the government, and on each other. The Soviet Union deployed an army of secret agents and informers throughout the city. The British, with American help, spied on everyone, all the time.

On November 13th, 1930, over tea in the magnificent Cathay Hotel, Ursula met a woman who would change her life. Agnes Smedley was America’s most famous radical left-wing woman novelist, the acclaimed author of Daughter of Earth, a best-seller the previous year. Smedley never espoused a coherent philosophy, for hers was the politics of anger, a scattergun rage against the capitalists, mine owners, imperialists and colonizers who kept the poor, the non-white and the ***working class*** enslaved. She had no time for political theory: “Who cares if I read all that trash? I know who the enemy is, and that’s enough.”

Smedley supported communism without considering what communist rule involved in reality. She was passionate, prejudiced, charismatic, narcissistic, reckless, volatile, loveable, emotionally fragile and uncompromising. She considered sex degrading, but was an enthusiastic advocate, and energetic exponent, of free love. “Out here I’ve had chances to sleep with all colours and shapes,” she wrote to a friend, shortly before meeting Ursula. “One French gunrunner, short and round and bumpy; one fifty-year-old monarchist German who believes in the dominating role of the penis in influencing women; one high Chinese official whose actions I’m ashamed to describe, one round left-wing Kuomintang man who was soft and slobbery.” Agnes was everything Ursula admired: feminist, anti-fascist, an enemy of imperialism and defender of the oppressed against the forces of capitalism, and a natural revolutionary.

She was also a spy, who had been recruited by Soviet intelligence in Berlin the previous year.

Ursula was five months pregnant, and unaware of her new friend’s covert activities. She did not know that Agnes’s handbag contained a loaded pistol. She knew only that she had found a sister of the heart.

Immediately after their first meeting, Agnes sent a message to Moscow requesting permission to arrange the recruitment of young Mrs Hamburger.

Three weeks later, Agnes told Ursula to expect a visit from someone she could “fully trust”. At the appointed hour, the butler announced that “Mr Richard Johnson” had arrived, and ushered in a man of about 35. Ursula was immediately struck by his extraordinary good looks: “A slender head, thick wavy hair, his face already deeply furrowed, his intense blue eyes framed by dark lashes, his mouth beautifully formed”. The stranger had a pronounced limp and a strong German accent. Three fingers of his left hand were missing. He radiated charm, and danger.

His real name was Richard Sorge. He was Agnes Smedley’s principal partner in espionage and her current lover, the most senior Soviet spy in Shanghai, an adept seducer, and an officer of the Red Army intelligence service.

Ian Fleming once described Sorge as “the most formidable spy in history”. Despite being German, communist and approaching middle age, in 1930 Sorge bore a distinct resemblance to the fictional James Bond, not least for his looks, appetite for alcohol and prodigious, almost pathological womanizing.

Years later, Ursula recalled her initiation into Soviet espionage.

Having received Ursula’s assurance that the house was empty save for the servants, Sorge carefully closed the door to the sitting room, and sat beside her on the sofa.

“I have heard that you are ready to support the Chinese comrades in their work?”

Ursula nodded eagerly.

“You can still refuse without anyone holding it against you.”

Implicit in Sorge’s question was a threat that if she opted to play her part now but attempted to back out in the future, it would be held against her in a way that might be very unpleasant indeed. She insisted she was ready.

Sorge smiled. Her contribution would be strictly logistical, he said. Her apartment would be used as a safehouse, where Sorge could conduct meetings with revolutionary comrades fighting the Chinese nationalist government. She would let the visitors in, provide refreshments, warn if anyone approached the house, and otherwise stay out of the way.

Ursula was now living a double life: one with Rudi, as the wife of a colonial official, dull, dutiful and comfortable; the other with Sorge, Smedley and their communist collaborators, a thrilling existence of secret meetings, comradeship and intellectual stimulation. Her husband knew nothing of her secret activities.

On 12 February 1931, Ursula gave birth to a boy: he was named Michael.

One of the first visitors was Richard Sorge. As she would throughout her life, Ursula felt the conflicting pull of espionage work and her maternal instincts, “partly embarrassed to be involved in such private matters as having babies, and partly proud of my little son”. Sorge brought flowers. “I led him to the baby’s crib,” Ursula wrote. “He bent over and gently pulled back the quilt with his hand. For a long time he looked at the infant in silence.”

From Sorge’s ruthlessly pragmatic perspective, little Michael was a complication, but potentially an asset. He was ideal cover. Who could possibly suspect that a first-time mother with a newborn baby might also be a spy?

On a beautiful summer morning, when Michael was almost six months old, Ursula received a telephone call from Sorge, not to arrange another meeting, but with an altogether different proposition.

“Would you like to go for a ride on my motorbike?”

Sorge was waiting for Ursula on the city outskirts, astride an enormous black Zündapp Flat-twin K500 motorcycle. He showed her how to put her feet into the footrests, and told her to hold on. Then they roared off, at breathtaking speed. Sorge was a fantastically reckless driver. Soon they were beyond the city limits and flying through the Chinese countryside, past paddy fields and villages, Ursula’s arms tightly wrapped around Sorge. “Thrilled by his breakneck driving, I urged him to go fast and faster.” Sorge accelerated, and the motorbike seemed to take off. Ursula was in a state of petrified ecstasy.

“When we stopped,” she later wrote, “I was a changed person. I laughed and romped about and talked non-stop.” Her anxieties seemed to evaporate. “Shanghai’s detested social life was forgotten, as were the constant pressures to conform to etiquette, the responsibilities of clandestine activities, and the unnecessary worries about my son...I was no longer afraid.” Many years later, she reflected: “Perhaps he had only arranged this ride to test my physical courage. If, however, he had been seeking a way to establish better contact between us, he had gone about it the right way. After this ride, I no longer felt inhibited.”

Sorge understood the seductive power of a fast motorbike. Ursula shared his love of risk. He was undoubtedly testing her, though in a way that was more emotional than physical. Exactly when Ursula Hamburger and Richard Sorge became lovers is still a matter of debate. Years later, when quizzed about her relationship with Sorge, Ursula replied obliquely: “I was not a nun.” Most sources suggest that their relationship ceased to be platonic soon after this exhilarating motorbike ride, and quite possibly somewhere in the Chinese countryside outside Shanghai that very afternoon.

A housewife-spy, Ursula had hitherto stood on the periphery of Sorge’s network, keeper of a safehouse, a discreet enabler. With their newfound intimacy she joined Sorge’s inner circle, a trusted lieutenant in the conspiracy, a partner and confidante.

In his messages to Moscow, Sorge allocated Ursula a codename: “Sonya”.

There was a song, popular in Shanghai’s nightclubs: “When Sonya is dancing to a Russian song, you can’t help falling in love with her... Even Vladimir is crazy about her, sets aside a glass of vodka, just to see Sonya...”

The codename carried a significance only Sorge and Ursula understood.

[ Return to the review of [*“Agent Sonya.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/15/books/review/agent-sonya-ben-macintyre.html)]

AGENT SONYA Moscow’s Most Daring Wartime Spy By Ben Macintyre Illustrated. 400 pp. Crown. $28. Copyright 2020 © by Ben Macintyre Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

**Load-Date:** September 15, 2020

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[***Coronavirus Briefing: What Happened Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YHS-HM51-JBG3-640R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 27, 2020 Friday 19:53 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1452 words

**Byline:** Lara Takenaga and Jonathan Wolfe

**Highlight:** After erupting on the coasts, the outbreak is swiftly making its way inland.

**Body**

After erupting on the coasts, the outbreak is swiftly making its way inland.

This is the Coronavirus Briefing, an informed guide to the global outbreak. [*Sign up here to get the briefing by email*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

* President Trump signed the [*$2 trillion economic stimulus bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) into law.

1. Officials in nearly 200 U.S. cities [*reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) a dire need for emergency equipment.
2. Prime Minister Boris Johnson of Britain has [*contracted the virus*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing). He’s the first Western leader known to have tested positive.
3. [*Get the latest updates here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), plus   [*maps*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) and   [*full coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

The U.S. braces for an onslaught

After erupting on the East and West Coasts, [*the coronavirus outbreak has made its way inland*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), threatening to overwhelm parts of the United States where medical equipment is in short supply and official guidance is sometimes contradictory.

In Louisiana, which may have [*the fastest-growing outbreak in the world*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), New Orleans is the epicenter. The city’s case count topped 1,100 on Friday, as speculation mounted among medical experts that last month’s Mardi Gras festivities had helped fuel the rapid growth.

Across the country, many cities and states with zero cases last month now face looming explosions: Chicago and its suburbs have nearly 2,000 cases; Detroit has identified over 1,000; and Milwaukee County, Wis., has reported 468.

Counties and cities outside of major urban centers have also seen striking numbers, as in Albany, Ga., whose population of 73,000 has been hit with more than 160 confirmed cases and 16 deaths.

Clashes between state and local leaders over how to respond, and mixed signals from the federal government, have complicated the situation. In states without formal restrictions, one mayor’s order to keep residents at home can be undermined by surrounding cities and counties without such measures.

The chaos of the responses could exacerbate another pressing issue: [*a severe, widespread shortage of medical supplies*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing). In one survey, nearly 200 American cities, large and small, reported lacking face masks, testing kits, ventilators and other equipment needed to handle the crisis.

The Times is providing free access to [*much of our coronavirus coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), and our   [*Coronavirus Briefing newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) — like all of our newsletters — is free. Please consider   [*supporting our journalism with a subscription*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

An early hot spot flattens its curve

By now, you may be used to reading a constant stream of bad news. But here’s a reason to be cautiously optimistic: There are signs that strong isolation and intervention measures have [*slowed the spread of the virus*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) in an early U.S. hot spot.

After cases started to grow in New Rochelle, N.Y., earlier this month, a one-mile-radius containment zone was put in place, the National Guard was called in, and widespread testing was adopted. Health investigators tracked down people potentially infected by a lawyer thought to have been the source of the spread.

Over the last four days, New Rochelle reported just 38 new cases to the county. State and local health officials cautioned that it was too early to declare victory, but it’s a significant drop — early on, the city saw more than 20 new cases a day.

“In the beginning, it felt like house arrest,” said one resident whose family was placed into quarantine. “But the punishment turned out to be a blessing in disguise. This is really a case of perspective.”

Looking for more good news? Craft distilleries are making hand sanitizer, for free. Doctors are finding creative ways to cope with shortages. Research on a vaccine is moving at breakneck speed. We [*rounded up bright spots*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) amid the coronavirus crisis.

Life, and death, in northern Italy

Bergamo, Italy, is the bleak heart of the world’s deadliest coronavirus outbreak.

Once known as a quiet and wealthy province, Bergamo is now a place where Red Cross workers go door to door to carry away the afflicted, where the coffins are so numerous the army has been called to take them away.

Our correspondent Jason Horowitz and the photographer Fabio Bucciarelli have been reporting on the tragedy unfolding there. [*This photo essay is a look at the human toll the virus has taken*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

Love under lockdown: Can I ship you a drink?

Around the world, the pandemic is [*radically altering approaches to love, dating and sex*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing). A meme circulating on social media sums it up: “Can I see myself quarantined with him? Does he come with toilet paper?”

Lockdowns mean new togetherness for some but increased friction and conflict for others. Stuck indoors, millions of singles are turning to the internet for virtual yoga dates, digital drag queen karaoke nights and WhatsApp birthday parties.

The crisis has spawned a new lexicon, too. In nine months, we may see the first coronababies born. In a little more than a decade, they’ll be known as the quaranteens. Sadly, couples who can’t cope with the pressure of isolation could end up in covidivorce.

Hot spots

* A Navy hospital ship is [*scheduled to arrive*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) in New York City on Monday, and the Javits Center, a mammoth convention hall in Manhattan, has been converted into an emergency hospital. There are more than 25,000 cases in the city.

1. Japan, with 2,083 confirmed cases, seemed to do the impossible — contain the virus without imposing draconian measures. But [*evidence is now emerging of rampant infection*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).
2. France has extended its lockdown by two weeks. The country reported 29,155 cases and 1,696 deaths on Thursday, and its health care system, which ranks [*among the best in the world*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), is creaking and straining.
3. South Africa began [*a three-week lockdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) on Friday after the number of cases soared to more than 1,000, placing the country at the center of Africa’s pandemic.

What you can do

Take care of your lungs: If you are breathing polluted air, you may be at greater risk of catching the coronavirus and of having a severe infection. [*Here are some tips on improving indoor air quality*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

Reinvent holidays: Many people [*are finding creative ways*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) to celebrate — cooking Easter brunch for two, staging virtual seders, breaking Ramadan fasts at home and enjoying Nowruz feasts at a six-foot distance.

Have better video meetings: Testing your tech setup and establishing a clear agenda can make your [*virtual calls with colleagues*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) more productive — and less awkward. And follow these tips for   [*looking your best on a webcam*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

Try a new game: Our crossword columnist suggests [*five tried and true classics*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing) that will entertain both kids and adults.

What else we’re following

* President Trump invoked the Defense Production Act, a power dating back to the Korean War, to [*compel General Motors to manufacture ventilators*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing). Shortly after, the company announced that the machines would be “scheduled to ship as soon as next month.”

1. The virus can afflict rich and poor alike, but in the U.S., the response to the outbreak is [*laying bare class divides*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), with the rich holed up in vacation properties, the middle class marooned at home with restless children and the ***working class*** on the front lines.
2. Millions of Americans will soon get a direct payment from the federal government as part of the stimulus package. If you don’t need the money, [*here are some ideas to help you give it to someone who does*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).
3. The Supreme Court was urged in a filing to preserve DACA, the program protecting young undocumented immigrants known as Dreamers. About [*27,000 of them work in health care*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), many on the front lines in the fight against the pandemic.
4. The [*Oregon Shakespeare Festival*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), one of the oldest and largest nonprofit U.S. theaters, is laying off 80 percent of its employees, canceling half of this year’s productions and postponing live performances until after Labor Day.
5. When they gave birth at the same New York hospital, [*two mothers didn’t know they had the coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing). Both deteriorated soon after and wound up in intensive care.
6. Dr. Anthony Fauci, an adviser to Mr. Trump on the coronavirus, has a new claim to fame: Doughnuts adorned with his image have become a top seller at a shop in Rochester, N.Y., [*the Democrat &amp; Chronicle reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

What you’re doing

I’ve been cleaning out drawers and finding emails and addresses of friends I haven’t contacted for years. I’ve sent notes in the hopes of reconnecting with friends from the past. I also sent my grown children notes letting them know how much I care about them. I’m in the process of setting up a time to chat online with a former colleague and friend I haven’t seen for nine years!

— Jill Davis, Brookfield, Wis.

Let us know how you’re dealing with the outbreak. [*Send us a response here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing), and we may feature it in an upcoming newsletter.

[*Sign up here to get the briefing by email*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/coronavirus-briefing).

Tom Wright-Piersanti contributed to today’s newsletter.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2020

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[***Making Art When ‘Lockdown’ Means Prison; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60X7-JXD1-DXY4-X304-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 24, 2020 Thursday 18:12 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1780 words

**Byline:** Holland Cotter

**Highlight:** The harshness of life behind bars is designed to crush inmates’ individuality. But a stirring exhibition at MoMA PS1 shows the prison-industrial complex can’t stifle the artistic impulse.

**Body**

We’re living in a post-fact time, but that doesn’t mean there are no facts. Here are some. The United States has the largest population of captive human beings on earth, around 2.4 million, and an outsized percentage of them are Black. Since the 1980s, prison life sentences have quadrupled; the minimum age for imprisonment has dropped; the use of solitary confinement, sometimes referred to as “no-touch torture,” has grown.

The result is the prison-industrial complex we know, a punitive universe walled off from the larger world. What takes place behind those walls? Deprivation and cruelty, but also the production of art, as we learn from [*“Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration,”*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5208) a stirring 44-artist show at the reopened [*MoMA PS1*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/07/arts/design/greater-new-york-moma-ps1.html).

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**Load-Date:** October 7, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Stirring Creations From Behind Bars***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60XF-0WX1-DXY4-X4PT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 1; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 1673 words

**Byline:** By Holland Cotter

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** September 26, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Democrats Missed Trump’s Appeal to Latino Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6181-7VS1-JBG3-64X0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1986 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Medina

**Highlight:** The election was a referendum on Trump’s America, but plenty of Latino voters liked it just fine.

**Body**

The election was a referendum on Trump’s America, but plenty of Latino voters liked it just fine.

PHOENIX — Democrats thought it would be enough.

After four years of draconian Trump immigration policies and divisive messaging, the Biden campaign courted [*Latino voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html) primarily by reminding them that Joseph R. Biden Jr. was not Donald Trump, that if they felt targeted in President Trump’s America, a vote for Mr. Biden would change that.

That argument resonated for many [*Latinos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html), who became the second-largest voting group for the first time this year.

“He’s come after people like me,” said Taylor Valencia, 23, a first-year elementary schoolteacher who showed up before sunrise on Tuesday to vote in person in Guadalupe, a predominantly Latino town near Phoenix. “His entire presidency is an attack on my moral values and who I am.”

But for others, it was Mr. Trump who made them feel a part of America, not targeted by it.

“I have been in this country since I was 9, I have been through a lot, and I am American,” said Teresita Miglio, an accountant in her 60s who immigrated from Cuba and attends an evangelical church in Miami where Mr. Trump spoke in January. “Abortion is the litmus test, Jesus is my savior and Trump is my president.”

Mr. Biden is now the president-elect, and as he vows to work “as hard for those who didn’t vote for me as those who did,” as he said [*in his victory speech on Saturday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html), he must grapple with the fact that Mr. Trump actually improved his showing among Latino voters, from under 30 percent in 2016 to closer to one-third this year, according to exit polls and voter surveys.

Democrats lost in Florida, in part because of lackluster support among Latino voters. They did basically no better than they normally do [*in Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html), in part because Hispanic voters in the Rio Grande Valley moved decisively toward the G.O.P. But in Arizona, Barry Goldwater’s home state and a once-conservative stronghold where Mr. Biden [*has a slim lead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html), Democrats will claim both of the state’s Senate seats for the first time in decades, fueled by young, progressive Latino voters.

For years, many Democrats have presumed demography as destiny, believing that Latinos would come to vote for them with the same kind of consistency that Black voters do. A growing Latino population, they hoped, would transform the political landscape and give the party an edge in the Southwest.

That dream ran into reality in this election, in which the results confirmed what was evident from conversations with hundreds of Latino voters in dozens of settings from the early days of the Democratic primary until the long ballot-counting hours in Arizona over the last week: The Latino vote is deeply divided, and running as not-Trump was always going to be insufficient.

At a Trump rally in Rio Rancho, N.M., last fall, Martha Garcia was part of the largely Hispanic crowd — many members of which wore Make America Great Again hats — waiting hours in the blazing sun to hear the president speak. She said she agreed with his harsh language on immigration: “We need to take care of the people who are already here.”

In east Las Vegas and Los Angeles, young progressives distraught over the Super Tuesday losses by “Tío Bernie” — Senator Bernie Sanders — remained politically active for the first time. At a Spanish-speaking evangelical megachurch in Miami, the pastor offered the president a blessing for re-election campaign early this year. And in South Phoenix on the eve of the election, grandfathers gathered last weekend for “Low Ridin’ With Biden,” showing off their custom Impalas.

For Latinos, this was an election that turned on feelings about Mr. Trump above all else.

That just didn’t mean what Democrats, and the Biden campaign specifically, assumed it did.

“We went in the wrong direction, and we want to make sure that does not happen again,” said Julián Castro, the only Latino candidate in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary.

For months, he said, he had been publicly warning of the coming risks for Democrats from underinvesting in Latino voters, particularly in Texas. He said he was worried that even with a Biden victory, the party would find itself “winning the battle but losing the war.”

On Saturday, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a New York Democrat and one of the most prominent Latina members of Congress, [*spoke critically*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html) of her party’s efforts at connecting with Latino voters. “I don’t think that our party has ever seriously done the work,” she said, describing what she saw as concern only around election years. “That’s not acceptable for any community. I don’t know why it’s acceptable for so many communities of color.”

Both candidates in 2020 knew that Latino voters had the power to be decisive, and both campaigns went after them, at times with little sophistication. After the Democratic primary began with several candidates [*speaking Spanish*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html) on debate stages, the general-election approach — or as some critics call it, “Hispandering” — took a musical turn. Mr. Biden played the hit song “Despacito” on his cellphone speaker, and the Trump campaign commissioned a salsa [*music video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html) played over Mexican folklórico dancers.

Fellow Democrats complained about the Biden campaign’s sluggish Latino outreach for months, though the campaign eventually spent a record $20 million on Spanish-language television and radio advertising, more than double the Trump campaign’s $9 million, according to Advertising Analytics, an ad tracking firm. And both campaigns tried to target voters based on regional and national origin — there were advertisements featuring Cuban, Puerto Rican and Mexican accents.

Indeed, the regional differences illustrate both political shifts and the way Latinos see themselves. In Arizona, for example, a historically [*Republican*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html) state shifted because of young Latinos who were politically activated by Senate Bill 1070, a 2010 state measure that was known as the “show me your papers” law and that critics called legalized racial profiling.

“People pretty much tend to attack us,” Alma Aguilar said at a small Black Lives Matter demonstration in the Phoenix suburbs this summer. “We are not treated the same way as white people.”

Even as votes were still being counted, many Democrats credited young Latinas such as Ms. Aguilar for their success in the state. Local activists noted that while the Democrats celebrated, organizing voters began long before the national party invested in the state.

“We did this,” said Alejandra Gomez, the co-executive director of Lucha, a voter engagement group that was established in response to anti-immigration state policies a decade ago. “We organized when nobody else was paying attention. It’s weird to say, but without that, I am not sure we would have flipped the state.”

Yet one lesson of Arizona — that political identity is often built in the face of persecution — did not bear out in Texas, where over a year ago a gunman killed 22 people in El Paso, the largest anti-Latino attack in modern American history, after the authorities said he wrote a manifesto that echoed much of [*the president’s language*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html).

Texas didn’t even come close to flipping to the Democrats this year. Roughly 25 to 30 percent of Latino voters nationally have chosen Republican candidates for decades, but many Democrats said they were particularly alarmed by the loss of support in the Rio Grande Valley, where Mr. Biden won some border counties by significantly smaller margins than Hillary Clinton did in 2016.

“More people are waking up,” said Kelly Gonzalez, who attended a Republican election party in Harlingen, in South Texas, with her husband, her 1-year-old daughter and her 7-year-old son, each of them clad in Trump gear from head to toe. In the once reliably left-leaning region, Ms. Gonzalez said her opinion of liberals — particularly young ones — had changed in the last four years. “It’s like, ‘Give me this, give me that,’ and they don’t want to work for it,” she said.

Minerva Simpson, a district leader for the Texas Federation for Republican Women, who was one of the hosts of the party, said the president was critical to the energy she saw.

“We’ve seen the Latinos come out in a very strong way,” she said. “I’ve never seen a movement like that in my culture, and it’s all for Trump.”

Democrats also did not seem to account for how effective Mr. Trump’s efforts to tie their party to socialism would be, especially among Venezuelan- and Cuban-American voters in Florida.

“If Biden gets elected, America will go down the rabbit hole of socialism into communism within the next year,” said Gilbert Fonticoba, an internet marketer, who stood with a group waving American and Trump flags in front of a polling place in the city of Hialeah outside Miami on Tuesday. He said he became unemployed after his social media accounts were disabled because of his views as a member of the Proud Boys, a far-right group, adding that his parents had fled Cuba.

Mr. Fonticoba blamed the country’s polarization in part on the news media. “Millennials are brainwashed,” he said. “There’s a lot of dumb people that live in this country that believe the fake news.” Then, unprompted, he brought up the Proud Boys, denying that they had ties to white supremacy. “Proud Boys are for America, keeping America the way America was created,” he said. “The West is the best.”

The Biden campaign did recognize its potential weakness with Cubans and Venezuelans, but hoped that support from younger Latinos, particularly Puerto Ricans, might make up the difference. To make its case in Florida and elsewhere, the campaign emphasized the reality that Latinos were contracting and dying from the coronavirus and suffering economically at disproportionately high rates, and that the president had mishandled the pandemic. One of the final ads the campaign ran in battleground states, including Florida, Arizona and Nevada, focused on the Trump administration’s [*family separation policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html).

But the fact that Mr. Biden is heading to the White House is not cause for a victory lap when it comes to engaging Latino voters, according to those who work on that issue.

“We were not choosing our savior, we were choosing our opponent,” said Marisa Franco, the executive director of Mijente, a Latino civil rights organization that originally backed Mr. Sanders, explaining her group’s work in 2020. “The Biden campaign may have chosen not to spend time in ***working-class***, immigrant and people-of-color neighborhoods, but that is exactly where his victory is coming from and where the solutions he’ll need to champion will have to start.”

Most Latino groups have not expressed surprise at the election’s results. They have long noted, for example, how little conservative religious South American voters in Florida backing Mr. Trump have in common with progressive young Mexican-Americans in Arizona turning out for Democrats. But the groups’ leaders also argue that without pushing the idea of a pan-Latino political identity, Latinos in any one region might never get sustained attention from national candidates.

In September, a nonpartisan group called the Texas Organizing Project [*released a report*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/us/politics/latino-voters-biden-democrats.html) based on interviews with more than 100 Latinos in Texas that offered a preview of how 2020 might go.

“The majority do not feel there is a singular ‘Latino Vote,’ the report concluded. “Though they see its potential.”

Reporting was contributed by Caitlin Dickerson from Harlingen, Texas, Patricia Mazzei from Hialeah, Fla., Astead W. Herndon from Dallas, and Giovanni Russonello from New York.

PHOTOS: President Trump gained support among Cuban-Americans in the Little Havana neighborhood of Miami, top, by successfully linking the Democrats to socialism. The president-elect, Joseph R. Biden Jr., had more luck energizing young Latino voters in once-conservative Arizona, above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT MCINTYRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (P5)

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Can Coconut Grove Keep Its Groove?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YH5-S1H1-JBG3-63KY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 8; SQUARE FEET

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**Byline:** By Jane Margolies

**Body**

The city's development boom has finally caught up to a lush haven of shade trees and cafes. Some worry the neighborhood growth is too fast.

With its profusion of parks and shade trees, Coconut Grove is celebrated for being one of the greenest parts of sun-baked Miami.

It has some of the best schools in the city, drawing students from all over the metropolitan area. And it has long been a magnet for artists, writers and musicians who have given the neighborhood a bohemian vibe.

But lately, Coconut Grove has become known for yet another thing: a real estate boom.

The area did not experience much of the pre-recession wave of development that swept other Miami neighborhoods. But now, luxury residential towers by renowned modernist architects have been rising in Coconut Grove along Biscayne Bay, a snazzy hotel recently opened, and a well-known shopping center is getting a makeover.

And boutique office buildings are going up, attracting brand-name tenants in the tech, finance and creative industries.

The office square footage is a small fraction of that of nearby Brickell or downtown Miami, but the development is occurring in an area under six square miles, much of it zoned for low- and midrise construction.

The fast pace of growth and gentrification is pushing out longtime residents. And it is raising a question about the neighborhood's identity: Can the Grove grow without losing its groove?

''We're at a crossroads,'' said Ken Russell, a city commissioner who also heads the board of the Coconut Grove Business Improvement District.

Settled in the early 19th century, Coconut Grove has some of the oldest and grandest single-family homes in Miami. One of the best-known estates, Vizcaya, has been converted into a museum and gardens. Much of the land on which the city was built was clear cut for development, but the Grove retained its subtropical lushness.

By the 1960s, it was a hippy haven, South Florida's answer to New York's Greenwich Village and San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district.

A whiff of that anti-establishment attitude still lingers. It says something about the neighborhood that four years ago, the person elected commissioner of the district that encompasses it was Mr. Russell, a Grove native whose background was in yo-yo and paddleboard sales.

In a phone interview, Mr. Russell acknowledged that he hadn't known anything about land use or historic preservation when he took office. Now he does.

''I'm running hearings on land-use appeals, upzonings,'' he said. ''I've been thrust into this with a very steep learning curve.''

Luxury residences helped kick-start the surge in development.

First came the Grove at Grand Bay, developed by Terra Group, a local firm, and designed by BIG, founded by the Danish architect Bjarke Ingels. Completed in 2016, it consists of two 20-story towers that twist as they climb. (The former Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez installed his investment company, A-Rod Corp, in commercial space on the ground floor of one of them.)

Next up were the curvilinear towers of Park Grove, a project designed by Rem Koolhaas's OMA and developed by Terra and the Related Group, which is based in downtown Miami. The 276 units are nearly sold out, with the handful left priced at $3.1 million and up, said Jon Paul Perez, executive vice president of Related.

And soon to break ground: a 20-story condo companion to the new Mr. C Miami-Coconut Grove, the latest property in the upscale Mr. C hotel chain.

But housing is also needed for the ***working class***.

A solar-powered mixed-use project, under construction at the Metrorail station, will have 400 apartments, including market-rate, co-living and affordable units. The $320 million project, Grove Central, is being developed by Terra and Grass River Property, another local firm.

Residential development has spurred retail and office development. New restaurants, cafes and stores have opened, a mix of national brands (Warby Parker, Bonobos) and local companies (Books & Books, Fireman Derek's Bake Shop).

A waterfront development in the works from the TREO Group will encompass a marina, restaurants and a food hall in hangars that were originally part of a naval air station and later used by Pan Am Airways, which operated seaplane flights to Cuba.

Terra just completed a five-story office building known as Mary Street -- a reuse of a municipal parking garage -- and Related is erecting an eight-story office building. Madison Marquette, which is based in Washington, paid $47.4 million for two existing office buildings.

Even established neighborhood hot spots are getting a refresher.

Federal Realty Investment Trust, based in Rockville, Md., is working with Grass River and the Comras Company to breathe new life into CocoWalk, an upscale, open-air mall that dates to the 1990s. When it reopens this summer it will have a recalibrated mix of stores and restaurants (the Cheesecake Factory, out; a vegan restaurant, in). This time around, the mall will have an office component that will house, among others, the co-working company Spaces.

An investment fund of Brookfield Asset Management, which is based in Toronto, recently bought the eclectic Mayfair Hotel, which has a facade inspired by Gaudí's Barcelona buildings, stained glass by Louis Comfort Tiffany and Moorish tiles. Brookfield declined to discuss plans for the property.

Developers say they are having no difficulty finding office tenants, even with rates in the Grove averaging $52.48 per square foot for Class A space, compared with $43.54 in nearby Coral Gables, according to the Avison Young Miami-Dade County year-end 2019 office market report.

Sony Music Latin America and SapientNitro, an advertising firm, are among the companies that have moved to the Grove or expanded their business there in the last five years.

Many residents cheer the changes. Among them is Bernardo Fort-Brescia, who founded Arquitectonica with his wife, Laurinda H. Spear, four decades ago. They have raised their six children in Miami while their firm has grown and acquired an international reputation, and they have designed multiple projects in town.

''It's a natural evolution,'' Mr. Fort-Brescia said. ''More people want to live here, more businesses want to be here.''

But the real estate activity has also caused unease in some quarters.

Juan Mullerat, the founding principal of PlusUrbia Design, which worked with Perkins & Will, a global design firm, on a master plan for the business improvement district a few years ago, expressed concern about vacant storefronts.

In some cases, short-term investors may be sitting on properties, waiting for their value to rise before flipping them. Some owners are offering only short-term leases, Mr. Mullerat said, ''making it difficult for businesses to make investments in their stores.''

Real estate speculation and gentrification have been occurring in the West Grove section, which was settled by Bahamian immigrants who labored in construction and agriculture. Starting in the late 1800s, they built themselves wood-framed houses on yards now shaded with trees; some homes have been in the same families for decades.

Now, however, many of these modest homes have been supplanted by large houses built right up to lot lines. Aging apartment houses have been demolished.

''We see vacant lots where hundreds of families used to be,'' said the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson III, the senior pastor of West Grove's Greater St. Paul A.M.E. Church, which owns 40 affordable housing units that it rents out.

West Grove's black population declined more than 32 percent from 2000 to 2017, while the white population increased more than 176 percent, according to preliminary data compiled by the Community Equity, Innovation and Resource Lab at the University of Miami Law School's Center for Ethics and Public Service.

Many feel the displacement needs to end. Jacqueline Gonzalez Touzet, a co-founder of Touzet Studio, the Miami architecture firm that designed Terra's Mary Street office building and the Grove Central project, hopes the Grove doesn't ''swing too hard'' in the direction of high-end development, pricing out longtime locals and others who wish to enjoy the Grove's charms.

She and her husband, Carlos Prio-Touzet, the firm's other founding principal, would like to move their offices to the Grove but are not sure they can afford to.

About the neighborhood's future, Ms. Touzet said, ''It's a wait and see.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/24/business/miami-coconut-grove-development.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/24/business/miami-coconut-grove-development.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, a cafe along Commodore Plaza in Coconut Grove, where the fast pace of gentrification is pushing out longtime residents. ''We see vacant lots where hundreds of families used to be,'' said the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson III of the Greater St. Paul A.M.E. Church. Left, the Grove at Grand Bay luxury towers. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANGEL VALENTIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2020

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[***How the U.S. Embassy in Iraq Became a Target***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XWF-VFR1-JBG3-61RM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Alan Yuhas

**Highlight:** After months of turmoil in Iraq, U.S. airstrikes against a pro-Iranian militia drew a backlash.

**Body**

After months of turmoil in Iraq, U.S. airstrikes against a pro-Iranian militia drew a backlash.

For months, furious protests have battered Iraq, driven by frustration at a dysfunctional economy, corruption and the pervasive influence of a foreign power: Iran.

Then a rocket attack killed an American contractor in Iraq, American airstrikes hit an Iranian-backed Iraqi militia, and Iraqis’ anger turned back on the United States, culminating with a break-in at its embassy compound in Baghdad on Tuesday.

The airstrikes and the embassy standoff, with demonstrators drawn largely from Iranian-backed militias, brought the United States to its most serious crisis in the country in years — and pulled it deeper into the volatile problems engulfing Iraq and its neighbor Iran.

Complicated at the best of times, the relations between Iraq, Iran and the United States are now even more fraught.

What happened in the last few days?

On Friday, more than 30 rockets were fired at an Iraqi military base near Kirkuk, in northern Iraq, killing an American civilian contractor and wounding four American and two Iraqi servicemen.

The United States [*accused an Iranian-backed militia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html), Kataib Hezbollah, of carrying out the attack. A spokesman for the militia denied its involvement. President Trump blamed Iran for the attack, writing Tuesday on Twitter, “Iran killed an American contractor, wounding many.”

The American military launched airstrikes against the militia over the weekend, killing 24 members in what Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called “a decisive response.” He said the United States would “not stand for the Islamic Republic of Iran to take actions that put American men and women in jeopardy.”

The United States and Iran are at longstanding odds — over influence in Iraq, Iran’s nuclear program and other issues — and tensions have spiked under the Trump administration, which pulled out of the 2015 nuclear accord and imposed punishing sanctions on Tehran.

But the American airstrikes came at a particularly combustible moment in Iraq, where anger at foreign meddling was already running high. For much of the last 16 years, Iraqis’ ire has been directed at the United States for its invasion and the war and occupation that followed. Iran has also deeply embedded in Iraq, raising fears that the country would be caught in the rivalry between Tehran and Washington.

The country’s top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, warned that Iraq must not become “a field for settling regional and international scores,” and Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi called the airstrikes a violation of Iraqi sovereignty.

On Tuesday, protesters [*stormed the sprawling American Embassy compound*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) in Baghdad. They did not enter the main embassy buildings, and eventually joined thousands of others nearby — many of them members of the fighting groups technically overseen by the Iraqi military, and many chanting, “Death to America.”

Mr. Trump accused Iran of “orchestrating” the break-in, adding that “they will be held fully responsible.”

Many of the protesters who broke into the compound were members of Kataib Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed militias. On Wednesday, militia leaders ordered their supporters to stand down, and most of the people outside the compound withdrew.

Why has Iraq been so volatile recently?

Huge, sometimes violent protests began erupting across Iraq in October, as people angry about unemployment, [*corruption and shambolic public services*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) poured into the streets. For 12 weeks, the government flailed for a solution, variously promising reform and cracking down.

Those earlier protests, drawing a cross-section of Iraqis, appeared to be broader based than the standoff this week.

More than 500 people were killed and 19,000 injured in the earlier unrest, [*according to the United Nations special envoy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) to Iraq.

The brutal government response hardened protesters’ resolve, and the protests gradually expanded to include complaints about [*Iran’s widespread influence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) in Iraq’s government. (An Iranian general, Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, had brokered the deal creating the current government.) Many protesters link Iranian influence to corruption in the government and among Shiite militias.

In November, protesters [*burned down the Iranian Consulate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) in the southern city of Najaf, and for weeks, protesters camped outside the heavily guarded Green Zone of Baghdad, the seat of Parliament and the prime minister. By the end of the month, Prime Minister Abdul Mahdi   [*said he would resign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html).

Iraq’s government has been in limbo ever since, unable to pick his successor.

How is Iran involved in Iraq’s militias?

After years of competing with the United States for influence over Iraq, Iran has emerged as an aggressive and powerful force in Iraqi life.

Iran [*wields powerful influence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) in the government, business and religion. Iranian-linked parties have gained significant strength in Parliament, especially since the American military withdrawal in 2009. And when the Islamic State invaded Iraq in 2014, Iran helped form Shiite militias to fight it, giving it leverage in Iraq’s security.

As the militias and the United States — effectively fighting on the same side — drove the Islamic State out of territory it controlled in Iraq, the militias gained influence. They control powerful factions in Parliament and the military, and some have turned into mafia-like groups that use extortion rackets to profit from Iraqis.

Some militias have attacked Iraqi bases where Americans are stationed, too. The populist cleric Moktada al-Sadr, who has called for the United States and Iran to leave Iraq, urged the militias to stop “irresponsible actions.”

The group accused in Friday’s rocket attack, Kataib Hezbollah, has close ties to Iran, but many Iraqis consider it a primarily Iraqi force. It is separate from the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon, though both groups have Iran’s backing and oppose the United States. The State Department has [*designated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) both groups as terrorist organizations.

Kataib Hezbollah promised “retaliation” for the airstrikes, without providing details. Iran’s Foreign Ministry said the United States “must accept full responsibility for the consequences of this illegal action.”

What is the United States presence in Iraq?

The United States has about 5,200 troops in Iraq, and a fluctuating number of civilian contractors. Most of the soldiers are stationed at a base northwest of Baghdad and at a base in the Kurdish-controlled north.

The embassy compound in Baghdad opened in 2009 and, at 104 acres, is nearly as large as Vatican City. The compound and the American Consulate in Erbil, in northern Iraq, have a combined staff of 486, most in Baghdad.

After the storming on Tuesday, the Pentagon sent 120 additional Marines to Baghdad. Late Tuesday, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper announced that about 750 troops would deploy to the region.

The American presence in Iraq has declined sharply from its height during and immediately after the Iraq war. There were nearly 16,000 people in the embassy compound in 2012, and 170,000 troops in Iraq in 2007. Amid rising tensions with Iran this year, the State Department ordered some diplomats to leave the embassy.

What’s happening in Iran?

Adding to the regional turmoil, Iran has also been reckoning with its [*worst unrest in decades*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html).

These protests began in November with a sudden increase in gasoline prices, and grew into demonstrations against Iran’s leaders and how they have handled American sanctions, [*a staggering economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) and   [*anger from neighbors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/politics/american-rocket-attack-iraq.html) in Iraq and Lebanon.

Thousands of people demonstrated, many from cities with large low-income and ***working-class*** populations, but Iran’s security forces crushed the protest, killing up to 450 people, according to human rights groups. Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, justified the crackdown by calling the protests a plot by Iran’s enemies at home and abroad.

PHOTO: The base of an Iranian-backed militia, Kataib Hezbollah, on Monday in Iraq after U.S. airstrikes. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** January 4, 2020

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[***The Women's Vote***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617V-5MF1-JBG3-63NV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Rebecca Traister

**Body**

If you're a parent of kids (who am I kidding: girls) and possess a passing interest in basic human rights and dignity, you most likely have been gifted some of the books I have come to call the You Go Girl Collection. Infant libraries once home mostly to overinvested bunny mothers and magic pasta pots are now studded with bobble-headed cartoon depictions of female pioneers from Ada Lovelace to Bessie Coleman, while older kids now read about women resisting, persisting and dissenting till they puke.

Some of the new wave of children's progressive history is brilliant and transporting; Erica Armstrong Dunbar's young readers' edition of ''Never Caught,'' about George and Martha Washington's runaway slave Ona Judge, and her Harriet Tubman biography, ''She Came to Slay,'' are gold standards, and I love David Roberts's ''Suffragette: The Battle for Equality,'' Jonah Winter's ''Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965'' and so many others. But there's plenty that will make you want to self-immolate (''Cleopatra was Queen of the Nile and said girls rule!'').

I try to remind myself that, despite their varied quality, the proliferation of these books means that kids are at least hearing about history I never knew existed. I gobbled the Landmark history books like candy, and by third grade could have told you in excruciating detail about John F. Kennedy's PT-109, but wouldn't have recognized Alice Paul or Mary Church Terrell if they'd shown up to picket my house.

Still, it was with trepidation that I tackled a new crop of children's books published to mark the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. When the story of the long fight for women's enfranchisement has been told popularly, it has too often been presented as flat celebration -- all the complexities and nastiness, the racism and classism, the defining incompleteness of the project pressed out to make a neat fist-in-the-air tale of victory. If it's so hard to honestly address the ways in which injustices have been replicated within movements for justice, how can those contours be effectively communicated in children's books? Especially children's books that are designed to inspire?

Barb Rosenstock's ''Fight of the Century,'' with illustrations by Sarah Green, did not assuage my anxieties. Rosenstock perplexingly presents the protracted battle between suffragist Paul and then-President Woodrow Wilson over a suffrage amendment to the Constitution as a boxing match: ''This fight determines whether the women of the United States can vote, folks. The winner changes the country forever.'' This framing, aside from giving kids bonkers ideas about what constitutes real political challenge -- ''In this corner, standing five feet six inches, 100 pounds, wearing long skirts and a large-brimmed hat, women's rights leader, Alice Paul!'' -- also undersells what was actually radical about her tactics. While Rosenstock writes that Paul's pickets outside the White House were a first in American protest strategy, the impact of that point gets dulled somewhere around ''DING! END OF ROUND THREE.''

Why Rosenstock believed that ringside vernacular would resonate more with kids than direct storytelling is mysterious, but so are the gaps in her history. Green's illustrations of the 1913 suffrage parade Paul organized show cheerfully integrated crowds of white and Black women. There is no mention until the concluding author's note that Paul herself signed off on the segregation of Black suffragists to the back of the march to appease white suffragists who did not want them included at all; even when she does offer up this information, Rosenstock notes that Paul's ''support of her organization's discriminatory actions damaged her historical reputation as a fighter for equal rights,'' as if the reputational damage sustained by Paul -- and not the white supremacy of a movement that purported to be on the side of liberty and democracy -- is the key takeaway.

What a pleasure, then, to dive into ''How Women Won the Vote'' by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, with illustrations by Ziyue Chen, which offers an engaging and nuanced view of the movement, without attempting to pretty it up. Bartoletti describes the process of force-feeding suffragists who protested their imprisonment with hunger strikes: ''A prison doctor stuck a long rubber hose as thick as a finger up [Paul's] nose. He snaked the tube down her throat and into her stomach. He fastened a funnel to the top of the hose. Into the funnel, the doctor poured milk and two raw eggs. This is called force-feeding. And it hurt.'' Ziyue's illustrations of protesters being clubbed by police are interspersed with photographs reminding young readers that these things happened to real people in real life.

While this book, like ''Fight of the Century,'' settles on Paul as a central character (and does not address the very different, inside approach her contemporary, the National American Woman Suffrage Association leader Carrie Chapman Catt, took to persuading Wilson to come around to the 19th Amendment), its view of the movement is broader and comes far closer to providing the multigenerational, multiracial and, very often, racist bigger picture. Bartoletti dedicates several pages to Black suffragists, including the anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells -- who was instructed not to march with the white Illinois delegation in the 1913 parade but flouted orders by joining them partway through -- as well as the N.A.A.C.P. co-founder Mary Church Terrell, Nellie May Quander, Nannie Helen Burroughs and Carrie Williams Clifford. But its conclusion is something of a letdown: a pat celebration of the 19th Amendment, with an afterword promisingly entitled ''More Work to Be Done'' that is mostly about Paul's later work to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, and not about the long battle to overturn Jim Crow-era disenfranchisement of Black women and men, a fight that extended 45 years beyond the 19th Amendment and -- especially in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2013 gutting of the Voting Rights Act -- continues today.

For a longer view, slightly older readers can turn to ''History Smashers: Women's Right to Vote'' by Kate Messner, illustrated by Dylan Meconis. This volume is the most conversational of the bunch, a mix of sidebars, graphic-novel-style storytelling and cartoons; the text is often disconcertingly colloquial. Of suffragist and abolitionist Ernestine Rose, who pushed for the Married Women's Property Act that New York passed in 1848, Messner writes, ''She thought that the state's law about married women not being able to keep their own property was the dumbest thing ever.'' Which, y'know, isn't wrong.

The book's format may be a good match for those with shorter attention spans, and permits it to be gratifyingly capacious in what it covers. Messner pays welcome attention to Harriot Stanton Blatch's Equality League of Self-Supporting Women, as well as to the labor activists, including Rose Schneiderman, who understood suffrage as a key lever of influence for ***working-class*** women. She also covers the history of fighting voter suppression up through Stacey Abrams's contested loss in the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial election and concludes with a photo and prompt from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: ''Just imagine what all those women who fought for their right to vote would think if they could see their country now.''

My favorite of the books is ''Finish the Fight!,'' written by the staff of The New York Times, led by Veronica Chambers. ''The way we frame suffrage needs attention. It is thought to be kind of dowdy and dour, whereas in fact it is exciting and radical,'' the historian Kate Clarke Lemay is quoted as saying near the start. In addition to that ''makeover,'' the writers note, this history requires ''a wider lens,'' and so they highlight the activists who were not Paul, Susan B. Anthony or Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

They begin, as the suffrage movement is widely understood to have begun, in Seneca Falls, New York, but they do not linger on Stanton or her 1848 convention there. Instead the book describes the Haudenosaunee confederacy of Native American tribes, a society, built on matrilineal power lines, in which women were public speakers and leaders. Instead of considering the impact the Haudenosaunee had on white suffragists -- an angle that keeps the focus on those white feminists -- it recounts how the imposition of white political culture on the Haudenosaunee women contributed to their disempowerment, and left them to their own centuries-long battle to get back the authority they'd had long before suffragists came into view. ''The Seneca Nation constitution wouldn't be changed to allow women to vote in tribal elections until 1964,'' we learn.

We also learn about the New Yorker Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, who in 1912 rode a white horse as she led members of her Chinese and Chinese-American community in one of the biggest suffrage parades in U.S. history. And there is an excellent section on the suffragist and writer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper -- one of the first African-American women in the United States to publish short stories and novels -- who said, ''I do not believe that white women are dew-drops just exhaled from the skies. I think that like men they may be divided into three classes, the good, the bad and the indifferent. The good would vote according to their convictions and principles; the bad, as dictated by prejudice or malice; and the indifferent will vote on the strongest side of the question, with the winning party.'' Could there be a more vivid description of the gendered, racial and political dynamics of our contemporary moment, a century after the 19th Amendment, in a year when a Black woman was the vice presidential candidate on a major party's ticket for the first time in this nation's history?

Reading the lushly illustrated chapters about the Mexican suffragist Jovita Idár and the Dakota Sioux writer and activist Zitkála-Sá, as well as about Elizabeth Piper Ensley, who in the 1890s fought for racial integration within the suffrage movement in the Western states and wrote, ''Women's work in politics must be like that of the chambered nautilus, the spiral animal, which after completing one house or shell proceeds to make another and so is constantly advancing,'' I felt myself wanting more. Not from this volume, which offers lots, but from others.

These books make me hungry for more like them, for children and adults. I want this history offered in as many forms and with as much energy and dedication as the history of this nation's white men over the centuries.

The purely heroic, bang-pow version of affirmative women's history is the stuff I fear younger readers will reflexively rear back from, reasonably question and ultimately reject. The complex, challenging texts that provoke curiosity and frustration seem more likely to drive kids of every gender, race and identity to want to read more, learn more, write more of their own history and, most crucially, jump into America's ongoing, jumbled, urgent fight for full enfranchisement.Rebecca Traister is a writer for New York magazine and author of ''Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger.''FIGHT OF THE CENTURYAlice Paul Battles Woodrow Wilson for the VoteWritten by Barb RosenstockIllustrated by Sarah Green40 pp. Calkins Creek/Boyds Mills & Kane. $18.99.(Ages 7 to 10)HOW WOMEN WON THE VOTEAlice Paul, Lucy Burns, and Their Big IdeaWritten by Susan Campbell BartolettiIllustrated by Ziyue Chen80 pp. Harper. $18.99.(Ages 8 to 12)HISTORY SMASHERSWomen's Right to VoteWritten by Kate MessnerIllustrated by Dylan Meconis224 pp. Random House. $7.99.(Ages 8 to 12)FINISH THE FIGHT!The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought for the Right to VoteBy Veronica Chambers and the staff of The New York Times144 pp. Versify/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. $18.99.(Ages 8 to 12)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/books/review/19th-amendment-suffrage-womens-right-to-vote.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/books/review/19th-amendment-suffrage-womens-right-to-vote.html)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Trump Can Win***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60X1-2W81-JBG3-62FX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 23, 2020 Wednesday 09:15 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1792 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Good morning. Republicans have the votes for confirmation. Miami will reopen classrooms. And many Americans are obsessed with the idea of a Trump comeback win.

How Trump can win

Across the political spectrum, many Americans are obsessed with the idea that President Trump will pull off another surprise victory this November. Today, I want to look at how such a victory might happen.

If recent polls are perfectly accurate, Joe Biden [*will win comfortably*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), taking both the Upper Midwest and several Sun Belt states. But they may not be.

The state-by-state polls could be off in a systematic way, as they were in 2016, when they underestimated Trump’s white ***working-class*** support. Pollsters have tried to fix that problem, and there is no reason to believe they have failed, as The Times’s Nate Cohn says. But polling is an inexact science, made harder by the decline in landline phones.

The bigger issue is that the campaign isn’t over, and Trump could gain support in the final weeks. One possibility is that the coming Supreme Court confirmation battle will sway some conservative voters who are dissatisfied with Trump. If the campaign were a referendum on his presidency, they might vote for Biden. If the confirmation battle instead gets them thinking about whether they’re conservative or liberal, they could come home to Trump.

[*The Upshot’s polling scorecard*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) offers a useful way to think about this: Trump will narrowly win re-election if the results differ from the current polls by as much (and in the same direction) as the 2016 results differed from the final polls.

In this scenario, he would probably still lose the popular vote. But he would win all the states where he leads or trails very narrowly, like Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio — and Arizona, where most polls show him trailing but [*a new ABC/Washington Post poll this morning*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) shows a virtual tie. Even with those, Trump would need one more, and the most likely seems to be Pennsylvania, where Biden’s lead has hovered around 5 percentage points.

Only a few years ago, Pennsylvania was more Democratic than the country as a whole, but it has shifted right, driven by its large number of white residents without a college degree. Trump is trying to appeal to them by emphasizing both many Democrats’ hostility to fracking (Biden’s own position is [*more nuanced*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/)) and the coronavirus lockdown imposed by the state’s Democratic governor, according to The Times’s Trip Gabriel, [*who has reported from the state*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

Notably, Trump trails in Pennsylvania by less than he does in Wisconsin or Michigan, two other states he won in 2016. “Pennsylvania has to be troubling the Biden campaign,” Trip says.

A Trump victory may end up involving another factor: disputed mail ballots. (Thomas Edsall, a Times Opinion writer, lists those ballots as [*one of five reasons for Biden to worry*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).)

The Trump campaign has consistently tried [*to make voting more difficult*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), believing that low turnout benefits the president. Last week, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court sided with the campaign and ruled that election officials could not count mailed ballots that arrived in only a single envelope, rather than including a second “secrecy” envelope.

One local official [*told The Philadelphia Inquirer*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) that the ruling could lead to more than 100,000 completed ballots being thrown out — or between 1 and 2 percent of the total likely to be cast.

More election news:

* [*Facebook has detected Chinese operations*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/)intended to interfere with the election, although they do not appear to be on the same scale as Russia’s.

1. [*Cindy McCain, the widow of John McCain, endorsed Biden*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), citing Trump’s reported comments denigrating members of the military.

THREE MORE BIG STORIES

1. Romney backs Trump’s court pick

Senator Mitt Romney of Utah said that he would support Trump’s push to fill the Supreme Court seat vacated by the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. His decision [*essentially ensures*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) that Republicans will be able to confirm a new justice.

Trump will announce his choice at [*5 p.m. on Saturday*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), he told a rally last night. Hoping to deflect attention from the coronavirus, he is [*pushing for confirmation before Election Day*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/). Some Republicans would like to wait, hoping that the issue will lift conservative turnout and help the party keep control of the Senate.

2. Miami plans return to the classroom

The Miami-Dade County school board approved a plan [*for students to return to classrooms full time starting next month*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/). The reopening would make Miami-Dade, the fourth-biggest district in the U.S., the largest to bring students back into the classroom full-time. (Families who prefer virtual learning would be allowed to continue with it.)

In other virus developments:

* Absenteeism at schools teaching remote classes [*has surged*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), especially in poorer communities, and many schools are struggling to track down students.

1. A 20-year-old student at California University in Pennsylvania died this month from a blood clot after being hospitalized with Covid-19. He appears[*to be the first college football player to die from the virus*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).
2. The number of confirmed virus deaths in the U.S. surpassed 200,000 yesterday. ([*These maps and charts track the toll.*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/))

3. Climate change uproots a community

Cameron Parish, a close-knit coastal community in southwestern Louisiana, is a place where families tend to stick for generations. But as the changing climate has pummeled the Gulf Coast with more frequent and more furious hurricanes, residents are [*agonizing over whether they should rebuild homes and businesses, again, or move*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

Trump’s legacy: In his first term, federal judges have rejected a number of the president’s rollbacks of environmental rules. A second term, and a more conservative Supreme Court, could help his administration [*secure those changes*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

The future: The Times spoke to [*two dozen experts about the future of the climate crisis*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), and the steps that could prevent the worst outcomes.

Here’s what else is happening

* The House [*approved a spending bill*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) to fund the government through December 11.

1. Louisville residents are [*awaiting a decision*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) by Kentucky’s attorney general about whether his office will bring charges against the police officers who shot and killed Breonna Taylor inside her home in March.
2. In a [*video Op-Ed*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), Svetlana Tikhanovskaya tells the story of her transformation from stay-at-home mom to leader of a Belarusian revolution.
3. Lives Lived: Growing up in difficult circumstances in New Jersey, Tommy DeVito was, in his own words, “a hell-raiser.” But he found a purpose when he got serious about music, forming a band called the Variety Trio. After a teenage singer named Frankie Valli joined the band, it found success as the Four Seasons. [*DeVito died of the coronavirus at 92*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

Every day, a team of Times journalists works with reporters and editors around the world to create this newsletter — and help you make sense of the world. [*Please consider supporting our work by subscribing to The Times*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

IDEA OF THE DAY: End boring breakfasts

When the Southern chef and food writer Edna Lewis was growing up on a Virginia farm in the early 20th century, her family would gather for elaborate breakfasts that included fried chicken, sweet potatoes and more. Lewis liked to describe breakfast “as ‘about the best part of the day,’ when everyone greeted each other ‘with a real sense of gratefulness to see the new day,’” [*as Bee Wilson has written in The Wall Street Journal*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

Wilson’s essay is a lovely plea for more Americans to channel Lewis and ditch their boring breakfasts of cereal or toast. In many other countries, that’s the norm: Breakfast resembles lunch or dinner more than a dessert. And the rhythms of pandemic life give Americans a chance to make a change.

“For some people working at home during the pandemic, it has been easier to have later and more leisurely breakfasts,” Wilson writes. “When you already have coffee in your body and a Zoom meeting under your belt, you may branch out and turn your mind to more brunch-like dishes — such as a spicy shakshuka of eggs poached in a rich cumin-scented tomato sauce and topped with cilantro.”

[*A personal postscript*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/): I ditched my cereal breakfasts a few years ago and switched to a combination of eggs, cheese, bread, fruit and vegetables. ([*Yes, vegetables*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).) I highly recommend it.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, SURF

The business of bagels

Officially, Beth George is a lawyer. But since 2013, she’s worked day and night as one of the world’s most sought-after bagel consultants. Largely self-taught, she wrote her first bagel recipe in the back of a Lebanese cookbook. Since then, aspiring bakers from the Bahamas to Saudi Arabia have hired her to [*develop recipes and help guide their business plans*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

To bake: For something a bit simpler to make at home, try[*the classic no-knead bread*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) — one of the most popular recipes The Times has ever published.

The film festival circuit

With the Toronto International Film Festival complete and the New York Film Festival in progress, the Times film critics Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott [*explain the highs, the lows and the weirdness of the largely virtual events*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

Among the best movies the critics watched: “[*76 Days,*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/)” a Chinese documentary about the first months of the pandemic in Wuhan, and “[*Preparations to Be Together for an Unknown Period of Time*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/),” a Hungarian drama that follows a surgeon’s return to Budapest.

The biggest wave

Some of the tallest waves on earth are in Nazaré, a Portuguese fishing port. A scientific team has determined that Maya Gabeira, a 33-year-old Brazilian, rode a [*73.5 feet wave in February, the biggest wave surfed*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) in the 2019-20 winter season. That’s a first for a female surfer.

Seven years ago, Gabeira almost died wiping out on a 50-foot wave, and her long recovery involved three back surgeries.

Diversions

* Take [*a virtual tour of Montana*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), where the trout are plentiful and the crafting of fly-fishing rods is an art.

1. The late-night hosts [*responded*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/) to Romney’s decision to support Trump’s plan to quickly seat a Supreme Court justice.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/), and a clue: thumbs-up (three letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

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

P.S. The word “[*ghostlings*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/)” appeared for the first time in The Times yesterday as noted by the Twitter bot [*@NYT\_first\_said*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/)” is about a historic moment for anti-abortion activists.

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/).

PHOTO: President Trump supporters a campaign event for Joe Biden in Lancaster, Pa. in June. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Mark Makela/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 23, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Bohemian or Business: Identities Collide in Miami’s Coconut Grove; Square Feet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YH0-SJ81-DXY4-X1RP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 24, 2020 Tuesday 08:50 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

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**Byline:** Jane Margolies

**Highlight:** The city’s development boom has finally caught up to a lush haven of shade trees and cafes. Some worry the neighborhood growth is too fast.

**Body**

The city’s development boom has finally caught up to a lush haven of shade trees and cafes. Some worry the neighborhood growth is too fast.

With its profusion of parks and shade trees, Coconut Grove is celebrated for being one of the greenest parts of sun-baked Miami.

It has some of the best schools in the city, drawing students from all over the metropolitan area. And it has long been a magnet for artists, writers and musicians who have given the neighborhood a bohemian vibe.

But lately, Coconut Grove has become known for yet another thing: a real estate boom.

The area did not experience much of the pre-recession wave of development that swept other Miami neighborhoods. But now, luxury residential towers by renowned modernist architects have been rising in Coconut Grove along Biscayne Bay, a snazzy hotel recently opened, and a well-known shopping center is getting a makeover.

And boutique office buildings are going up, attracting brand-name tenants in the tech, finance and creative industries.

The office square footage is a small fraction of that of nearby Brickell or downtown Miami, but the development is occurring in an area under six square miles, much of it zoned for low- and midrise construction.

The fast pace of growth and gentrification is pushing out longtime residents. And it is raising a question about the neighborhood’s identity: Can the Grove grow without losing its groove?

“We’re at a crossroads,” said Ken Russell, a city commissioner who also heads the board of the [*Coconut Grove Business Improvement District*](https://coconutgrove.com/).

Settled in the early 19th century, Coconut Grove has some of the oldest and grandest single-family homes in Miami. One of the best-known estates, Vizcaya, has been converted into a museum and gardens. Much of the land on which the city was built was clear cut for development, but the Grove retained its subtropical lushness.

[*By the 1960s, it was a hippy haven*](https://coconutgrove.com/), South Florida’s answer to New York’s Greenwich Village and San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district.

A whiff of that anti-establishment attitude still lingers. It says something about the neighborhood that four years ago, the person elected commissioner of the district that encompasses it was Mr. Russell, a Grove native whose background was in yo-yo and paddleboard sales.

In a phone interview, Mr. Russell acknowledged that he hadn’t known anything about land use or historic preservation when he took office. Now he does.

“I’m running hearings on land-use appeals, upzonings,” he said. “I’ve been thrust into this with a very steep learning curve.”

Luxury residences helped kick-start the surge in development.

First came the Grove at Grand Bay, developed by Terra Group, a local firm, and designed by BIG, founded by the Danish architect Bjarke Ingels. Completed in 2016, it consists of two 20-story towers that twist as they climb. (The former Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez installed his investment company, A-Rod Corp, in commercial space on the ground floor of one of them.)

Next up were the curvilinear towers of Park Grove, a project designed by Rem Koolhaas’s OMA and developed by Terra and the Related Group, which is based in downtown Miami. The 276 units are nearly sold out, with the handful left priced at $3.1 million and up, said Jon Paul Perez, executive vice president of Related.

And soon to break ground: [*a 20-story condo companion to the new Mr. C Miami-Coconut Grove*](https://coconutgrove.com/), the latest property in the upscale Mr. C hotel chain.

But housing is also needed for the ***working class***.

A solar-powered mixed-use project, under construction at the Metrorail station, will have 400 apartments, including market-rate, co-living and affordable units. The $320 million project, Grove Central, is being developed by Terra and Grass River Property, another local firm.

Residential development has spurred retail and office development. New restaurants, cafes and stores have opened, a mix of national brands (Warby Parker, Bonobos) and local companies ([*Books &amp; Books*](https://coconutgrove.com/),   [*Fireman Derek’s Bake Shop*](https://coconutgrove.com/)).

[*A waterfront development*](https://coconutgrove.com/) in the works from the TREO Group will encompass a marina, restaurants and a food hall in hangars that were originally part of a naval air station and later used by Pan Am Airways, which operated seaplane flights to Cuba.

Terra just completed a five-story office building known as Mary Street — a reuse of a municipal parking garage — and Related is erecting an eight-story office building. Madison Marquette, which is based in Washington, paid $47.4 million for two existing office buildings.

Even established neighborhood hot spots are getting a refresher.

Federal Realty Investment Trust, based in Rockville, Md., is working with Grass River and the Comras Company to breathe new life into CocoWalk, an upscale, open-air mall that dates to the 1990s. When it reopens this summer it will have a recalibrated mix of stores and restaurants (the Cheesecake Factory, out; a vegan restaurant, in). This time around, the mall will have an office component that will house, among others, the co-working company Spaces.

An investment fund of Brookfield Asset Management, which is based in Toronto, recently bought the eclectic Mayfair Hotel, which has a facade inspired by Gaudí’s Barcelona buildings, stained glass by Louis Comfort Tiffany and Moorish tiles. Brookfield declined to discuss plans for the property.

Developers say they are having no difficulty finding office tenants, even with rates in the Grove averaging $52.48 per square foot for Class A space, compared with $43.54 in nearby Coral Gables, according to the Avison Young Miami-Dade County year-end 2019 office market report.

Sony Music Latin America and SapientNitro, an advertising firm, are among the companies that have moved to the Grove or expanded their business there in the last five years.

Many residents cheer the changes. Among them is Bernardo Fort-Brescia, who founded Arquitectonica with his wife, Laurinda H. Spear, four decades ago. They have raised their six children in Miami while their firm has grown and acquired an international reputation, and they have designed multiple projects in town.

“It’s a natural evolution,” Mr. Fort-Brescia said. “More people want to live here, more businesses want to be here.”

But the real estate activity has also caused unease in some quarters.

Juan Mullerat, the founding principal of PlusUrbia Design, which worked with Perkins &amp; Will, a global design firm, on a master plan for the business improvement district a few years ago, expressed concern about vacant storefronts.

In some cases, short-term investors may be sitting on properties, waiting for their value to rise before flipping them. Some owners are offering only short-term leases, Mr. Mullerat said, “making it difficult for businesses to make investments in their stores.”

Real estate speculation and gentrification have been occurring in the West Grove section, which was settled by Bahamian immigrants who labored in construction and agriculture. Starting in the late 1800s, they built themselves wood-framed houses on yards now shaded with trees; some homes have been in the same families for decades.

Now, however, many of these modest homes have been supplanted by large houses built right up to lot lines. Aging apartment houses have been demolished.

“We see vacant lots where hundreds of families used to be,” said the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson III, the senior pastor of West Grove’s Greater St. Paul A.M.E. Church, which owns 40 affordable housing units that it rents out.

West Grove’s black population declined more than 32 percent from 2000 to 2017, while the white population increased more than 176 percent, according to preliminary data compiled by the [*Community Equity, Innovation and Resource Lab*](https://coconutgrove.com/) at the University of Miami Law School’s Center for Ethics and Public Service.

Many feel the displacement needs to end. Jacqueline Gonzalez Touzet, a co-founder of Touzet Studio, the Miami architecture firm that designed Terra’s Mary Street office building and the Grove Central project, hopes the Grove doesn’t “swing too hard” in the direction of high-end development, pricing out longtime locals and others who wish to enjoy the Grove’s charms.

She and her husband, Carlos Prio-Touzet, the firm’s other founding principal, would like to move their offices to the Grove but are not sure they can afford to.

About the neighborhood’s future, Ms. Touzet said, “It’s a wait and see.”

PHOTOS: Top, a cafe along Commodore Plaza in Coconut Grove, where the fast pace of gentrification is pushing out longtime residents. “We see vacant lots where hundreds of families used to be,” said the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson III of the Greater St. Paul A.M.E. Church. Left, the Grove at Grand Bay luxury towers. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANGEL VALENTIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2020

**End of Document**



[***A Walkable Low-Key Alternative to the Hamptons***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60WC-F1C1-DXY4-X061-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 20, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 9; LIVING IN

**Length:** 1809 words

**Byline:** By Jan Benzel

**Body**

With its quiet streets, serious dining and plentiful beaches, the Suffolk County community attracts those looking for a low-key alternative to the Hamptons.

Greenport, the mile-square waterfront village on the North Fork of Long Island, has had to reinvent itself numerous times since its days as a 19th-century whaling port. Necessity struck again this year with the coronavirus pandemic, which tested the resilience and adaptability of a local economy that relies on a seasonal influx of visitors, and wound up fueling an already heated real estate market.

''Even in the spring, when we couldn't show a house or tour a house in person, there were bidding wars,'' said Sally Heitel, an agent who manages the Greenport office of Century 21 Albertson Realty. ''Houses are closing at asking price or above.''

The rental market was particularly tight this year, she added, because people who normally rent out their homes for at least part of the summer stayed put.

Walkability, varied and historic architecture, harbors, convivial restaurants, bars and shops, and convenient transportation have long made Greenport a hub for weekenders and vacationers, particularly those who prefer its more casual feel to the ever-ritzier and traffic-choked Hamptons. On quiet residential streets, instead of formidable hedges you'll see roses and hydrangeas growing over picket fences in front of shingled saltboxes and farmhouses with generous porches.

Joanne Greenbaum, an artist based in Manhattan, rented places in Greenport for several years. ''I wanted to have a place to go when I'm an old lady,'' she said. ''Wait, I'm already an old lady!'' (She's 66.)

In May, Ms. Greenbaum bought a newly renovated four-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom farmhouse on Sterling Place for $580,000, with a separate two-car garage. ''I've basically turned the whole house into a studio,'' she said. Even the garage is set up for painting and sculpture.

She's not ready to abandon the city completely. ''You have to show your face in the art world,'' she said. ''But I love it here. It's quiet. I go to the beach. I walk my dog into town to get a coffee. I'm working well. The casualness of Greenport is totally up my alley. People are neighborly, but there isn't a scene. You can choose to be social or choose not to; you won't be judged.''

Ms. Greenbaum prefers the small-town feel of Greenport to the open spaces she might have found elsewhere. ''Even though I live alone, I don't feel alone,'' she said. ''I like it that there are people around, and I like that it's a diverse community.''

Jill Dunbar, an agent in the Greenport office of Douglas Elliman and a former owner of the Greenwich Village bookstore Three Lives & Company, moved to Greenport about 30 years ago. ''The town was a bit down and out, rough around the edges, but people were welcoming,'' she said. ''Then the New Yorkers moving here were from Greenwich Village. Now they're from Brooklyn.''

Greenport is interesting in its blend, she continued, with its long-established Black community, continuing waves of immigrants -- Greek, Mexican, Guatemalan, Colombian -- and the influx from the city. ''The infusion of new energy and creativity is thrilling,'' she said.

Longtime North Forkers are vital to the mix. At the Halyard, the restaurant at the Sound View motel with highly Instagramable sunset views, the locally sourced menu is the work of Stephan Bogardus, the young executive chef, who grew up in nearby Mattituck and was formerly the chef at another local favorite, North Fork Table & Inn, in Southold.

What You'll Find

The village of Greenport, on the banks of the Peconic River, is a North Fork headquarters of sorts for those in pursuit of serious local food and wine, fishing, gardening, beach-going, water activities, bicycling and bird-watching (there's an Audubon Society). Beaches are plentiful along the river, which flows west from Gardiners Bay and surrounds Shelter Island (a 10-minute ferry ride away), and north across Route 48, on Long Island Sound.

Part of Southold Town in Suffolk County, Greenport, with a population of about 2,200, is incorporated, and offers municipal services like water, sewers and brush pickup. There's a 70-bed hospital and a beloved public library. Greenport West, a 3.3-square-mile census-designated place with a population of about 2,100, surrounds the village on its three landward sides.

Greenport was laid out as a ***working-class*** enclave in the 19th century, so residences are on small lots, rarely bigger than a quarter or half acre. Gracious Victorians, farmhouse fixer-uppers, two-family clapboard dwellings, beach cottages and an increasing number of waterside condos make up the housing stock.

Greenport West has more typically suburban homes, as well as a couple of vineyards and farms. Vineyard View, 50 newly built units of much-sought-after affordable housing, will be filled through a lottery system (a first round was scrapped after it was determined that not all applications had been included in the draw). Peconic Landing, a 144-acre retirement community, includes private beachfront on Long Island Sound.

What You'll Pay

As of Sept. 11, there were 28 residences for sale in Greenport, including single-family homes, multifamily homes, condos and co-ops -- about half the usual inventory, Ms. Dunbar said. Current listings range from a 650-square-foot cottage for $215,000 to a grand waterfront house for $2.75 million. Of the other available listings, three are multifamily homes, one is operating as a bed-and-breakfast, and one is a restored church.

In the past 12 months, sales of 69 residences have closed in Greenport, Ms. Dunbar said, citing figures from One Key Multiple Listing Service. The numbers reflect a year in which there was very little activity for six months, she noted, although sales picked up in July, once Phase 4 of Suffolk County's reopening began. Of those residences, 56 were single-family homes with a median sale price of $633,000; 12 were condos or co-ops with a median price of $385,750. One multifamily house sold, for $540,000.

In the previous year, sales of 66 residences closed. Of those, 51 were single-family homes, with a median sale price of $690,000. Four multifamily homes sold, with a median price of $797,500; 11 condos and co-ops sold, with a median price of $405,000.

While in the past it was possible to find a year-round rental for as little as $1,200 a month, this year they are scarce, and priced at $2,000 or more, Ms. Heitel said.

The Vibe

''Part of what's funky and neat about the village is that it's got its own little government,'' said Bridget Elkin, an agent at Daniel Gale Sotheby's who moved to Greenport five years ago after living in San Francisco and New York City. She and her husband, Eric, have a 15-month-old daughter, and were part of a successful push to get the village speed limit lowered from 30 to 25 miles an hour.

The Art Deco movie theater on Front Street used to be open only during summer months until Lisa Gillooly, an agent for Corcoran, and her partner, Tony Spiridakis, a writer for film and television, made an arrangement with Josh Sapan, the chief executive of AMC Networks, who bought and restored it as a labor of love. Mr. Sapan agreed that they could show movies there for free on winter weekends, if they could figure out how to get the ancient heating system working (they did). They also took charge of making popcorn for cold-weather crowds and changing the letters on the marquee. For now, the letters spell Greenport/Six Feet Apart/Standing Together.

That D.I.Y. ethos has been in high gear in recent months. Although the antique carousel in Mitchell Park is silent and the Monday night summer dance parties with live music are on hold, the village has created parklets on its two perpendicular commercial streets, Main and Front, where restaurants and shops have set up tables and awnings. Restaurants like Claudio's (which caters dockside to the boating crowd), 1943 Pizza Bar and First & South have devised inventive systems for takeout food. Beall & Bell, a popular vintage furniture store in a former Masonic temple, is selling its finds on Instagram.

North Fork Yoga Shala, usually upstairs from Beall & Bell, is holding distanced pop-up classes in grassy yards and on the deck of the Menhaden, the fancy new hotel in town. Shops like Greenport Wines and Spirits, which carries many local wines, and the independent Burton's Bookstore made deliveries until they were able to open to masked customers. Clarke's Garden and Home set up an honor-system box in its courtyard.

The Schools

Greenport has one school building, housing students in prekindergarten through 12th grade. In December 2019, the school district approved a $17.18 million bond for major infrastructure improvement, the Suffolk Times reported.

In 2018-19, there were 333 students enrolled in the Greenport Elementary School, serving kindergarten through sixth grade, and 332 in the high school. On state tests, 20 percent of third-grade students demonstrated proficiency in English language arts, compared with 51 percent statewide; 30 percent demonstrated proficiency in math, compared with 54 percent statewide. The overall number of students tested was low -- the opt-out movement is strong in Suffolk County.

In spring 2019, Greenport High School's graduation rate was 59 percent, compared with a statewide rate of 83 percent.

The Commute

The 95-mile drive from Greenport to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel takes about two hours, depending on traffic. On the Long Island Rail Road, the trip takes about three and a half hours; two eastbound and four westbound trains stop in Greenport daily. The Hampton Jitney bus stops several times a day in Greenport, depending on the season. The ferry from Greenport Harbor to Shelter Island runs continuously from 5:15 a.m. to midnight.

The History

Religious life has long been part of the fabric of Greenport, and as congregations flourished and then dwindled, churches were built and then closed or sold and revived by other denominations, according to ''Greenport,'' by David S. Corwin and Gail F. Horton. Beginning in the 1830s, as the village prospered from whaling and shipbuilding, newcomers began arriving from around the world to find work on the docks, in brickyards and on the railroad. As they settled in, they established their own houses of worship. The cornerstone for the Reform synagogue was placed in 1903. The Clinton Memorial AME Zion Church was established in the 1920s by Black families, some of whom had come to Greenport to find work opening oysters. In June 2020, the church's pastor, the Rev. Natalie R. Wimberly, spoke as hundreds attended a vigil there for George Floyd.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/16/realestate/greenport-long-island.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/16/realestate/greenport-long-island.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Stirling Square, a festive setting for nightlife in Greenport, N.Y., has restaurants, bars and a pizzeria. The village has been a longtime hub for weekenders and vacationers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC STRIFFLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 20, 2020

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[***President Goes Quiet On Michigan TV Sets As Biden's Edge Grows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60G8-3YT1-JBG3-63FK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1630 words

**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher and Kathleen Gray

**Body**

The president has started spending more money on ads in much smaller Electoral College prizes like Iowa and Nevada, and in recent days his campaign stopped buying ads in Michigan entirely.

President Trump's campaign has quietly receded from the television airwaves in Michigan in recent weeks, shifting money elsewhere as one of the key Midwestern states that powered his surprise victory in 2016 threatens to move more firmly back into the Democratic column in 2020.

Michigan began the year with expectations that it would be one of the most intense battlegrounds in the country, but its share of Trump television advertising dollars dwindled this summer as Joseph R. Biden Jr. built a steady advantage in the polls.

Since the end of June, Mr. Trump has spent more money on ads in 10 other states -- with Michigan falling behind even much smaller states like Iowa and Nevada -- and in recent days, Mr. Trump's campaign stopped buying ads in Michigan entirely.

The Biden campaign has more than tripled what Mr. Trump spent on television in Michigan in the last month, by far the most lopsided advantage of any swing state where both are advertising. And in Detroit, the state's largest media market, the Trump campaign last ran a television ad, outside of national ad buys that include the state, on July 3, according to data from Advertising Analytics.

Mr. Trump faces a trifecta of troubles in Michigan, according to political strategists and state polling: reduced support among less educated white voters in a contest against Mr. Biden compared with Hillary Clinton; motivated Black voters in the state's urban centers; and suburban voters who continue to flee Mr. Trump's divisive brand of politics.

''Of all the states he won in 2016, Trump would be most hard-pressed to keep Michigan in his column this time around,'' said Geoff Garin, a Democratic pollster for Priorities USA, a Democratic super PAC.

There are uniquely local factors hampering the president, too: Mr. Trump's unprovoked and unfulfilled threat this spring to ''hold up funding'' to the state because election officials planned to send absentee ballot applications to voters, as well as his loud sparring with Michigan's Democratic governor, Gretchen Whitmer, over her response to the coronavirus pandemic. Voters now consistently rate her performance on the issue positively and his unfavorably.

''The clearest reason why the president is reeling in Michigan is because of his failed coronavirus response,'' said Garlin Gilchrist, the state's Democratic lieutenant governor.

Mr. Trump's campaign has downplayed any talk of retreat. Republicans are unlikely to jump ship so early on a state worth 16 Electoral College votes, and they are still organizing in Michigan. The campaign continues to deploy door-knocking volunteers during the pandemic, dispatch top administration officials (including the attorney general and the secretary of energy this month) and advertise digitally on Facebook.

But the reality is that Mr. Trump has far more pathways to 270 electoral votes without Michigan than Mr. Biden does. The Trump campaign has been redirecting money to defend other, more conservative states that he won in 2016, like Ohio and Georgia, and to try to find new Democratic states to flip, such as Nevada and Minnesota.

Michigan Democrats are uneasy about the notion that they are ahead after Mrs. Clinton's narrow and devastating loss. ''If nothing else, 2016 has made it very clear to a lot of Democrats that you don't want to put too much stock in anything other than what happens on Election Day,'' said Brandon Dillon, who was the Michigan Democratic Party's chairman four years ago.

''The biggest danger for us is to be overconfident,'' added Representative Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat whose frequent warnings have earned her the ''Debbie Downer'' nickname.

Until this week, Mr. Trump's outside allies had not been filling the Michigan advertising breach. But on Wednesday, a group called Restoration PAC, funded by the Republican megadonor Richard Uihlein, will begin a $2.5 million, two-week Michigan ad buy. The group's polling showed Mr. Trump trailing Mr. Biden 54 percent to 37 percent in June, double the gap the president faced in March. Dan Curry, a Restoration PAC spokesman, said more recent private polls indicated that the contest was ''tightening.''

America First Action, the leading pro-Trump super PAC, cut Michigan from its ad buy in early July, swapping in Arizona and North Carolina instead. Including super PACs, Democrats spent $5.3 million in television ads in the state from June 30 through Tuesday, compared with less than $1 million for Republicans.

Bradley Beychok, the president of American Bridge, a Democratic super PAC that has made Michigan a major focus, argued that the ad spending disparity was a sign that ''Trump is conceding part of the battleground.'' If it holds, he said, ''this is a big, seismic event.''

In a call last week with reporters, Mr. Trump's new campaign manager, Bill Stepien, dismissed current polls that show Mr. Trump losing in Michigan and nationally, noting that the president trailed badly throughout much of the summer of 2016 and into the fall before winning the White House anyway.

''These are states the experts did not see coming four years ago,'' Mr. Stepien said of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, which all flipped to the G.O.P. despite surveys showing Mrs. Clinton ahead. ''We intend to protect this 2016 map,'' he added.

Mr. Trump's campaign still has $11.4 million in television ads reserved in Michigan starting in September, and the head of the Republican National Committee, Ronna McDaniel, is said to be particularly invested in the state as a former state party chair who had argued Mr. Trump had a chance there in 2016.

But ad reservations are not necessarily strong predictors of future priorities; campaigns are not financially penalized for canceling or adjusting reservations closer to their air dates.

''This is a state-by-state fist fight,'' said John Sellek, a Lansing-based Republican political consultant. ''The Trump campaign may have decided that they need to shore up their base states like Ohio and Georgia. There will be on-and-off skirmishes in the blue wall states, but for now, it looks like some of the fights we'll see are in the Republican base states.''

After Mr. Trump carried Michigan in 2016 by only 10,704 votes, Democrats struck back decisively in 2018, flipping three statewide offices from Republican to Democrat, as well as two suburban Detroit congressional seats and five seats each in the State House of Representatives and State Senate. At the top of the ticket, Ms. Whitmer won the governorship by more than 400,000 votes.

''Particularly women in the suburbs broke in a big way for us Democrats,'' said Mr. Gilchrist, who was elected with Ms. Whitmer, ''and I think the Biden campaign is running an effort to continue to build on that momentum.''

Then there are Mr. Trump's self-inflicted political wounds in the state, none more public than his insults of Ms. Whitmer as she locked down the state after the virus began spreading in March, calling her ''half Whitmer'' and ''the woman in Michigan.''

Ms. Whitmer was one of a series of Michigan women whom the president has belittled: the attorney general, the secretary of state, the chief executive of General Motors and two members of Congress.

''I don't know any other state where he's gone after as many women,'' Ms. Dingell said. Mr. Trump also mocked her late husband, former Representative John D. Dingell, at a rally last year, suggesting he had gone to hell and was ''looking up.''

Three state polls last week showed Mr. Biden winning female voters by wide margins, from 15 to 29 percentage points, and ahead in the state over all by six to 12 points.

Mr. Biden is seen as a stronger candidate in Michigan than Mrs. Clinton was, especially after he swept all 83 counties in the Democratic primary race against Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Four years earlier, Mr. Sanders carried 73 counties against Mrs. Clinton, and some of his strongest areas were rural and white regions that would go on to vote overwhelming for Mr. Trump in the fall.

Mr. Trump carried non-college-educated white voters in Michigan by more than 30 percentage points, according to 2016 general election exit polling. Last week, separate CNN and Fox News polls of the state showed that Mr. Trump's lead among that group had shrunk to only 10 points.

''Hillary Clinton was toxic to non-college-educated white ***working-class*** voters, particularly men,'' said Adrian Hemond, a Michigan-based Democratic strategist. ''They don't have the same attitude with Joe Biden.''

In the state's largely rural Upper Peninsula, Mr. Trump swept all but one of 15 counties. And while the president is expected to carry the region again, many predict it will be by lower margins.

Rod Nelson, a retired chief executive of the Mackinac Straits Health System hospital in St. Ignace, on the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula, is one of those who voted for Mr. Trump but has been turned off by the president's attitude and leadership.

''I was privately hoping he would get in there and do the things he said he was going to do, but I was bothered by what he said about John McCain,'' Mr. Nelson said.

''And that cabinet meeting where they all had to go around and praise him really turned it for me,'' he added. ''I don't believe in a dictator or a king. I want a president who knows how to lead.''

He plans to cast a ballot for Mr. Biden in November.

''I just don't see how he can win Michigan,'' Mr. Nelson said of the president. ''I think there was a real anti-Hillary sentiment in 2016. It was a perfect storm for him to win.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/us/politics/michigan-trump-biden-2020.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/us/politics/michigan-trump-biden-2020.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Representative Debbie Dingell, at lectern, has warned Michigan Democrats not to be complacent as former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. leads President Trump in the state. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***An Unsung Figure Joins the Clay Canon***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60G8-3YT1-JBG3-63F6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1495 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Griffin

**Body**

The underrecognized Black ceramist made tiny ''weed pots'' in the 1960s and '70s that are seen today on a fresh pedestal.

LOS ANGELES -- One afternoon in the early '90s, the banking consultant Rudy Estrada returned to his mansion in Pasadena, Calif., to find two members of the local sheriff's department standing over a lightly built African-American man spread-eagled on his front lawn.

Mr. Estrada immediately recognized the man as his friend Doyle Lane, a mild-mannered ceramic artist whom he had known since childhood. Growing up in the 1950s and '60s in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of El Sereno, in East Los Angeles, Mr. Estrada and his schoolfriends used to visit Mr. Lane at his hillside home studio to watch him throwing pots.

Now Mr. Estrada was a collector of Mr. Lane's work, and Mr. Lane had come to his house to install a tile mural. In this affluent, predominantly white neighborhood, the officers had assumed he was an intruder. (A few months later, Mr. Estrada's father, who is Hispanic, was similarly harassed.)

Once the sheriffs had departed, Mr. Estrada was astonished to find Mr. Lane apologizing to him. ''To this day it bothers me,'' he told me recently by phone from his home in San Marino. ''He was such a humble man.''

If Mr. Lane, who arrived in Los Angeles from New Orleans in the early 1950s and died in 2002, age 78, endured other such humiliations in his lifetime, he did not use his art to confront the racism, violence and economic inequity that surrounded him, unlike so many of his peers -- Charles White, Betye Saar, Noah Purifoy or John Outterbridge, for example. He threw pots, made color-field tile murals and abstract ''clay paintings,'' along with mosaics, beads, enamel panels, wooden keepsake boxes and other artifacts that observed no delineation between fine art, folk art, applied art or design.

It is his tiny ''weed pots'' that are celebrated in an exhibition through Aug. 29 at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, which is open by appointment. The show gathers 60 pots made between the 1950s and the '70s: slim-necked, round vessels in a profusion of colors and textured glazes. All are borrowed from private and public collections; none are for sale. The show, which includes a virtual tour and a catalog currently in production, was the idea of the artist Ricky Swallow, a collector of Mr. Lane's work, whose own exhibition of bronze sculptures runs concurrently in the gallery's adjacent space.

The ''weed pots'' are ravishingly seductive. Some are smooth as river rocks; others are cracked or lumpen, like overripe fruit from otherworldly trees. Many are barely more than a couple of inches high. Despite Mr. Lane's name for them, the ''weed pots'' have nothing to do with marijuana; their apertures are wide enough for only a single wildflower stem. They are potent objects. David Kordansky, who is lending pots from his personal collection for the exhibition, describes them as ''magic crystals.''

Mr. Swallow's love of Mr. Lane's pots comes neither from their cultural significance nor from their historical value as design objects.

''I'm a fan of the possibility of the minute,'' he told me from behind a mask and a baseball cap during a break from installing at the gallery. ''I've made very small intricate sculptures over the years and I've collected different things of that scale.'' One of the sculptures in his exhibition is ''Cap #4,'' a life-size bronze cast of a ball of twine in a teacup. ''I think there's something about the 'weed pots' that you could hold one or you could look at one and have a really clear understanding of who that artist is,'' he said. ''That's a simple idea but it's a hard thing to achieve.''

''I've never had the urge to make a social statement in my art,'' Mr. Lane said in a 1981 interview. ''It's nice if you can do that. Some of the artists who do those things have other incomes; they're not making their living from just their art.''

One loyal friend and supporter of Mr. Lane was the artist and educator Charles White, who died in 1979. Mr. White, who was a hugely influential figure in L.A.'s Black arts community, once said, ''I have no use for artists who try to divorce themselves from the struggle.'' He helped Mr. Lane throughout his career, recommending him for a mural commission at the International Children's School in Los Angeles -- a mosaic of a cat surrounded by birds, now lost. What drew Mr. White to Mr. Lane's work? Mr. White's son, C. Ian White, an artist and the director and chief executive of his father's archives, told me that it was Mr. Lane's ''tireless work ethic'' that appealed to him.

Mr. Lane worked hard to diversify his income streams. He was a glaze consultant for local ceramic supply companies, while also selling wares direct from his studio. He sold through craft galleries like The Folk Tree in Pasadena, where his beads went for a dollar each, as well as the Brockman Gallery in Leimert Park, a vital and respected Black-owned gallery for African-American artists in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. Dale Davis, its co-founder with his brother Alonzo, said that Mr. Lane was a popular fixture at what he called his ''holiday shows'' -- group exhibitions of objects under $30.

Around the same time, Mr. Lane was undertaking much larger projects. When the Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens in San Marino unveiled its new visitor entrance in 2015, the courtyard outside its education center was dominated by a 17-foot wide mural made by Mr. Lane in 1964. The abstract work, made up of nearly 5,000 irregular red tiles, was commissioned by the architect Welton Becket for the Pasadena office of the Mutual Savings and Loan Association.

''He had a connection I wasn't aware of,'' Mr. Davis said. ''Because a bank was not going to buy a major work by an African-American artist in the 1950s or '60s.'' In fact, Mr. Lane had many connections. He would carry boxes of pots to architects' offices, offering them direct or, in at least one instance, allowing the architect to sell on his behalf. These relationships brought larger commissions for him, from Los Angeles to Palm Springs.

The photographer Ben Serar, who photographed Mr. Lane around 1976, recalled how his father, the architect Rudy Serar, met him while they both were throwing pots at East Los Angeles College. ''Over the years, my dad connected Doyle with a lot of different architects,'' he said.

The Los Angeles-based independent curator jill moniz (she writes her name in lowercase letters), formerly head curator at the California African American Museum, to which Mr. Lane left his archive, suggests that this resourcefulness alone makes him remarkable. ''It's wonderful that he could sell his work and live doing this thing that he loved,'' she said. ''For a lot of Black artists at the time, that was an almost impossible consideration.''

She has little patience with the patronizing, pitying narrative that is often attached to Mr. Lane, who died alone, without family. ''You know -- 'He was alone, poor Doyle Lane,''' she said. ''But not poor Doyle Lane! Doyle Lane had a community, he had friends, he had collectors, he had commissions. He lived a full life.'' She added, ''This is the thing for me that's so important right now; there is a community of Black makers and thinkers and collectors who were friends with Doyle who supported him, who were interested in him long before he became the purview of white institutionality.'' His legacy, she insists, does not need saving by anyone.

But Mr. White is not so sure. He broadly welcomes the attention -- ''overzealous attention,'' Ms. moniz calls it -- that Black artists are receiving from white collectors and institutions, even if it comes too late. ''He was a single man,'' Mr. White said. ''I remember his house as a shack. He wasn't afforded those opportunities of a certain level of lifestyle, whether or not that he wanted it. When he passed, everything was just moved and put onto the street.''

These days, Mr. Lane's ''weed pots'' change hands for around $2,000 each, said Gerard O'Brien, the design dealer and gallerist who has handled much of his work over the past 15 years. Large pieces go for much more. Most of his clients, he says, are white, and typically are collectors of midcentury design rather than African-American art.

Contrast Mr. Lane's market with that of Ken Price, perhaps L.A.'s most celebrated ceramic artist, who studied in the same class as Mr. Lane in the 1950s. Last year, Price's ''Slate Cup II'' (1972) sold at Christie's for $243,750. Price, who was white, had his first solo exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in 1960, age 25. Mr. Lane, who received such deep affection and support in his lifetime from those who knew him, likely never imagined receiving that same devotion from those who did not.

David Kordansky Gallery

Through Aug. 29, by appointment.

5130 West Edgewood Place, Los Angeles; 323-935-3030; davidkordanskygallery.com.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The ceramicist Doyle Lane in his home studio, around 1976, in the El Sereno neighborhood of Los Angeles. His pots were as complex as paintings. Left from top: Ceramic vessels by Lane on display at David Kordansky Gallery through Aug. 29. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROZETTE RAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BEN SERAR) (C1)

Doyle Lane's so-called weed pots, at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles. He also made Color Field tile murals and mosaics that observed no delineation between fine art, folk art and design. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROZETTE RAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ROZETTE RAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Clockwise from left: Lane in his studio around 1976. He had strong support from Black art dealers and from architects, and now has a growing fan base

a restored 1964 mural by Lane

and the Australian sculptor and curator Ricky Swallow with several of Lane's pots. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN SERAR

DAVID WAKELY

ROZETTE RAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C7)

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[***The Pandemic That Ravaged Canada and Its Lessons for Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YG6-D8S1-DXY4-X2MC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Ian Austen

**Highlight:** There are parallels to be drawn between the crisis we currently face as the new coronavirus spreads across the globe and the Spanish Flu of 1918.

**Body**

There are parallels to be drawn between the crisis we currently face as the new coronavirus spreads across the globe and the Spanish Flu of 1918.

These days, walking around downtown Ottawa, and likely most other places in Canada, is an experience that’s both encouraging and melancholy.

Even the most casual stroll — if walks that involve stepping off the sidewalk to maintain two meters of separation can be called casual — suggests that most people are heeding calls for social distancing to slow the spread of the new coronavirus. But the empty streets, darkened shops and restaurants with “To Our Customers” notices on their doors, and empty buses grinding along at rush hour only reinforces how much of our lives have been put on hold.

Over the course of the week, there were several announcements in Canada that would have been unthinkable just three weeks ago. As of Saturday we’ll be largely closed off to the rest of the world, except for freight shipments and some essential travelers. As part of that, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Friday that the asylum seekers who have made Roxham Road the best-known dead-end street in Canada will now be sent back to the United States.

[Read: [*In Shift, Trudeau Says Canada Will Return Asylum Seekers to U.S.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html)]

And while restrictions on domestic travel haven’t been formally imposed, the shutdown of [*galleries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html),   [*museums*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html),   [*ski resorts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html) and pretty much anything else you’d likely   [*visit while on vacation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html) has effectively told everyone to stay put.

And as industrial employees, airline workers and even much of the staff at The Hockey News were sent home on temporary layoffs, oil prices continued to plummet.

At The Times, more than 360 journalists have been publishing a torrent of stories about the pandemic, roughly 100 a day. You can reach them all through here. And, as I mentioned last week, our coronavirus coverage is open to everyone without a subscription.

[Read: [*The Latest Updates on the Coronavirus Pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html)]

Within all of that material, there have been several articles offering practical advice. Here are a few that I have found useful:

— Tech columnist Brian X. Chen who, like me, is a longtime work-at-home type, offers advice for newcomers when it comes to [*sorting out technical issues*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html). His key point: “Less is better, especially fewer gadgets and fewer work apps. That principle can guide us to a simpler, less frustrating setup that enables us to work well with our colleagues.”

— In Cooking, Margaux Laskey offers some [*meal suggestions for people in self-quarantine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html).

— And for those of you who can get outside for exercise, Talya Minsberg [*makes a compelling case to go running.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html)

As the number of confirmed cases and deaths continue to build in Canada, many people have drawn parallels with the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918. Its toll was devastating. It killed an estimated 55,000 people in Canada by the time it ran out of steam in 1920, when the country had a population of just 8.7 million. No one really knows how many people died worldwide, but estimates range between 50 and 100 million.

There are many differences between the Spanish flu and the current coronavirus. They include the previous pandemic’s greater lethality as well as enormous advances in medicine, particularly the development of antibiotics. Many Spanish flu victims were actually killed by secondary bacterial infections that, for the most part, can be treated today.

To get a fix on what that earlier pandemic can tell us about today’s crisis, I spoke with Mark Humphries, a historian and the director of the Laurier Center for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. Professor Humphries’ books include “[*The Last Plague: Spanish Influenza and the Politics of Public Health in Canada*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html).” Our conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity.

Most people believe that the Spanish flu was carried across Canada by troops returning from fighting in Europe during World War I. Is that how it happened?

There’s a popular perception that because we know that the war ends in November of 1918, that means somehow things are ramping down. But the reality is that the war effort really peaks in the fall of 1918. That includes the expansion of Canada’s war effort to create a force to go to Siberia to fight the Bolsheviks. They mobilized people across the country and that is what’s responsible for how the flu was seeded across the country.

It would have inevitably crossed the country no matter what and it probably would have happened over a period of several weeks rather than simply one week. It’s just that we can actually trace the spread in many local communities to those soldiers.

How quickly was the seriousness of the situation recognized?

Public health officials by this point were very experienced in tracking infectious diseases. And in many ways, what’s remarkable about the Spanish flu is how little worry it caused within professional circles. It was very much treated as just another of many different public health problems. And that, to me, is always the most remarkable thing when looking back at 1918.

The reason was that in 1918 you were far more likely to die of an infectious disease than today. Generally, we then had dozens of major infectious diseases that were constantly making the rounds in communities. And if you think about the war, it had by the fall of 1918 resulted in about 45,000 Canadian deaths by that point.

Why was the Spanish flu so lethal?

Nineteen eighteen was a very different time than today. Tuberculosis was rampant. The world was powered by coal in people’s houses as well as in industry and there were no scrubbers or anything like that on smokestacks. The baseline in terms of the everyday health of most ***working-class*** people was much lower. You’re dealing with a world in which you still had lots of children who developed rickets and other things like that.

So you mix all those things together, combined with overcrowding to a degree that is unimaginable today, and you create the perfect environment for a severe respiratory pathogen like the 1918 flu to run through the population.

How did it change Canada’s public health system?

At that point, most people conceived of public health as something for cleaning up nuisances and getting rid of so-called problems within society.

What 1918 convinced people of in Canada and around the world is that public health threats are not based in class, and are not simply limited to immigrants, which is how an awful lot of diseases were viewed in the 19th and early 20th century.

The change in mentality that comes out of 1918 is the recognition that taking a shared responsibility toward preventing, controlling and managing disease is important.

What does the history of the Spanish flu tell us about the current outbreak

I’ve been reluctant to say this, but one of the lessons history teaches us is that we often get pandemics wrong or epidemics wrong as they’re occurring.

Today, public health officials hope that what they are doing slows the spread of the disease and that it ramps down the pressure on hospitals. And that’s entirely understandable. We do have to weigh that against the economic consequences and the social consequences of what’s happened and how long we can sustain what we’re doing.

What history teaches us is that in the moment, we don’t always get it right. I’m not sure what the right path is forward here. But what I find most remarkable is the universal way in which, and the speed with which, we’ve adopted measures that are completely unprecedented in history.

A native of Windsor, Ontario, Ian Austen was educated in Toronto, lives in Ottawa and has reported about Canada for The New York Times for the past 16 years. Follow him on Twitter at @ianrausten.

How are we doing?

We’re eager to have your thoughts about this newsletter and events in Canada in general. Please send them to [*nytcanada@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html).

Like this email?

Forward it to your friends, and let them know they can sign up [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/world/canada/trudeau-asylum-seekers-coronavirus.html).

PHOTO: Telephone operators in High River, Alberta, during the Spanish flu pandemic. (PHOTOGRAPH BY University of Calgary Archives and Special Collections FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2020

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[***Michigan Threatens to Slip From Trump as He Goes Quiet on Airwaves***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60G2-DGV1-JBG3-6034-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 29, 2020 Wednesday 11:17 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1654 words

**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher and Kathleen Gray

**Highlight:** The president has started spending more money on ads in much smaller Electoral College prizes like Iowa and Nevada, and in recent days his campaign stopped buying ads in Michigan entirely.

**Body**

The president has started spending more money on ads in much smaller Electoral College prizes like Iowa and Nevada, and in recent days his campaign stopped buying ads in Michigan entirely.

[*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html)’s campaign has quietly receded from the television airwaves in Michigan in recent weeks, shifting money elsewhere as one of the key Midwestern states that powered his surprise victory in 2016 threatens to move more firmly back into the Democratic column in 2020.

Michigan began the year with expectations that it would be one of the most intense battlegrounds in the country, but its share of Trump television advertising dollars dwindled this summer as [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) built a steady advantage in the polls.

Since the end of June, Mr. Trump has spent more money on ads in 10 other states — with Michigan falling behind even much smaller states like Iowa and Nevada — and in recent days, Mr. Trump’s campaign stopped buying ads in Michigan entirely.

The Biden campaign has more than tripled what [*Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) spent on television in Michigan in the last month, by far the most lopsided advantage of any swing state where both are advertising. And in Detroit, the state’s largest media market, the Trump campaign last ran a television ad, outside of national ad buys that include the state, on July 3, according to data from Advertising Analytics.

Mr. Trump faces a trifecta of troubles in Michigan, according to political strategists and state polling: reduced support among less educated white voters in a contest against Mr. Biden compared with Hillary Clinton; motivated Black voters in the state’s urban centers; and suburban voters who continue to flee Mr. Trump’s divisive brand of politics.

“Of all the states he won in 2016, Trump would be most hard-pressed to keep Michigan in his column this time around,” said Geoff Garin, a Democratic pollster for Priorities USA, a Democratic super PAC.

There are [*uniquely local factors*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) hampering the president, too: Mr. Trump’s unprovoked and unfulfilled threat this spring to [*“hold up funding”*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) to the state because election officials planned to send absentee ballot applications to voters, as well as his loud sparring with Michigan’s Democratic governor, Gretchen Whitmer, over her response to the coronavirus pandemic. Voters now consistently rate her performance on the issue positively and his unfavorably.

“The clearest reason why the president is reeling in Michigan is because of his failed coronavirus response,” said Garlin Gilchrist, the state’s Democratic lieutenant governor.

Mr. Trump’s campaign has downplayed any talk of retreat. Republicans are unlikely to jump ship so early on a state worth 16 Electoral College votes, and they are still organizing in Michigan. The campaign continues to deploy door-knocking volunteers during the pandemic, dispatch top administration officials (including the [*attorney general*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) and the [*secretary of energy*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) this month) and advertise digitally on Facebook.

But the reality is that Mr. Trump has far more pathways to 270 electoral votes without Michigan than Mr. Biden does. The Trump campaign has been redirecting money to defend other, more conservative states that he won in 2016, like Ohio and Georgia, and to try to find new Democratic states to flip, such as Nevada and Minnesota.

Michigan Democrats are uneasy about the notion that they are ahead after Mrs. Clinton’s narrow and devastating loss. “If nothing else, 2016 has made it very clear to a lot of Democrats that you don’t want to put too much stock in anything other than what happens on Election Day,” said Brandon Dillon, who was the Michigan Democratic Party’s chairman four years ago.

“The biggest danger for us is to be overconfident,” added Representative Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat whose frequent warnings have earned her the “Debbie Downer” nickname.

Until this week, Mr. Trump’s outside allies had not been filling the Michigan advertising breach. But on Wednesday, a group called Restoration PAC, funded by the Republican megadonor Richard Uihlein, will begin a $2.5 million, two-week Michigan ad buy. The group’s polling showed Mr. Trump trailing Mr. Biden 54 percent to 37 percent in June, double the gap the president faced in March. Dan Curry, a Restoration PAC spokesman, said more recent private polls indicated that the contest was “tightening.”

America First Action, the leading pro-Trump super PAC, cut Michigan from its ad buy in early July, swapping in Arizona and North Carolina instead. Including super PACs, Democrats spent $5.3 million in television ads in the state from June 30 through Tuesday, compared with less than $1 million for Republicans.

Bradley Beychok, the president of American Bridge, a Democratic super PAC that has made Michigan a major focus, argued that the ad spending disparity was a sign that “Trump is conceding part of the battleground.” If it holds, he said, “this is a big, seismic event.”

In a call last week with reporters, Mr. Trump’s new campaign manager, Bill Stepien, dismissed current polls that show Mr. Trump [*losing in Michigan and nationally*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html), noting that the president trailed badly throughout much of the summer of 2016 and into the fall before winning the White House anyway.

“These are states the experts did not see coming four years ago,” Mr. Stepien said of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, which all flipped to the G.O.P. despite surveys showing Mrs. Clinton ahead. “We intend to protect this 2016 map,” he added.

Mr. Trump’s campaign still has $11.4 million in television ads reserved in Michigan starting in September, and the head of the Republican National Committee, Ronna McDaniel, is said to be particularly invested in the state as a former state party chair who had argued Mr. Trump had a chance there in 2016.

But ad reservations are not necessarily strong predictors of future priorities; campaigns are not financially penalized for canceling or adjusting reservations closer to their air dates.

“This is a state-by-state fist fight,” said John Sellek, a Lansing-based Republican political consultant. “The Trump campaign may have decided that they need to shore up their base states like Ohio and Georgia. There will be on-and-off skirmishes in the blue wall states, but for now, it looks like some of the fights we’ll see are in the Republican base states.”

After Mr. Trump carried Michigan in 2016 by only 10,704 votes, Democrats struck back decisively in 2018, flipping three statewide offices from Republican to Democrat, as well as two suburban Detroit congressional seats and five seats each in the State House of Representatives and State Senate. At the top of the ticket, Ms. Whitmer won the governorship by more than 400,000 votes.

“Particularly women in the suburbs broke in a big way for us Democrats,” said Mr. Gilchrist, who was elected with Ms. Whitmer, “and I think the Biden campaign is running an effort to continue to build on that momentum.”

Then there are Mr. Trump’s self-inflicted political wounds in the state, none more public than his insults of Ms. Whitmer as she locked down the state after the virus began spreading in March, calling her “half Whitmer” and “the woman in Michigan.”

Ms. Whitmer was one of [*a series of Michigan women whom the president has belittled*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html): the attorney general, the secretary of state, the chief executive of General Motors and two members of Congress.

“I don’t know any other state where he’s gone after as many women,” Ms. Dingell said. Mr. Trump also [*mocked her late husband*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html), former Representative John D. Dingell, at a rally last year, suggesting he had gone to hell and was “looking up.”

Three state polls last week showed Mr. Biden winning female voters by wide margins, from 15 to 29 percentage points, and ahead in the state over all by six to 12 points.

Mr. Biden is seen as a stronger candidate in Michigan than Mrs. Clinton was, especially after he [*swept all 83 counties*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) in the Democratic primary race against Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Four years earlier, Mr. Sanders carried 73 counties against Mrs. Clinton, and some of his strongest areas were rural and white regions that would go on to vote overwhelming for Mr. Trump in the fall.

Mr. Trump carried non-college-educated white voters in Michigan by more than 30 percentage points, according to 2016 general election exit polling. Last week, separate [*CNN*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) and [*Fox News*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) polls of the state showed that Mr. Trump’s lead among that group had shrunk to only 10 points.

“Hillary Clinton was toxic to non-college-educated white ***working-class*** voters, particularly men,” said Adrian Hemond, a Michigan-based Democratic strategist. “They don’t have the same attitude with Joe Biden.”

In the state’s largely rural Upper Peninsula, Mr. Trump swept all but one of 15 counties. And while the president is expected to carry the region again, many predict it will be by lower margins.

Rod Nelson, a retired chief executive of the Mackinac Straits Health System hospital in St. Ignace, on the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula, is one of those who voted for Mr. Trump but has been turned off by the president’s attitude and leadership.

“I was privately hoping he would get in there and do the things he said he was going to do, but I was bothered by [*what he said about John McCain*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html),” Mr. Nelson said.

“And that cabinet meeting where [*they all had to go around and praise him*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/donald-trump.html) really turned it for me,” he added. “I don’t believe in a dictator or a king. I want a president who knows how to lead.”

He plans to cast a ballot for Mr. Biden in November.

“I just don’t see how he can win Michigan,” Mr. Nelson said of the president. “I think there was a real anti-Hillary sentiment in 2016. It was a perfect storm for him to win.”

PHOTOS: Representative Debbie Dingell, at lectern, has warned Michigan Democrats not to be complacent as former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. leads President Trump in the state. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES; MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2020

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[***The Coronavirus Bailouts Begin to Take Shape***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YG4-JM71-DXY4-X1GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 20, 2020 Friday 07:15 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1453 words

**Highlight:** There is little doubt that a severe economic downturn awaits. How bad it gets depends on the nature of the government response.

**Body**

Want this email in your inbox each morning? [*Sign up here*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

The shape of things to come

Recessions almost always [*follow bear markets*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), and there is little doubt that the steep market decline driven by the coronavirus pandemic will lead to a severe economic downturn. How bad it gets will depend on the nature of the government response.

Economists have been slashing their forecasts, and the numbers are grim, especially for the second quarter. But what real difference does it make if Goldman Sachs thinks the U.S. economy will shrink by 5 percent and Deutsche Bank expects a 13 percent fall? It’s going to be bad, and the shape of the downturn is what many are focusing on now.

Will it be a V-, U- or L-shaped recovery? Calls for a short, sharp downturn — a V-shaped decline and rebound — have been fading away, as widespread business shutdowns and “social distancing” orders suggest that it could be a while before things return to normal. That implies a more gradual U-shaped trajectory. In the worst-case scenario, the drop in activity lasts so long that it resembles an “L”: falling fast and then staying low.

The shape of bailouts is also emerging, with Senate Republicans [*presenting their $1 trillion proposal*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) for business loans, tax cuts and direct payments to Democratic colleagues today. But disagreements between the parties in Congress, and between   [*the White House and the Fed*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), may slow the passage of stimulus measures.

Yesterday, President Trump suggested that the government could [*take equity stakes*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) in companies as a condition of aid.

Nikki Haley, the Trump administration’s former U.N. ambassador, [*resigned from the board of Boeing*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), which is seeking a $60 billion bailout of the aerospace industry. She said, “I cannot support a move to lean on the federal government for a stimulus or bailout.”

We’re about to see some truly terrible job numbers, as companies lay off workers when they close their doors. The number of initial unemployment claims filed last week [*shot up to 281,000*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), compared with 211,000 the week before. When the data for this week is published, the level of claims is expected to break records: Analysts at Goldman think jobless claims could reach above two million.

In other coronavirus news ...

The global food supply is buckling under the strain of frenzied buying. ([*Bloomberg*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Walmart will pay out $550 million in cash bonuses to its hourly workers and hire up to 150,000 temporary employees. ([*WSJ*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

The rental car companies Hertz and Avis want to be part of any bailout of the travel industry. ([*Bloomberg*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Who’s buying, who’s selling

A storm is brewing for senators who sold stocks in the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak. At the same time, data suggests that company execs have been buying during the turmoil.

Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat; and Richard Burr, James Inhofe and Kelly Loeffler, all Republicans, [*sold shares starting in late January*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), according to disclosures. The sales took place before the worst of the recent market rout.

Mr. Burr, who is the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has received [*the most criticism*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), given his sales took place as he delivered messages of   [*public reassurance*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) and   [*private alarm*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). The sales also appear to represent a significant share of his overall holdings.

Ms. Feinstein and Ms. Loeffler said that their portfolios were managed by others, without their input or knowledge.

Meanwhile, company insiders appear to be buying. According to AlphaSense, a data platform, regulatory filings announcing purchases by executives and directors have jumped in recent weeks.

At companies with market caps of at least $1 billion, there have been 1,305 filings for stock purchases so far this month, compared with just 113 during the same period last year. Executives may think the bear market has hit their shares too hard, or that purchases with their own money serve as a sign of commitment during tough times — or a bit of both.

Noteworthy buyers in the past week include David Simon, the head of the mall operator Simon Property Group, who bought $9 million on March 17; and Charles Scharf, the C.E.O. of Wells Fargo, who bought $5 million in the bank’s shares on March 13.

Bill Gates’s notes on a pandemic

He may [*not be on the board of Microsoft anymore*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), but Mr. Gates is keeping busy through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, helping respond to the coronavirus. He conducted an   [*Ask Me Anything Q.&amp;A.*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) on Reddit yesterday, answering queries about the disease outbreak. Here are some highlights.

Is there any chance that the 18-month timeline for development of a vaccine can be shortened, and by how much?

This is a great question. There are over six different efforts going on to make a vaccine. Some use a new approach called RNA which is unproven. We will have to build lots of manufacturing for the different approaches, knowing that some of them will not work. We will need literally billions of vaccines to protect the world. Vaccines require testing to make sure they are safe and effective.

Is there anything you can do to assist with ventilator production?

There are a lot of efforts to do this. If we do social distancing (“shut down”) properly then the surge of cases won’t be as overwhelming. Our foundation’s expertise is in diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines so we are not involved in the ventilator efforts, but it could make a contribution to have more, especially as the disease gets into developing countries including Africa.

How long will this go on?

This will vary a lot by country. China is seeing very few cases now because their testing and “shut down” was very effective. If a country does a good job with testing and “shut down” then within 6-10 weeks they should see very few cases and be able to open back up.

Oxy may tap a former leader to take on Carl Icahn

Occidental Petroleum has a ton of problems right now: plunging oil prices, huge debt from its $38 billion takeover of Anadarko and an irate Carl Icahn making trouble among its shareholders.

The company is said to be in talks to bring back its former C.E.O., Stephen Chazen, as chairman, [*Cara Lombardo of the WSJ reports*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). It hopes that bringing back Mr. Chazen will please Mr. Icahn, who reportedly wanted Mr. Chazen to serve on an alternative slate of directors he proposed for the company.

There’s no guarantee that will help, however, as Mr. Icahn is said to have soured on Mr. Chazen, according to the WSJ. Mr. Icahn’s biggest priority now: getting Oxy to consider selling itself.

Weekend reading

Our colleague Amanda Hess takes a deep dive into The Wing, the women-focused co-working company, and finds employees there who don’t think the start-up is living up its utopian goals. ([*NYT Magazine*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Nathaniel Popper and Ana Vanessa Herrero tell the story of a coder and a dictator, about a crypto enthusiast who built a digital coin for the Venezuelan regime, and nearly paid for it with his life. ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Louise Lucas of the FT reviews “Samsung Rising,” a new book by Geoffrey Cain about the Korean technology behemoth. Mr. Cain’s book “throws into relief what is perhaps Samsung’s fatal flaw: an inability to learn from its mistakes, which it is thus condemned to repeat.” ([*FT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

“Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism,” a new book by the Princeton economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton about the straits of white ***working-class*** men in America, gets a positive review in the NYT: “It is a highly important book.” ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

The speed read

Deals

Airbnb is reportedly fielding pitches from would-be investors, even amid the coronavirus crisis. ([*CNBC*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Deal making in Silicon Valley is otherwise largely on hold. ([*CNBC*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Politics and policy

A look at the Trump administration’s U-turn on stock buybacks. ([*Axios*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Tech

Anthony Levandowski, the former Google autonomous-driving expert, pleaded guilty to stealing trade secrets from his former employer. ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Tesla will shut its factory in Fremont, Calif., ending its apparent defiance of a local county order. (Separately, Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York has asked Elon Musk if the company could produce ventilators for the city.) ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

[*Netflix*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) and   [*YouTube*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) will downgrade the quality of their video streams in Europe to ease the burden on the continent’s internet infrastructure. (CNN, Reuters)

Best of the rest

Inside the global race to develop a coronavirus vaccine. ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Are “risk parity” trading strategies contributing to the market sell-offs? ([*FT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

TV medical dramas are donating their face masks to emergency medical workers. ([*EW*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

We’d love your feedback. Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

PHOTO: The line at an employment office in Las Vegas on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY John Locher/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Adding a New Name to the Canon in Clay: Doyle Lane***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60G3-D2D1-JBG3-61MY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 29, 2020 Wednesday 20:38 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1628 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Griffin

**Highlight:** The underrecognized Black ceramist made tiny “weed pots” in the 1960s and ’70s that are seen today on a fresh pedestal.

**Body**

The underrecognized Black ceramist made tiny “weed pots” in the 1960s and ’70s that are seen today on a fresh pedestal.

LOS ANGELES — One afternoon in the early ’90s, the banking consultant Rudy Estrada returned to his mansion in Pasadena, Calif., to find two members of the local sheriff’s department standing over a lightly built African-American man spread-eagled on his front lawn.

Mr. Estrada immediately recognized the man as his friend [*Doyle Lane*](https://www.themarksproject.org/marks/lane-0), a mild-mannered ceramic artist whom he had known since childhood. Growing up in the 1950s and ’60s in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of El Sereno, in East Los Angeles, Mr. Estrada and his schoolfriends used to visit Mr. Lane at his hillside home studio to watch him throwing pots.

Now Mr. Estrada was a collector of Mr. Lane’s work, and Mr. Lane had come to his house to install a tile mural. In this affluent, predominantly white neighborhood, the officers had assumed he was an intruder. (A few months later, Mr. Estrada’s father, who is Hispanic, was similarly harassed.)

Once the sheriffs had departed, Mr. Estrada was astonished to find Mr. Lane apologizing to him. “To this day it bothers me,” he told me recently by phone from his home in San Marino. “He was such a humble man.”

If Mr. Lane, who arrived in Los Angeles from New Orleans in the early 1950s and died in 2002, age 78, endured other such humiliations in his lifetime, he did not use his art to confront the racism, violence and economic inequity that surrounded him, unlike so many of his peers — Charles White, Betye Saar, Noah Purifoy or John Outterbridge, for example. He threw pots, made color-field tile murals and abstract “clay paintings,” along with mosaics, beads, enamel panels, wooden keepsake boxes and other artifacts that observed no delineation between fine art, folk art, applied art or design.

It is his tiny “weed pots” that are celebrated in an exhibition through Aug. 29 at [*David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles*](https://www.themarksproject.org/marks/lane-0), which is open by appointment. The show gathers 60 pots made between the 1950s and the ’70s: slim-necked, round vessels in a profusion of colors and textured glazes. All are borrowed from private and public collections; none are for sale. The show, which includes a virtual tour and a catalog currently in production, was the idea of the artist Ricky Swallow, a [*collector of Mr. Lane’s work*](https://www.themarksproject.org/marks/lane-0), whose own exhibition of bronze sculptures runs concurrently in the gallery’s adjacent space.

The “weed pots” are ravishingly seductive. Some are smooth as river rocks; others are cracked or lumpen, like overripe fruit from otherworldly trees. Many are barely more than a couple of inches high. Despite Mr. Lane’s name for them, the “weed pots” have nothing to do with marijuana; their apertures are wide enough for only a single wildflower stem. They are potent objects. David Kordansky, who is lending pots from his personal collection for the exhibition, describes them as “magic crystals.”

Mr. Swallow’s love of Mr. Lane’s pots comes neither from their cultural significance nor from their historical value as design objects.

“I’m a fan of the possibility of the minute,” he told me from behind a mask and a baseball cap during a break from installing at the gallery. “I’ve made very small intricate sculptures over the years and I’ve collected different things of that scale.” One of the sculptures in his exhibition is “Cap #4,” a life-size bronze cast of a ball of twine in a teacup. “I think there’s something about the ‘weed pots’ that you could hold one or you could look at one and have a really clear understanding of who that artist is,” he said. “That’s a simple idea but it’s a hard thing to achieve.”

“I’ve never had the urge to make a social statement in my art,” Mr. Lane said in a 1981 interview. “It’s nice if you can do that. Some of the artists who do those things have other incomes; they’re not making their living from just their art.”

One loyal friend and supporter of Mr. Lane was the artist and educator Charles White, who died in 1979. Mr. White, who was a hugely influential figure in L.A.’s Black arts community, once said, “I have no use for artists who try to divorce themselves from the struggle.” He helped Mr. Lane throughout his career, recommending him for a mural commission at the International Children’s School in Los Angeles — a mosaic of a cat surrounded by birds, now lost. What drew Mr. White to Mr. Lane’s work? Mr. White’s son, C. Ian White, an artist and the director and chief executive of his father’s archives, told me that it was Mr. Lane’s “tireless work ethic” that appealed to him.

Mr. Lane worked hard to diversify his income streams. He was a glaze consultant for local ceramic supply companies, while also selling wares direct from his studio. He sold through craft galleries like The Folk Tree in Pasadena, where his beads went for a dollar each, as well as the Brockman Gallery in Leimert Park, a vital and respected Black-owned gallery for African-American artists in the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s. Dale Davis, its co-founder with his brother Alonzo, said that Mr. Lane was a popular fixture at what he called his “holiday shows” — group exhibitions of objects under $30.

Around the same time, Mr. Lane was undertaking much larger projects. When the Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens in San Marino unveiled its new visitor entrance in 2015, the courtyard outside its education center was dominated by a [*17-foot wide mural made by Mr. Lane in 1964*](https://www.themarksproject.org/marks/lane-0). The abstract work, made up of nearly 5,000 irregular red tiles, was commissioned by the architect Welton Becket for the Pasadena office of the Mutual Savings and Loan Association.

“He had a connection I wasn’t aware of,” Mr. Davis said. “Because a bank was not going to buy a major work by an African-American artist in the 1950s or ’60s.” In fact, Mr. Lane had many connections. He would carry boxes of pots to architects’ offices, offering them direct or, in at least one instance, allowing the architect to sell on his behalf. These relationships brought larger commissions for him, from Los Angeles to Palm Springs.

The photographer Ben Serar, who photographed Mr. Lane around 1976, recalled how his father, the architect Rudy Serar, met him while they both were throwing pots at East Los Angeles College. “Over the years, my dad connected Doyle with a lot of different architects,” he said.

The Los Angeles-based independent curator jill moniz (she writes her name in lowercase letters), formerly head curator at the [*California African American Museum*](https://www.themarksproject.org/marks/lane-0), to which Mr. Lane left his archive, suggests that this resourcefulness alone makes him remarkable. “It’s wonderful that he could sell his work and live doing this thing that he loved,” she said. “For a lot of Black artists at the time, that was an almost impossible consideration.”

She has little patience with the patronizing, pitying narrative that is often attached to Mr. Lane, who died alone, without family. “You know — ‘He was alone, poor Doyle Lane,’” she said. “But not poor Doyle Lane! Doyle Lane had a community, he had friends, he had collectors, he had commissions. He lived a full life.” She added, “This is the thing for me that’s so important right now; there is a community of Black makers and thinkers and collectors who were friends with Doyle who supported him, who were interested in him long before he became the purview of white institutionality.” His legacy, she insists, does not need saving by anyone.

But Mr. White is not so sure. He broadly welcomes the attention — “overzealous attention,” Ms. moniz calls it — that Black artists are receiving from white collectors and institutions, even if it comes too late. “He was a single man,” Mr. White said. “I remember his house as a shack. He wasn’t afforded those opportunities of a certain level of lifestyle, whether or not that he wanted it. When he passed, everything was just moved and put onto the street.”

These days, Mr. Lane’s “weed pots” change hands for around $2,000 each, said Gerard O’Brien, the design dealer and gallerist who has handled much of his work over the past 15 years. Large pieces go for much more. Most of his clients, he says, are white, and typically are collectors of midcentury design rather than African-American art.

Contrast Mr. Lane’s market with that of Ken Price, perhaps L.A.’s most celebrated ceramic artist, who studied in the same class as Mr. Lane in the 1950s. Last year, Price’s “Slate Cup II” (1972) sold at Christie’s for $243,750. Price, who was white, had his first solo exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in 1960, age 25. Mr. Lane, who received such deep affection and support in his lifetime from those who knew him, likely never imagined receiving that same devotion from those who did not.

David Kordansky Gallery

Through Aug. 29, by appointment.

5130 West Edgewood Place, Los Angeles; 323-935-3030; [*davidkordanskygallery.com*](https://www.themarksproject.org/marks/lane-0).

PHOTOS: The ceramicist Doyle Lane in his home studio, around 1976, in the El Sereno neighborhood of Los Angeles. His pots were as complex as paintings. Left from top: Ceramic vessels by Lane on display at David Kordansky Gallery through Aug. 29. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROZETTE RAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; BEN SERAR) (C1); Doyle Lane’s so-called weed pots, at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles. He also made Color Field tile murals and mosaics that observed no delineation between fine art, folk art and design. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROZETTE RAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Clockwise from left: Lane in his studio around 1976. He had strong support from Black art dealers and from architects, and now has a growing fan base; a restored 1964 mural by Lane; and the Australian sculptor and curator Ricky Swallow with several of Lane’s pots. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN SERAR; DAVID WAKELY; ROZETTE RAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C7)

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2020

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[***Pandemic Shadows the Final Appeals From Trump and Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616R-VMK1-JBG3-60TT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 3, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1820 words

**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher

**Body**

President Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. barnstormed through battleground states, concluding an extraordinary campaign conducted amid a health crisis and deep economic anxiety.

[Follow our live Trump vs Biden 2020 election updates and analysis.]

NEW HOPE, Pa. -- Voters on both sides of the nation's widening political divide prepared on Monday to render a verdict on President Trump's four tumultuous years in the White House and, in particular, his management of the coronavirus pandemic that has upended American life for the past eight months.

As Mr. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. raced across the most important battleground states in a frenzied final push for votes, the 2020 election was unfolding in a country with urgent problems: an uncontrolled public health crisis, a battered economy, deep ideological divisions, a national reckoning on race and uncertainty about whether the outcome of the vote will be disputed.

Undeterred by the pandemic, Americans have already displayed an uncommon determination to have their voices and votes heard this year. Nearly 100 million cast their ballots in advance of Election Day, shattering records as they endured long lines at early voting sites or sent in their ballots by mail.

Much of the country felt on edge, as if the often-predicted ''most important election of a lifetime'' had finally arrived. Ahead of the polls opening on Tuesday, businesses in cities from Denver to Detroit to Washington, D.C., were boarding up their windows with plywood as they readied for the possibility of civil unrest. Some governors were readying the National Guard.

''Everyone is starting to panic,'' Fernando Casas, a construction worker, said as he pounded nails into a plywood frame at a storefront in a trendy shopping district near Los Angeles.

Election administrators braced themselves to pull off the twin challenges of holding an election during a pandemic and fending off efforts by a president who is trailing in the polls to undermine trust in the vote-counting process.

''Please be patient,'' Jim Kenney, the mayor of Philadelphia -- the biggest city in one of the most important swing states -- urged, predicting long lines on Tuesday. Both the Trump and Biden campaigns were readying armies of lawyers for a potentially prolonged fight.

Still, the unchecked spread of Covid-19 shadowed the election, and on Monday, a report from the coordinator of the White House virus task force contradicted the president's repeated claims on the campaign trail that the United States was on the way to defeating the virus.

The report, by Dr. Deborah Birx, warned against the type of rallies that Mr. Trump had been holding. It also predicted that the United States would see days when the number of new cases exceeded 100,000, according to a White House official who has reviewed the report, which was first reported by The Washington Post.

Voters were racked with nervous energy. Katie Whelan, a high school history teacher from New Jersey, crossed the Pennsylvania border to knock on doors over the weekend for Mr. Biden in the key battleground. The previous night, she said, she had awakened from a panic dream involving Hillary Clinton and the dread of falling just short at the ballot box. ''She was like, 'Honey, I've been there,''' Ms. Whelan recalled Mrs. Clinton telling her in the dream.

Adding to her anxiety, Ms. Whelan could not tell if the nightmare was set in 2016 or 2020. ''I stood over the sink and drank three pints of water,'' Ms. Whelan said. ''And I said to myself, 'I better get canvassing.'''

For Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden, their final events on the last full day of 2020 campaigning offered as stark a display of their differences as anything they said.

Seeking to project a sense of normalcy even as infection caseloads surge, Mr. Trump flouted public health guidelines with a slate of large rallies in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, and even made a winking nod to firing the country's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, should he win another term, in a Florida rally that lasted past midnight on Sunday.

In Ohio and Pennsylvania, Mr. Biden argued there could be no return to routine until the virus was under control and his itinerary of socially distanced, drive-in rallies -- ''Honk if you agree with me!'' he shouted in Cleveland -- served a visual expression of his sober approach. Mr. Biden, the former vice president, cast race as a referendum on Mr. Trump's stewardship of a pandemic that has infected more than nine million people in the United States and cost more than 230,000 lives.

''The first step to beating the virus is beating Donald Trump,'' Mr. Biden declared, adding, ''The power to change the country is in your hands.''

In his own meandering and grievance-filled appearances, in which he lashed out against Nancy Pelosi, Adam Schiff, Hillary Clinton and the news media, Mr. Trump framed his re-election as an economic imperative to avoid ''a deadly Biden lockdown'' of the economy's fragile recovery.

''This is not the crowd of a second-place finisher,'' Mr. Trump said in Scranton, Pa., where Mr. Biden will also appear on Election Day, in a sign of Pennsylvania's potential to tip the election.

Mr. Trump has signaled he may try to declare victory prematurely if the early tabulations favor him, and the Biden campaign held an unusual public briefing on the eve of the election to set expectations. At issue is not just the tallying of the vote but how fast certain states can count. Some key battlegrounds, such as Pennsylvania, are expected to take days while others, like Florida and North Carolina, will likely process most votes within hours.

''Under no scenario will Donald Trump be declared a victor on election night,'' Jen O'Malley Dillon, Mr. Biden's campaign manager, bluntly declared.

As polling places were set to open on Election Day, Mr. Trump's road back to the White House was plainly narrower than Mr. Biden's pathway. Polls show Mr. Trump trailing nationally and in most of the key battlegrounds needed to reach the 270 electoral votes required to win the presidency.

Mr. Trump has been forced to defend not just the three Northern industrial states -- the former ''blue wall'' of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan -- that he flipped in a surprise victory four years ago but also an array of diversifying states across the Sun Belt and the South, including Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, Georgia and even Texas.

Those latter five states combine for 109 Electoral College votes, nearly all of which analysts believe Mr. Trump must win.

On Monday, Mr. Biden dispatched his most potent surrogate, former President Barack Obama, to two of those states: Florida and Georgia. The former president campaigned for Mr. Biden and two Senate Democratic challengers in Georgia, then stumped for Mr. Biden in Florida. Democratic Party strategists are hoping to win the three Senate seats they need to wrest back control of that chamber, along with the White House, and enact a progressive agenda in 2021.

The widening map had some Democrats coveting not only victory on Tuesday but also a landslide repudiation of Mr. Trump and his brand of Republicanism, including aspirations of flipping Texas for the first time since 1976.

That Mr. Biden himself began his final full day on the road in Ohio -- a state Mr. Trump carried by eight percentage points -- appeared a sign his campaign hoped to run up the score. Ohio was not among the dozen closest states in 2016.

But voters in both parties are mistrustful of the polls. Mr. Trump has actively questioned them on a near daily basis. And many Democrats are still scarred by the shock of 2016.

Outside the Polk County Auditor's office in Des Moines, the line to vote early stretched around the block. For 18-year-old Mikayla Simpson, who stood in line wearing earbuds and a tan camouflage Trump 2020 baseball cap, the wait to cast her first vote for Mr. Trump was well worth it.

''I'd stand here all day if I had to,'' she said.

Turnout on Tuesday will be critical even with the record early voting.

Mr. Trump, who for months has sown mistrust in mail-in ballots, is especially in need of a huge in-person showing, banking that the Republican Party's early investment in door-knocking will pay off.

Mr. Trump's chances are mostly pinned on luring white ***working class*** voters to the polls -- many of whom have flocked to his rallies despite the health risks. Seeking to recapture the energy of his surprise 2016 win, Mr. Trump's final stop is expected to be in Grand Rapids, Mich., the same city he finished his 2016 schedule.

The Democratic ticket ended the day in Pennsylvania's two biggest media markets alongside pop stars at rallies in stadium parking lots, with Ms. Harris in Philadelphia with John Legend and Mr. Biden in Pittsburgh with Lady Gaga. Lady Gaga also performed at Mrs. Clinton's final 2016 rally, then in North Carolina.

''Vote like this country depends on it because it does,'' she said Monday.

In the final stretch, both parties were zeroing in on key demographics. Mr. Biden spoke with the African-American community in Pittsburgh while his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, headlined a Latino get-out-the-vote effort in Bethlehem. Mr. Obama campaigned in Miami-Dade County, Florida's most populous which is a majority Latino and Black.

Mr. Trump continued to obsess aloud about how white suburban women had flocked toward the Democratic Party during his presidency, helping to deliver Democrats the House in 2018 and possibly the White House in 2020.

''I say to the women of the suburbs: love me women of the suburbs,'' Mr. Trump said.

For Mr. Tump, the race's waning days have been a characteristically chaotic closing stretch. He has threatened to send in lawyers to stop vote counting, cheered on supporters who surrounded a Biden bus on a Texas highway and baselessly accused doctors of exaggerating how many people had died from the virus so that they could make more money.

In Fayetteville, N.C., on Monday, Mr. Trump condemned the Supreme Court decision that will allow ballots to be counted in Pennsylvania after Election Day. ''Do you know what can happen during that long period of time?'' Mr. Trump said without evidence. ''Cheating.''

Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump's closing messages captured their divergent approaches to electoral politics.

''There will be no red states and blue states, just the United States,'' Mr. Biden said of his potential presidency.

Mr. Trump had a very different pitch. ''You have the power to vote, so go out and vote,'' he said. ''Unless you're going to vote for somebody other than me, in which case, sit it out.''

Reporting was contributed by Maggie Haberman in New York; Glenn Thrush in Washington, D.C.; Nick Corasaniti and Katie Glueck in Philadelphia; Louis Keene in Los Angeles; and Mike Anderson in Des Moines.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: CLEVELAND: Joseph R. Biden Jr. focusing on Ohio on Monday.

MONACA, PA. Mr. Biden visited a community college on Monday.

PITTSBURGH: Mr. Biden hopes to flip Pennsylvania this year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. President Trump in the battleground state.

SCRANTON, PA. The president made Pennsylvania a priority.

TRAVERSE CITY, MICH. The president aims to hold Michigan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence in Traverse City, Mich., left. Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Lady Gaga in Pittsburgh, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19)

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2020

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[***Queen Urges Britons to Pull Together as Nation Charts an Uncertain Course***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YG0-7CB1-DXY4-X147-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 19, 2020 Thursday 05:45 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

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**Byline:** Mark Landler and Stephen Castle

**Highlight:** Elizabeth, sequestered at Windsor Castle, offered encouragement in a statement. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, after a week of mixed messages, hewed to mostly voluntary curbs.

**Body**

Elizabeth, sequestered at Windsor Castle, offered encouragement in a statement. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, after a week of mixed messages, hewed to mostly voluntary curbs.

LONDON — Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday urged the British people to pull together even as they move apart, hoping to steady a country that has veered between alarm and complacency as the government has struggled to present a consistent message about its response to the coronavirus.

“We are all being advised to change our normal routines and regular patterns of life for the greater good of the communities we live in and, in particular, to protect the most vulnerable within them,” the queen said.

The statement — issued from Windsor Castle, where the queen sequestered herself Thursday as the outbreak bore down on London — was a familiar appeal to national solidarity from a monarch who has seen her country through traumas from World War II and Brexit to the death of Princess Diana.

But it took on added resonance at a time when Prime Minister Boris Johnson has offered a more muddled message, mixing warnings about the coronavirus with more relaxed efforts to suppress its spread. On Thursday, schools and pubs in Britain were still open, though the schools will close on Friday.

The queen left no doubt that she intended to self-isolate, and expected those around her to do the same.

“Many of us will need to find new ways of staying in touch with each other and making sure that loved ones are safe,” she said. “I am certain we are up to that challenge. You can be assured that my family and I stand ready to play our part.”

On Thursday, Mr. Johnson reiterated his warning to avoid pubs, restaurants and other crowded places. But he again stopped short of closing them, as other European countries have. He also ruled out a lockdown of London, like those in Paris and Madrid, which had been widely rumored in the news media.

If people act with “ruthless, determined collective action,” Mr. Johnson said, Britain could turn the tide on the pandemic in 12 weeks. He praised Britons for doing their part, but said there were pockets of resistance in London, which might demand stricter government action in the coming days.

The lethal danger the virus poses to older people has put the royal family — whose members are used to being in the public eye in times of crisis — in a predicament they have rarely experienced: having to lay low.

The queen turns 94 next month and her husband, Prince Philip, is 98. Even her son and heir, Prince Charles, is 71, a year older than the age at which the government has urged people to quarantine themselves.

The family just lost its best-known younger members, Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, who left for Canada after negotiating their withdrawal from royal life. That leaves Prince William and his wife, Kate, as the only senior members of the family who can still carry out regular public appearances.

The queen was at work in Buckingham Palace until Thursday, but she abruptly left London for Windsor Castle, where officials say she will be exposed to fewer people. The palace scrubbed her schedule, postponing a visit by Emperor Naruhito of Japan and his wife, Empress Masako, as well as several garden parties scheduled for the spring.

Rumors that Prince Philip had died flared up on social media on Wednesday, prompting the palace to issue a statement saying he was “absolutely fine.” In fact, the Duke of Edinburgh, as he is also known, was flown by helicopter from Sandringham, another of the queen’s residences, to join the queen at Windsor.

Prince Philip has lived in relative seclusion at Wood Farm, a modest cottage on the grounds of Sandringham, since he retired from public life in 2017. He spends his time there reading, painting and driving a horse and carriage around the grounds of the estate. The queen visits him from time to time.

But as this crisis unfolds, she will not be able to play the role of her father, George VI, who was a visible presence during the Blitz, when German air raids forced London into a more draconian lockdown than it has so far endured with the coronavirus. The king and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, toured bombed neighborhoods and consoled residents.

After Buckingham Palace was bombed in September 1940, Elizabeth, who was known later as the Queen Mother, said she could “look the East End in the face,” referring to the ***working-class*** neighborhoods of East London.

Princess Elizabeth, the future queen, worked in the auxiliary service as a driver and truck mechanic during the war — an experience that left a lasting imprint on her, not to mention giving her useful skills in fixing an engine.

In her statement on Thursday, the queen paid tribute to the “scientists, medical practitioners and emergency and public services.” She did not mention Mr. Johnson, who has repeatedly cited scientific advice to justify his government’s response.

But critics faulted the government for resisting drastic moves — like closing schools — and then reversing itself after other countries had moved first or new scientific data suggested a worsening outbreak.

“It looks like the worst of all worlds,” said Anand Menon, a professor of European politics and foreign affairs at King’s College London. “They have followed their scientific advice and then backtracked from it.”

When Mr. Johnson urged people to avoid pubs, bars and restaurants, his own father, Stanley Johnson, insisted that he might ignore the advice. Many people appeared to conclude that if the government really believed its message, it would have used its powers to close pubs and non-essential shops.

“The prime minister is very keen to be liked — as we always suspected — and he seems incapable of telling people things they don’t want to hear,” Mr. Menon said. “He’s like the weak parent saying to their kid, ‘Don’t do that darling,’ but letting them carry on.”

On Wednesday, the government decided to close schools by the end of this week, a step it had resisted even as it became standard across the Continent. But while Mr. Johnson said that exams would not take place, he did not say what would replace the tests that normally determine students’ future.

He also sowed confusion about a potential lockdown of London, declaring on Wednesday that he might have to go “further and faster,” an admission that the British news media took as confirmation that it was looming.

On Thursday, Downing Street denied the reports and accused members of the media of acting irresponsibly. There was, officials said, no plan to shut down public transportation, restrict people from leaving their homes or to put the army on the streets to enforce a quarantine.

In other parts of Europe, where the death toll is rising and hospitals are reaching their breaking point, the military is already playing a major role.

As the dead piled up in the northern Italian city of Bergamo, the army has been called in to transport bodies to other municipalities to be cremated. Italy, where more than 3,400 people have died, surpassed China’s death toll on Thursday.

In Hungary, the military moved Thursday to take control of 140 companies deemed to provide essential services in the energy, telecommunications, transportation and health care sectors. And in France, patients are being transported to military hospitals.

The French president, Emmanuel Macron, acknowledged Thursday the “difficulty of the moment” and urged people to respect distancing measures, while encouraging those who cannot work from home to report to their jobs.

But the prospect of anything like an ordinary life seemed far-fetched, as even senior officials across Europe have contracted the virus.

The latest was Michel Barnier, the European Union’s chief Brexit negotiator, who announced Thursday that he had tested positive but said he was doing well. His diagnosis appeared to put Mr. Johnson’s goal of striking a new trade deal with the European Union by the end of this year even further out of reach.

Megan Specia contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Buckingham Palace in London last week. Queen Elizabeth abruptly left London for Windsor Castle, on Thursday, where officials say she will be exposed to fewer people. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Testa for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2020

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[***Trump (Tough Guy), Biden (Nice Guy) and the Politics of Manliness***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616H-RBC1-DXY4-X0V8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 22; NEWS ANALYSIS

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**Byline:** By Jessica Bennett

**Body**

Kindness. Humility. Responsibility. These traits were once ''the definition of manliness,'' Barack Obama told a crowd on Saturday, campaigning in Flint, Mich., for his former running mate, Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Though he did not name him, it was clear who the former president was talking about.

''It used to be being a man meant taking care of other people, not going around bragging,'' Mr. Obama said.

The words were evocative, and not simply because Mr. Obama followed them by knocking down a slick three-point basketball shot at the gymnasium of the high school where the drive-in rally was held -- a kind of viral punctuation mark to his thoughts on manliness.

In two days, Americans will take their shot, making a choice between two presidential candidates who resemble vastly different case studies in what a man, even in 2020, should do or be.

On the one extreme is President Trump, who leaves little subtlety in his approach: Bragging about his sexual prowess, along with the size of his nuclear button, proclaiming ''domination'' over coronavirus and mocking his opponent for the size of his mask (''the biggest mask I've ever seen''), as if mask-wearing is somehow weak. (The two dozen sexual assault allegations against him have not hampered the bragging.)

He has said he believes men who change diapers are ''acting like the wife.'' ''Macho Man'' is the song that plays at his rallies, even after the Village People objected. ''He seeks to distinguish himself as the manliest -- and thus, in his mind, the most-qualified -- person to be president,'' said Kelly Dittmar, a scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

On the other end of the spectrum, or perhaps somewhere in the middle, is Mr. Biden, a ''Dad-like'' figure, as the philosopher Kate Manne put it, who has vowed to be America's protector through a dark period, with some combination of strength, empathy and compassion.

He chose Kamala Harris, a barrier-breaking woman, as his running mate. He has surrounded himself with strong women. ''He's offering a more paternalistic type of masculinity, in that you can be a strong leader, but still be compassionate and empathetic,'' said Marianne Cooper, a sociologist at Stanford University who studies gender and work.

Mr. Obama, the man with whom Mr. Biden served, had to navigate the more complex demands of Black masculinity in the public eye. He did it with a ''cool-dad'' approach -- self-confident but without crowding out the love.

Mr. Biden is perhaps a more sensitive new-age grandfather, who speaks tenderly of his family -- he's made a point to take phone calls from his grandchildren at any time, especially in front of cameras -- and isn't afraid to express emotion. But he will also drive a Corvette in a campaign ad or challenge a voter (and his opponent) to a push-up contest. (Yes, he will call Mr. Trump a ''clown'' during a debate but he will later say he regretted the language.)

''He reads as a man who won't start a fight, but would punch back if provoked,'' said Robb Willer, a sociologist, also at Stanford, who has studied the way threats to masculinity influence men's behavior.

Remember four years ago, when Democrats planned to celebrate the election of the first woman as president by dropping 200 pounds of confetti shaped like glass shards to signify the crumbling of that ''highest, hardest'' glass ceiling? Or how, just last year, the Democratic field was still the most diverse, and female, in history?

It seems hard to parse how, in 2020, against a backdrop of a global pandemic that has left a disproportionate number of women out of work -- and with polls predicting what may be the biggest gender gap in electoral history -- the presidential election has become, among other things, a referendum on masculinity.

And yet here we are.

''Ultimately, masculinity still matters, we've learned. It's how candidates still try to prove they are the best candidate,'' said Ms. Cooper. ''And so, even in 2020, Democrats decided the safest bet to beat a white man in his 70s is another white man in his 70s.''

Hard Hats and Military Tanks

White American masculinity has been a factor in nearly every presidential election since the nation's founding. ''Trump is an exaggeration of an existing phenomenon, but he didn't create it,'' said Jackson Katz, the author of ''Man Enough? Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity.''

From Richard Nixon to Ronald Reagan and right on through Mr. Trump, largely white, Christian, heterosexual presidential candidates have ''performed'' manhood in all sorts of ways: Donning hard hats and posing inside military tanks; battling over who would be the better guy to have a beer with; and implying their opponents were soft, weak, or ''sleepy.''

Reagan, a former Hollywood actor, began dressing the part (cowboy hats, bluejeans) while George W. Bush -- a graduate of Yale and Harvard -- bought a ranch in Texas (along with a series of very big belt buckles) shortly before announcing his candidacy.

Sometimes these men were Democrats, but often they were Republicans -- a party that has long recognized the power of ''strong man identities'' to appeal to ***working-class*** white voters, said David Collinson, a professor of leadership and organization at Lancaster University who, with colleague Jeff Hearn, professor of gender studies at Örebro University in Sweden, has written on the contrasting masculinities of Biden and Trump.

In 1987, when George H.W. Bush, who had once described his quest for a ''kinder, gentler nation,'' appeared on the cover of Newsweek with the phrase, ''The 'Wimp Factor,''' his advisers, which included Lee Atwater and Roger Ailes, quickly shifted into gear.

''Michael Dukakis had a 17-point lead over Bush in the summer of 1988,'' said Mr. Katz, whose book on presidential masculinity has been adapted into a documentary called ''The Man Card.'' ''So what did they do? They relentlessly attacked his manhood. They suggested he was a failed protector, that he was 'soft,' that he wasn't a 'real man.'''

A decade later, when the younger Bush ran against John Kerry, he took a similar tack: He taunted his opponent for speaking French and painted him as an out-of-touch aristocrat even as he tried to present himself as a ''war president.''

''This happens all the time,'' said Tristan Bridges, an associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the co-editor of the journal, Men and Masculinities. ''One guy presents himself as a kind of salt of the earth, a person you could hang out with, and then effectively emasculates the other by presenting them as the opposite.''

''I think the performance of masculinity means a lot,'' he noted, ''because it has the potential to eclipse all else.''

One notable performance, Mr. Bridges said, was in 1840, when William Henry Harrison, a presidential newcomer, relentlessly pilloried the incumbent, Martin Van Buren (''Marty,'' as he called him) as ''effeminate and obsequious.''

Harrison won by a landslide, but there was a twist. He delivered the longest inauguration speech on record, on a cold day in Washington in the middle of winter, and refused to wear a coat. Three weeks later, Harrison fell ill with pneumonia. He was dead a month into his term.

'Become' a Woman, 'Be' a Man

Not wearing a coat -- or, say, a candidate rolling up his sleeves when talking with voters -- are small contests with dignity, said Mr. Bridges. But they can have big consequences.

Ms. Dittmar, the author of a book on stereotypes in political strategy, explained it this way: Political strategy 101 involves paying attention to what voters want in a candidate. They look at polling data, and inevitably hear words like ''tough'' and ''strong,'' or issues like ''national security.'' The words in and of themselves are not gendered, and yet, have historically been associated with men -- and often, certain types of men.

Which leaves not only men, but also women to display masculinity traits, though it tends to be more complicated for them. When women exhibit traits that tend to be associated with male leadership -- like toughness -- they are often viewed as too aggressive, but they must also not seem too ''soft'' to lead. It leads to a complicated dance.

Ms. Dittmar noted that Hillary Clinton's one-time adviser, Mark Penn, wrote in a 2006 memo to Mrs. Clinton that while voters may not be ready for ''the first mama'' president, they could be open to ''the first father being a woman,'' whatever that was supposed to mean.

(When she ran again eight years later, of course, the guidance was different.)

Part of what makes the role of gender in politics so complicated, said Ms. Cooper, is that while women are still contorting into a masculine framework, men are continually having to prove themselves as man ''enough.''

Social scientists call this ''precarious masculinity,'' the idea that manhood is something that must be proven over a lifetime while womanhood is perceived to be fixed. Girls receive a message that they ''become'' women -- typically through a biological event like menstruation -- while men are told throughout their lives to ''be'' men or to ''man up,'' as if masculinity is something that can be easily lost.

''You don't really say 'be a woman' the way you say 'be a man' or 'man up,''' she said.

It's that enduring need to prove, she said, that can have far-reaching implications.

Research by Robb Willer, of Stanford, found that when masculinity is challenged, men tend to overcompensate by increasing their support for more stereotypically masculine things, like war or wanting to purchase an SUV.

Daniel Cassino, a political scientist at Fairleigh Dickinson University, found in 2016 that just the mention of women as breadwinners led some men to abandon their support for Hillary Clinton and express support for President Trump. (The same was not true for those who supported Bernie Sanders, indicating that people were responding to a woman as a potential leader, not a Democrat.)

And 2018 research by Ms. Cooper and four colleagues, published in the Journal of Social Issues, found that the need to prove one's masculinity can be particularly damaging in a workplace context -- leading to unreasonable or unnecessary risk-taking, bragging, cutting corners, bullying, even sexual harassment.

Such behavior was most likely to be found in male-dominated environments characterized by a ''winner-takes-all approach'' -- and where winners tended to exhibit traits like toughness or ruthlessness, the study found.

In Ms. Cooper's view, those traits are central to presidential politics today.

''Trump is the personification of this masculinity contest culture,'' Ms. Cooper said. ''It's bad for organizations, it's terrible for a country.''

If the return to masculinity, exaggerated or calibrated, is dispiriting to some, there is perhaps a silver lining: Americans -- or at least, American women -- may finally be more cleareyed about its limits.

Since the 1980s, women have turned out to vote in higher numbers than men -- and the latest polls predict a potentially historic gender gap between the candidates.

Maybe women were always the intended audience for the contests. Whether that's true, they seem to be ready to render a clear judgment. Mr. Biden is leading among women by as much as 20 points.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/homepage/trump-biden-masculinity-2020.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/homepage/trump-biden-masculinity-2020.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: President Donald Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr., shown during their first presidential debate, represent two versions of masculinity. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL ACKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***In Dash to Finish, Biden and Trump Set Up Showdown in Pennsylvania***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616G-BKT1-DXY4-X0HW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Katie Glueck and Annie Karni

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[[*Joe Biden has won the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Read our story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html)]

PHILADELPHIA — As the national [*early vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) climbs past a staggering 93 million and challenges to the electoral process intensify across states, President Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. are barreling into [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) and turning it into the top battleground in Tuesday’s election, with Democrats flooding in with door-knockers and Republicans trying to parlay Mr. Trump’s rallies into big turnout once again.

​Both campaigns see Pennsylvania as increasingly crucial to victory: Mr. Trump now appears more competitive here than in Michigan and Wisconsin, two other key northern states he hopes to win, and Mr. Biden’s clearest electoral path to the White House runs through the state. Pennsylvania has more Electoral College votes, 20, than any other traditional battleground except Florida, and Mr. Trump won the state by less than one percentage point in 2016.

Mr. Trump devoted Saturday to four rallies across the state, and he and Mr. Biden planned campaign events for the final 48 hours of the race as well, with a wave of prominent Democrats and celebrities slated to arrive. On Monday the president was set to make an appeal to white, ***working-class*** voters in Scranton, where Mr. Biden was born, while the Democratic nominee was aiming to solidify a broad coalition of white suburbanites and voters of color on a two-day swing through Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and elsewhere in western Pennsylvania.

Mr. Biden is ahead with a modest margin in [*recent polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html), and is trying to cut into the president’s turnout in rural counties. But Mr. Trump’s rallies have energized many Republican voters, and his team is already preparing legal challenges over the vote if it ends up being close. On Sunday, the president told reporters, “as soon as that election’s over, we’re going in with our lawyers.”

In Pennsylvania in particular, [*the possibility*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) of extended court battles and confusion hangs over the race, with the state Republican Party hoping the Supreme Court will reconsider its decision last week to allow the state to continue receiving absentee ballots for three days after Election Day.

“Every day is a new reminder of how high the stakes are, how far the other side will go to try to suppress the turnout,” Mr. Biden said as he campaigned here Sunday. “Especially here in Philadelphia. President Trump is terrified of what will happen in Pennsylvania.”

Court battles have already rearranged the voting process across an array of states and continued to do so on Sunday. [*The Texas Supreme Court denied an effort*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) by Republicans to throw out more than 120,000 votes that had been cast at drive-through locations in Harris County, an increasingly Democratic area anchored in Houston. Republicans are now hoping for a favorable ruling at the federal level, where a judge has called an election-eve hearing for Monday.

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Throughout his final sprint of rallies, Mr. Trump has moved to baselessly sow doubt about the integrity of the electoral process. At an appearance in Dubuque, Iowa, on Sunday, Mr. Trump claimed, inaccurately, that the result of the election was always determined on Election Day. “We should know the result of the election on Nov. 3,” he said. “The evening of Nov. 3. That’s the way it’s been and that’s the way it should be. What’s going on in this country?”

Mr. Biden countered with his own warning later Sunday, saying, “The president is not going to steal this election.”

Mr. Trump’s lagging position in the race was evident in his grueling travel schedule that had him shoring up votes in five states he won four years ago — Michigan, Iowa, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

His final rally of the day was scheduled for 11 p.m., and risked violating a midnight curfew in Miami-Dade County.

Mr. Biden, by contrast, set his sights squarely on Pennsylvania on Sunday, an approach he will repeat again Monday, along with a foray into Ohio, a state Mr. Trump won handily in 2016 but that polls show could be more competitive now.

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Compared with other swing states, such as Florida, far fewer early ballots have already been cast in Pennsylvania and, [*according to*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) the U.S. Elections Project, as of Sunday there were more than 350,000 absentee ballots that had been requested by Democratic voters that had yet to be returned. The Biden campaign is focused on the fact that a large share of the electorate here is still [*expected to vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) on Election Day, an adviser said.

The final sprint of the race came against a different backdrop than in previous elections, with fewer voters left to motivate. The record number of early votes underscored the intense interest in one of the most consequential elections in modern history, despite the logistical challenges of voting amid a pandemic.

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“In Michigan here, just our little part of Michigan, the support that we see here is just insane,” he said, as windblown snow pelted his customers. “I mean, for the last month and a half, it’s just been off the hook.”

Still, Mr. Trump had work to do all over the country shoring up his support in states he won four years ago. In Michigan, Mr. Trump complained repeatedly about the freezing temperature and biting wind he said was pointed “directly” at his face while making false claims about resuscitating the auto industry there. He also embraced the actions of some of his supporters in Texas who had surrounded a Biden campaign bus with their vehicles on Saturday, in an apparent attempt to slow it down and run it off the road. Mr. Trump claimed the vehicles were “protecting his bus, yesterday, because they are nice.”

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Of the three big Northern swing states Mr. Trump won by a hair four years ago, the once reliably blue state of Pennsylvania is the one his advisers believe is most likely within his reach. That’s in large part because of the support of rural voters and Mr. Biden’s call for eventually phasing out fossil fuels, an unpopular stance for many voters in a state with a large natural gas industry.

Mr. Trump entered the final hours of the race in a worse position here than he was four years ago, when Pennsylvania was seen as Hillary Clinton’s firewall. This time, Mr. Biden has a lead of six points, according to a [*new New York Times/Siena College poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) released Sunday, and is working to create multiple pathways to 270 electoral votes.

That lead, however, isn’t enough to make Democrats and anti-Trump Republicans feel fully confident about the state of the race in Pennsylvania. Some of the president’s opponents in recent days have been worried about turnout in the state&#39;s rural counties, as well as calls about requested ballots that never arrived.

The Trump campaign ads running in Pennsylvania have been overwhelmingly centered on economic messages, mainly jobs and taxes. The campaign’s most aired ad in Pennsylvania over the past week has been [*a negative ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) claiming Mr. Biden will raise taxes (he has said he will raise taxes for those making over $400,000).

But the Biden campaign has not ceded the subject to the president, with 14 different ads on air that touch on jobs and the economy. Its [*most aired ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) in Pennsylvania over the past week featured a Biden speech outlining his plans for pandemic recovery, including jobs. Another ad [*directly rebuts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) the Trump campaign’s attacks on his tax plan.

Pennsylvania’s economy is emerging from the pandemic recession but still has a long road ahead to its pre-crisis state. Like the nation, it has seen a two-track recovery that has left small businesses and low-earning workers behind.

Pennsylvania saw its unemployment rate fall to 8.1 percent in September, according to the Labor Department, nearly identical to the national rate of 7.9 percent. That is a significant improvement from the 16.1 percent unemployment it posted in April. But the state still had 380,000 fewer jobs in September than it did in September of 2019, and there are 18 percent fewer small businesses open here compared to a year ago, according to data compiled by the [*economists at Opportunity Insights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html).

Pennsylvania has long loomed large in the psyche of the Biden campaign. Mr. Biden, a Scranton native, gave his [*first speech of his presidential campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/biden-election.html) in Pittsburgh, and he chose Philadelphia for his campaign headquarters, before the pandemic hit.

“That blue wall has to be re-established,” Mr. Biden said in another recent Pennsylvania campaign appearance. He said that winning the state meant a “great deal to me, personally as well as politically.”

Katie Glueck reported from Philadelphia and Annie Karni from Washington. Nick Corasaniti, Rick Rojas, Shane Goldmacher, Jim Tankersley and Jeremy Peters contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: President Trump traveled to Michigan, above, and four other states that he won in 2016, as former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. set his sights squarely on Pennsylvania, below. Few early ballots have been cast in Pennsylvania, raising the stakes for Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES; ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

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[***Key Swing States Set Up Showdown As Race Nears End***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616H-RBC1-DXY4-X0VJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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Of the three big Northern swing states Mr. Trump won by a hair four years ago, the once reliably blue state of Pennsylvania is the one his advisers believe is most likely within his reach. That's in large part because of the support of rural voters and Mr. Biden's call for eventually phasing out fossil fuels, an unpopular stance for many voters in a state with a large natural gas industry.

Mr. Trump entered the final hours of the race in a worse position here than he was four years ago, when Pennsylvania was seen as Hillary Clinton's firewall. This time, Mr. Biden has a lead of six points, according to a new New York Times/Siena College poll released Sunday, and is working to create multiple pathways to 270 electoral votes.

That lead, however, isn't enough to make Democrats and anti-Trump Republicans feel fully confident about the state of the race in Pennsylvania. Some of the president's opponents in recent days have been worried about turnout in the state's rural counties, as well as calls about requested ballots that never arrived.

The Trump campaign ads running in Pennsylvania have been overwhelmingly centered on economic messages, mainly jobs and taxes. The campaign's most aired ad in Pennsylvania over the past week has been a negative ad claiming Mr. Biden will raise taxes (he has said he will raise taxes for those making over $400,000).

But the Biden campaign has not ceded the subject to the president, with 14 different ads on air that touch on jobs and the economy. Its most aired ad in Pennsylvania over the past week featured a Biden speech outlining his plans for pandemic recovery, including jobs. Another ad directly rebuts the Trump campaign's attacks on his tax plan.

Pennsylvania's economy is emerging from the pandemic recession but still has a long road ahead to its pre-crisis state. Like the nation, it has seen a two-track recovery that has left small businesses and low-earning workers behind.

Pennsylvania saw its unemployment rate fall to 8.1 percent in September, according to the Labor Department, nearly identical to the national rate of 7.9 percent. That is a significant improvement from the 16.1 percent unemployment it posted in April. But the state still had 380,000 fewer jobs in September than it did in September of 2019, and there are 18 percent fewer small businesses open here compared to a year ago, according to data compiled by the economists at Opportunity Insights.

Pennsylvania has long loomed large in the psyche of the Biden campaign. Mr. Biden, a Scranton native, gave his first speech of his presidential campaign in Pittsburgh, and he chose Philadelphia for his campaign headquarters, before the pandemic hit.

''That blue wall has to be re-established,'' Mr. Biden said in another recent Pennsylvania campaign appearance. He said that winning the state meant a ''great deal to me, personally as well as politically.''

Katie Glueck reported from Philadelphia and Annie Karni from Washington. Nick Corasaniti, Rick Rojas, Shane Goldmacher, Jim Tankersley and Jeremy Peters contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/us/politics/trump-biden-campaign.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/us/politics/trump-biden-campaign.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: President Trump traveled to Michigan, above, and four other states that he won in 2016, as former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. set his sights squarely on Pennsylvania, below. Few early ballots have been cast in Pennsylvania, raising the stakes for Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2020

**End of Document**



[***In Arizona, Voting During a Pandemic Is a Way to Feel Normal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YFB-7GP1-DXY4-X0CH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Highlight:** Arizona’s primary is on Tuesday, and Democrats there are holding onto the idea that they still have control over something: “I want to believe that voting takes away some of the fear.”

**Body**

Arizona’s primary is on Tuesday, and Democrats there are holding onto the idea that they still have control over something: “I want to believe that voting takes away some of the fear.”

PHOENIX — Supermarket shelves are barren. Schools are closing across the country. But in Arizona, many Democrats are hoping that voting in the presidential primary provides a slice of normalcy at a time that is anything but normal.

“I want to believe that voting takes away some of the fear,” said Dawn Schumann, the political director for the Arizona Teamsters. “The fear is taking a lot out of all of us.”

In dozens of interviews at polling places across the state this weekend, where early voting was underway, residents said voting felt like both an act of faith and defiance, even as other states were considering whether to move forward.

By Monday, four states — Louisiana, Georgia, Ohio and Kentucky — had postponed their primary elections, with more likely to follow. But Arizona was still set to hold its election on Tuesday as planned. State and local officials said they would make disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer available at polling places, and they encouraged those who could to vote by mail.

The 8,000 members of Ms. Schumann’s union, Teamsters Local 104, include airline workers and delivery workers, people who could be among the most at risk for contracting the coronavirus. But she said they were anticipating the primary.

“They interact with a lot of people — they touch everything globally,” Ms. Schumann said. “I have no doubt many of them are eager to vote, maybe even more eager.”

When Stephanie Ringler, 49, and David Devenport, 62, came to cast their ballots at the Burton Barr Public Library, near downtown Phoenix, on Friday afternoon, they had the future on their minds. But they vacillated between thinking of a time when the nation would go “back to normal” and wondering aloud, “What is normal now?”

“We need an adult in the White House, first and foremost,” Ms. Ringler said. “We need a functioning cabinet who listens to common sense, who listens to science.”

They said they had watched with dismay as the crisis mounted in recent days, and expressed confusion about President Trump’s comments on the virus.

“I am deeply worried about how unprepared we are for this,” Mr. Devenport said, while adding that he had found inspiration among his friends.

He said he felt as if they were looking out for one another in new ways, such as texting when they are out shopping to ask, “Can I pick anything up for you?”

Voting, he said, is a kind of extension of that community, a way he could act when so many feel helpless. As voters, they could practice social distancing even as they attempted to knit society back together.

“We don’t have enough people out there talking the truth and speaking about reality,” he said. “We shouldn’t have to be this way.”

Sara Miller, 53, a teacher at a Catholic school, had gone to a Costco in Phoenix on Friday morning to try to buy food for a weekend dinner party. She walked out empty-handed after she saw the lines and the picked-over aisles.

“What we’re seeing now is mob mentality and someone needs to talk us out of that, get us out of that kind of thinking of every man for himself,” said Ms. Miller, a lifelong Democrat who mailed in her ballot for former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. last week, in large part because she liked his demeanor.

“We all want things that we know, that are familiar. We just really need calm,” she said. “We all have to remember we’re in this together. Do we have someone to remind us?”

Arizona is one of a handful of states both Republicans and Democrats believe will be competitive in the general election, and both Mr. Biden and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont had campaigned there before the outbreak.

While Mr. Sanders has so far performed well in the West, particularly in states with large Latino populations, polls in Arizona indicate he is facing an uphill climb here.

The vast majority of voters interviewed said they preferred Mr. Biden precisely because he was a familiar presence who they believed could win over moderates here and in other parts of the country.

“Absolutely nothing is the same — but where do we go with our worries?” said Lorraine Frias, 51, a nonprofit fund-raiser who voted with her husband in Mesa on Friday afternoon.

The couple was undecided for weeks, but landed on Mr. Biden after he won a string of primaries on Super Tuesday.

“We want someone who will not overpromise, who will be honest,” she said. “But so much is changing so fast, I don’t even know what we need to do.”

Even some supporters of Mr. Sanders believe that those who are most likely to vote for him are less likely to cast a ballot as the panic over the coronavirus spreads. Many of his backers are ***working-class*** voters who may be most acutely concerned about receiving health care or collecting their paycheck as the pandemic continues to shut down businesses, especially in service industries.

Strip mall parking lots in and around Phoenix were full over the weekend, but polling sites were far from it. Dozens of people shopping said they had no intention to vote in the Democratic primary or the November election.

At the voting center in the municipal building of Surprise, a suburban community about 30 miles northwest of Phoenix, fewer than 10 voters showed up over three hours Saturday morning.

Still, deep dissatisfaction with Mr. Trump was driving some voters to the polls.

Steve Brown, 69, who moved from Oregon after retiring as an insurance executive, described himself as “anti-Trump since the day he came down the escalator.”

While he said he did not feel worried about his own health, he was “very anxious” that the president’s leadership would mean the virus would “spiral further out of control.”

“Voting is always an obligation, but even more so now, when what we have is just terrifying,” said Mr. Brown, who along with his wife voted for Mr. Biden.

“Biden will pick the right people to be around him,” Mr. Brown said. “You can look to him like he knows where this is going.”

But, Mr. Brown added: “I’m kind of worried about his age. I know I was sharper at 60 than I am now.”

For Alfredo Lopez, a 38-year-old engineer who brought both his wife and his father with him to vote just before the polls closed in Mesa on Friday, the global health crisis was one more reason to support “Medicare for all,” a centerpiece of Mr. Sanders’s campaign.

“This is really showing us the need for a health care system that works for everybody,” Mr. Lopez said, adding that it was clear to him that many people would be unable to gain access to care or medication. “There’s going to be a peak, and the question is if we are ready for it.”

Moments after she cast her ballot in Mesa, Carol Lopez, 40, said she was particularly disturbed that the information coming from the president seemed to contradict advice from medical experts.

“People are getting bad information from the person in charge,” she said. “Right now the people who are in charge can’t be trusted.”

Arizona Democratic Party officials said that there had been “huge turnout” from early mail-in ballots, with 375,000 returned so far, and that the number of voters could easily surpass the 2016 primary.

“We’re pressing forward,” Adrian Fontes, the Maricopa County recorder, who oversees elections in Phoenix and the surrounding suburbs, where the vast majority of registered Democrats in the state live, said Sunday night.

Last week, he expressed blustery confidence in the system, saying it was “as calm as it can be.”

“We’re prepared for everything,” he said. “Except Godzilla.”

PHOTOS: “I want to believe that voting takes away some of the fear,” Dawn Schumann said.; Lorraine and Dan Frias were undecided for weeks before voting on Friday in Mesa, Ariz. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Undeterred by Pandemic, Americans Prepare to Deliver Verdict on Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616P-9RJ1-DXY4-X0CS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher

**Highlight:** President Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. barnstormed through battleground states, concluding an extraordinary campaign conducted amid a health crisis and deep economic anxiety.

**Body**

President Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. barnstormed through battleground states, concluding an extraordinary campaign conducted amid a health crisis and deep economic anxiety.

[These are the [*key states President-elect Joe Biden won*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/what-states-did-biden-win-lose.html).]

NEW HOPE, Pa. — Voters on both sides of the nation’s widening political divide prepared on Monday to render a verdict on President Trump’s four tumultuous years in the White House and, in particular, his management of the coronavirus pandemic that has upended American life for the past eight months.

As Mr. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. raced across the most important battleground states in a frenzied final push for votes, the 2020 election was unfolding in a country with urgent problems: an uncontrolled public health crisis, a battered economy, deep ideological divisions, a national reckoning on race and uncertainty about whether the outcome of the vote will be disputed.

Undeterred by the pandemic, Americans have already displayed an uncommon determination to have their voices and votes heard this year. Nearly 100 million cast their ballots in advance of Election Day, shattering records as they endured long lines at early voting sites or sent in their ballots by mail.

Much of the country felt on edge, as if the often-predicted “most important election of a lifetime” had finally arrived. Ahead of the polls opening on Tuesday, businesses in cities from Denver to Detroit to [*Washingto*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/what-states-did-biden-win-lose.html) [*n, D.C.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/what-states-did-biden-win-lose.html), were [*boarding up their windows*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/what-states-did-biden-win-lose.html) with plywood as they readied for the possibility of civil unrest. Some governors were [*readying the National Guard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/politics/what-states-did-biden-win-lose.html).

“Everyone is starting to panic,” Fernando Casas, a construction worker, said as he pounded nails into a plywood frame at a storefront in a trendy shopping district near Los Angeles.

Election administrators braced themselves to pull off the twin challenges of holding an election during a pandemic and fending off efforts by a president who is trailing in the polls to undermine trust in the vote-counting process.

“Please be patient,” Jim Kenney, the mayor of Philadelphia — the biggest city in one of the most important swing states — urged, predicting long lines on Tuesday. Both the Trump and Biden campaigns were readying armies of lawyers for a potentially prolonged fight.

Still, the unchecked spread of Covid-19 shadowed the election, and on Monday, a report from the coordinator of the White House virus task force contradicted the president’s repeated claims on the campaign trail that the United States was on the way to defeating the virus.

The report, by Dr. Deborah Birx, warned against the type of rallies that Mr. Trump had been holding. It also predicted that the United States would see days when the number of new cases exceeded 100,000, according to a White House official who has reviewed the report, which was first reported by The Washington Post.

Voters were racked with nervous energy. Katie Whelan, a high school history teacher from New Jersey, crossed the Pennsylvania border to knock on doors over the weekend for Mr. Biden in the key battleground. The previous night, she said, she had awakened from a panic dream involving Hillary Clinton and the dread of falling just short at the ballot box. “She was like, ‘Honey, I’ve been there,’” Ms. Whelan recalled Mrs. Clinton telling her in the dream.

Adding to her anxiety, Ms. Whelan could not tell if the nightmare was set in 2016 or 2020. “I stood over the sink and drank three pints of water,” Ms. Whelan said. “And I said to myself, ‘I better get canvassing.’”

For Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden, their final events on the last full day of 2020 campaigning offered as stark a display of their differences as anything they said.

Seeking to project a sense of normalcy even as infection caseloads surge, Mr. Trump flouted public health guidelines with a slate of large rallies in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, and even made a winking nod to firing the country’s top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, should he win another term, in a Florida rally that lasted past midnight on Sunday.

In Ohio and Pennsylvania, Mr. Biden argued there could be no return to routine until the virus was under control and his itinerary of socially distanced, drive-in rallies — “Honk if you agree with me!” he shouted in Cleveland — served a visual expression of his sober approach. Mr. Biden, the former vice president, cast race as a referendum on Mr. Trump’s stewardship of a pandemic that has infected more than nine million people in the United States and cost more than 230,000 lives.

“The first step to beating the virus is beating Donald Trump,” Mr. Biden declared, adding, “The power to change the country is in your hands.”

In his own meandering and grievance-filled appearances, in which he lashed out against Nancy Pelosi, Adam Schiff, Hillary Clinton and the news media, Mr. Trump framed his re-election as an economic imperative to avoid “a deadly Biden lockdown” of the economy’s fragile recovery.

“This is not the crowd of a second-place finisher,” Mr. Trump said in Scranton, Pa., where Mr. Biden will also appear on Election Day, in a sign of Pennsylvania’s potential to tip the election.

Mr. Trump has signaled he may try to declare victory prematurely if the early tabulations favor him, and the Biden campaign held an unusual public briefing on the eve of the election to set expectations. At issue is not just the tallying of the vote but how fast certain states can count. Some key battlegrounds, such as Pennsylvania, are expected to take days while others, like Florida and North Carolina, will likely process most votes within hours.

“Under no scenario will Donald Trump be declared a victor on election night,” Jen O’Malley Dillon, Mr. Biden’s campaign manager, bluntly declared.

As polling places were set to open on Election Day, Mr. Trump’s road back to the White House was plainly narrower than Mr. Biden’s pathway. Polls show Mr. Trump trailing nationally and in most of the key battlegrounds needed to reach the 270 electoral votes required to win the presidency.

Mr. Trump has been forced to defend not just the three Northern industrial states — the former “blue wall” of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan — that he flipped in a surprise victory four years ago but also an array of diversifying states across the Sun Belt and the South, including Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, Georgia and even Texas.

Those latter five states combine for 109 Electoral College votes, nearly all of which analysts believe Mr. Trump must win.

On Monday, Mr. Biden dispatched his most potent surrogate, former President Barack Obama, to two of those states: Florida and Georgia. The former president campaigned for Mr. Biden and two Senate Democratic challengers in Georgia, then stumped for Mr. Biden in Florida. Democratic Party strategists are hoping to win the three Senate seats they need to wrest back control of that chamber, along with the White House, and enact a progressive agenda in 2021.

The widening map had some Democrats coveting not only victory on Tuesday but also a landslide repudiation of Mr. Trump and his brand of Republicanism, including aspirations of flipping Texas for the first time since 1976.

That Mr. Biden himself began his final full day on the road in Ohio — a state Mr. Trump carried by eight percentage points — appeared a sign his campaign hoped to run up the score. Ohio was not among the dozen closest states in 2016.

But voters in both parties are mistrustful of the polls. Mr. Trump has actively questioned them on a near daily basis. And many Democrats are still scarred by the shock of 2016.

Outside the Polk County Auditor’s office in Des Moines, the line to vote early stretched around the block. For 18-year-old Mikayla Simpson, who stood in line wearing earbuds and a tan camouflage Trump 2020 baseball cap, the wait to cast her first vote for Mr. Trump was well worth it.

“I’d stand here all day if I had to,” she said.

Turnout on Tuesday will be critical even with the record early voting.

Mr. Trump, who for months has sown mistrust in mail-in ballots, is especially in need of a huge in-person showing, banking that the Republican Party’s early investment in door-knocking will pay off.

Mr. Trump’s chances are mostly pinned on luring white ***working class*** voters to the polls — many of whom have flocked to his rallies despite the health risks. Seeking to recapture the energy of his surprise 2016 win, Mr. Trump’s final stop is expected to be in Grand Rapids, Mich., the same city he finished his 2016 schedule.

The Democratic ticket ended the day in Pennsylvania’s two biggest media markets alongside pop stars at rallies in stadium parking lots, with Ms. Harris in Philadelphia with John Legend and Mr. Biden in Pittsburgh with Lady Gaga. Lady Gaga also performed at Mrs. Clinton’s final 2016 rally, then in North Carolina.

“Vote like this country depends on it because it does,” she said Monday.

In the final stretch, both parties were zeroing in on key demographics. Mr. Biden spoke with the African-American community in Pittsburgh while his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, headlined a Latino get-out-the-vote effort in Bethlehem. Mr. Obama campaigned in Miami-Dade County, Florida’s most populous which is a majority Latino and Black.

Mr. Trump continued to obsess aloud about how white suburban women had flocked toward the Democratic Party during his presidency, helping to deliver Democrats the House in 2018 and possibly the White House in 2020.

“I say to the women of the suburbs: love me women of the suburbs,” Mr. Trump said.

For Mr. Tump, the race’s waning days have been a characteristically chaotic closing stretch. He has threatened to send in lawyers to stop vote counting, cheered on supporters who surrounded a Biden bus on a Texas highway and baselessly accused doctors of exaggerating how many people had died from the virus so that they could make more money.

In Fayetteville, N.C., on Monday, Mr. Trump condemned the Supreme Court decision that will allow ballots to be counted in Pennsylvania after Election Day. “Do you know what can happen during that long period of time?” Mr. Trump said without evidence. “Cheating.”

Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump’s closing messages captured their divergent approaches to electoral politics.

“There will be no red states and blue states, just the United States,” Mr. Biden said of his potential presidency.

Mr. Trump had a very different pitch. “You have the power to vote, so go out and vote,” he said. “Unless you’re going to vote for somebody other than me, in which case, sit it out.”

Reporting was contributed by Maggie Haberman in New York; Glenn Thrush in Washington, D.C.; Nick Corasaniti and Katie Glueck in Philadelphia; Louis Keene in Los Angeles; and Mike Anderson in Des Moines.

PHOTOS: CLEVELAND: Joseph R. Biden Jr. focusing on Ohio on Monday.; MONACA, PA. Mr. Biden visited a community college on Monday.; PITTSBURGH: Mr. Biden hopes to flip Pennsylvania this year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES); FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. President Trump in the battleground state.; SCRANTON, PA. The president made Pennsylvania a priority.; TRAVERSE CITY, MICH. The president aims to hold Michigan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence in Traverse City, Mich., left. Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Lady Gaga in Pittsburgh, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES; ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19)

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2020

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[***The Mystery of Michael Flynn***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64SB-PJK1-JBG3-6128-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Robert Draper

**Body**

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On Nov. 25, 2020, President Donald J. Trump announced via Twitter that he was granting a full pardon to Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn, his former national security adviser. Flynn pleaded guilty in 2017 to lying to federal investigators about his contacts with Russia's ambassador to the United States during the presidential transition, though he had later tried to withdraw the plea. A CNN report that evening reflected the conventional view in Washington that the pardon, arriving 18 days after the presidential election was called for Joe Biden, was a near-final chapter of the Trump presidency, ''a sign Trump understands his time in office is coming to a close.''

At the time Trump announced the pardon, Flynn was encamped at the historic Tomotley estate in South Carolina, a more-than-700-acre former plantation dating back to the 17th century, where enslaved people harvested rice until much of the property was destroyed by federal troops at the close of the Civil War. Tomotley now belonged to L. Lin Wood, the Trump-supporting defamation lawyer who sued Georgia election officials over the state's 2020 election results showing a Biden victory and predicted that the state's Republican governor and secretary of state ''will soon be going to jail.'' (One of his suits was later dismissed; another is pending.) Though the next day would be Thanksgiving, Flynn had not brought his family with him. He had flown to South Carolina on the private jet of the former Overstock chief executive Patrick Byrne and set up camp at Tomotley, where he threw himself into the project of reversing the results of the election Trump had just lost.

The president and his loyalists, together and independently, had been working toward this end in various ways since Election Day. Byrne told me that he and Flynn's attorney, Sidney Powell, met with Trump's legal adviser Rudy Giuliani in Arlington, Va., shortly after the election to offer their assistance. Through Powell, Flynn soon became part of the group as well. Byrne said he had rented several rooms at the Trump Hotel for a few months -- paying a full rack rate of about $800,000 -- which he, Flynn, Powell and others would move in and out of. Byrne considered the hotel ''the safest place in D.C. for a command bunker.'' But Flynn suggested that they also establish a separate working area far from the Beltway. Powell contacted Wood, who agreed to host them at his secluded estate. As the group began to assemble in mid-November, Wood told me that he was surprised and ''honored'' to discover that Flynn, whom he had never met, was among his guests.

Powell had brought along two law associates. The other guests were there to gather and organize election information alongside her and Flynn. Among these was Seth Keshel, a 36-year-old former Army military intelligence captain who told me he got Flynn's attention three weeks earlier by sending what he believed were suspicious election data to Flynn's LinkedIn page. Another, Jim Penrose, was a cybersecurity specialist who had worked for the National Security Agency. A third, Doug Logan, was an associate of Byrne and the chief executive of a Florida-based software-security firm called Cyber Ninjas. (Powell, Penrose and Logan did not respond to requests for comment.) Wood and Byrne said the group had brought computers, printers and whiteboards. ''It looked like Election Central,'' Wood recalled.

Flynn and the other men slept and ate at an adjacent property, Cotton Hall, but otherwise toiled in the main residence at Tomotley. In a podcast interview, Keshel recalled that when he woke up in the mornings, usually around 5:45 a.m., Flynn typically had ''been up for several hours,'' juggling ''a few different cellphones at any given time.'' Keshel told me that while he spent his three weeks at Tomotley assembling data for Powell's legal filings, Flynn came and went without notice and did not always volunteer what he was working on. ''General Flynn is very adept at need-to-know,'' he said.

Two days after Thanksgiving, Flynn spoke by phone with the Worldview Weekend Broadcast Network, a right-wing religious media outlet. Claiming that the 2020 election involved ''probably the greatest fraud that our country has ever experienced in our history,'' he asserted that China was ''not going to allow 2020 to happen, and so now what we have is this theft with mail-in ballots.'' A legitimate counting of the ballots would have resulted in a Trump landslide, he insisted. ''I'm right in the middle of it right now,'' Flynn said, ''and I will tell you that, first of all, the president has clear paths to victory.''

While Powell was pursuing legal options for reversing the election results, Flynn was beginning to envision a military role. ''It's not unprecedented,'' Flynn, describing the nascent plan, insisted to the Newsmax host Greg Kelly on Dec. 17. ''I mean, these people out there talking about martial law, like it's something that we've never done. Martial law has been instituted 64 times, Greg,'' he said, then added, ''I'm not calling for that.''

But by that point, Flynn was in fact calling for sending in the military to the contested states. Byrne told me that by Dec. 16, he had lined up a series of options for the president to consider, including using uniformed officials to confiscate voting machines and ballots in six states. Flynn suggested to Byrne that the National Guard and U.S. marshals in combination would be the most suited to the job.

On the evening of Dec. 18, Flynn, Byrne, Powell and a legal associate took an S.U.V. limousine to the White House. The group found their way into the Oval Office with the help of several eager-to-please White House staff members, including Garrett Ziegler, an aide to the Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro. (Navarro had released his own extensive, and swiftly debunked, report on election fraud the day before and was in the midst of lobbying Republican members of Congress to overturn the 2020 results.) Byrne, Flynn and Powell then made their case directly to the president about the options he had at his disposal, including Flynn's suggested use of the National Guard and U.S. marshals. According to Byrne, Powell handed Trump a packet that included previous executive orders issued by President Barack Obama and by Trump that the group believed established a precedent for a new executive order, one that would use supposed foreign interference in the election as a justification for deploying the military. In this operation, Byrne added, Flynn could serve as Trump's ''field marshal.''

White House lawyers present at the meeting vehemently denounced the plan. According to Byrne, Flynn calmly replied: ''May I ask what it is you think happened on Nov. 3? Do you think there was anything strange about the election?'' According to another account of the meeting published by Axios, Flynn became livid. ''You're quitting!'' he yelled at Eric Herschmann, a senior adviser to Trump. ''You're a quitter! You're not fighting!'' (Byrne denies that Flynn said this.)

Trump was amenable to the idea of civilian authorities' seizing voting machines; in November, he reportedly proposed the idea of the Justice Department's doing so to his attorney general, William Barr, though Barr rejected it. But either by his own judgment or on the advice of others, he seemed to draw the line at using the military. Byrne told me that Giuliani recently explained to him that he had counseled the president to reject such a plan because ''we would all end up in prison.'' (A lawyer for Giuliani did not respond to a request for comment.) After Flynn and Powell's proposal was rejected, Phil Waldron, a retired Army colonel who served with Flynn and was now working with Powell's legal team, later offered his own revised draft executive order, in which the Department of Homeland Security would be ordered to seize the machines. But Ken Cuccinelli, the department's acting deputy secretary, resisted. (Waldron had presented his own martial-law plan to both Flynn and Trump's legal team; it is unclear whether the plan that Flynn's group presented originated with him or Waldron.)

Flynn, meanwhile, continued to agitate for military intervention. Through an intermediary, he contacted Ezra Cohen, the Defense Department acting under secretary for intelligence, who served under Flynn both at the Defense Intelligence Agency, where Flynn had been director, and on the National Security Council. Cohen (identified in other reports as Ezra Cohen-Watnick) was traveling in the Middle East at the time; the intermediary told him that Flynn wanted him to return to Washington right away.

The call, Cohen told me, was out of the blue. Although it has been reported that he and Flynn were close, he insisted that this was not true: They overlapped at the D.I.A., but Cohen said they met for the first time in the spring of 2016, well after Flynn left the agency, when Cohen wanted to solicit career advice from a veteran intelligence officer. Months later, Flynn recruited him to serve on the N.S.C., but Cohen said they had spoken only briefly a couple of times since Flynn's departure from the White House.

Cohen said he demurred, but Flynn called him a second time, shortly before Christmas, catching Cohen on his cellphone as he was driving home from a Whole Foods in Maryland. He explained that he needed Cohen to direct the military to seize ballots and voting machines and rerun the election.

Cohen said he was too stupefied to ask his former boss how he thought Cohen had the authority to do such a thing. ''Sir, the election is over,'' he said, according to the ABC News reporter Jonathan Karl's book ''Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show.'' ''It's time to move on.'' Cohen told me that Flynn yelled so loudly that Cohen's wife could clearly hear it from the passenger seat. ''You're a quitter!'' Flynn berated him, as he had berated Herschmann. ''This is not over! Don't be a quitter!''

With Flynn's fleeting window of direct access to the president closed, he and Powell urged Representative Devin Nunes, a Trump ally, to pursue a particularly hallucinatory rumor that the election results had been manipulated by an Italian defense contractor. But a Nunes staff member found the lead to be meritless, according to someone with knowledge of the discussions. Flynn's attempts to reach the director of national intelligence, John Ratcliffe, were blocked by the White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows, according to a government official who was privy to these efforts.

It was a stunning near miss for American democracy. But after more than a month of furious machinations, Flynn seemed to have at last exhausted his options. He would later lament to a right-wing podcaster, a fellow retired general and conspiracy theorist named Paul Vallely, that ''in the final days of the administration, there was a lot of decisions that could have been made.'' Flynn had been boxed out, he claimed, by ''a team that wanted to kind of, 'Let's get past this; let's get rid of this guy Trump.'''

A day after the riot at the Capitol on Jan. 6, the conservative Washington Examiner published an article suggesting that the intelligence community had delayed the publication of a report outlining China's attempts to influence the 2020 election (though the Office of the Director of National Intelligence categorically dismissed the claim that China played any role in altering the vote totals). Flynn texted a link to the article to an associate with a bitter accompanying note: ''Ratcliffe should be ashamed of himself as well as Trump for not demanding this report be made public over a month ago.''

On a Friday evening this January, Flynn took the stage at Dream City Church in Phoenix, the latest stop of the ReAwaken America conference: a right-wing road show that combines elements of a tent revival, a trade fair and a sci-fi convention. Flynn, the featured speaker, was wearing a palm-tree-print blazer over a T-shirt and jeans. He began by leading a round of stretching exercises. ''You're the tough crowd, because you're the ones who hung in there all day,'' Flynn said to the audience of perhaps a thousand.

The crowd had thinned considerably from a peak of 3,500. Those who remained had listened for nine hours to a procession of speakers, including Eric Trump; Mike Lindell, the MyPillow chief executive; the young conservative activist Charlie Kirk from Turning Point USA; and, just before Flynn, a New Jersey gym owner who was banned from American Airlines after refusing to wear a mask on a flight. After hours of apocalyptic pronouncements -- coronavirus vaccines described by one speaker as ''poison death shots,'' the Biden administration by another as ''worshipers of Satan'' -- his musings about the 2020 election seemed bland by comparison.

Flynn insisted that the election was rigged against Trump and that the failure to remedy it constituted ''a moment of crisis'' for America. He labeled the election system ''totally broken,'' Democrats ''socialists'' and establishment Republicans ''RINOs'' (Republicans in Name Only). But, Flynn said, ''people at the county level have the ability to change this country.'' Elected county commissioners could write more restrictive voting laws. Elected sheriffs could enforce those laws.

''Not everybody can be a Washington, D.C., superstar,'' Flynn reminded the crowd. ''Not everybody can be a Joan of Arc.''

Flynn did not explicitly compare himself to the canonized martyr of the Hundred Years' War. He did not have to. At this gathering and across the right-wing ecosystem, the story of Flynn's victimization by a diabolical ''deep state'' and the news media is practically a matter of scripture. ''Look at what they did to the general,'' Eric Trump told the crowd earlier that afternoon, with Flynn standing onstage beside him. Warning the audience that ''they want to take you down criminally,'' Trump then pointed to the human evidence standing to his left: ''They did it to him.''

One year since Trump's departure from office, his Make America Great Again movement has reconstituted itself as a kind of shape-shifting but increasingly robust parallel political universe, one that holds significant sway over the Republican Party but is also beyond its control. It includes MAGA-centric media outlets like One America News, Right Side Broadcasting and Real America's Voice; well-attended events like the ReAwaken America Tour, which has also touched down in California, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Michigan and Florida; its own personalities and merchandise; and above all, its shared catechism -- central to which is the false claim that Trump was the legitimate victor in 2020.

In this world, Flynn is probably the single greatest draw besides Trump himself. The ReAwaken America Tour organizer, Clay Clark, a 41-year-old Tulsa-based entrepreneur and anti-vaccine activist, has featured him in eight engagements across the United States over the past year. ''I view it as an honor to pay him to speak at our events,'' Clark told me, adding that a nondisclosure agreement prohibited him from revealing Flynn's fee. At the Phoenix event, two nonprofit organizations Flynn helps lead, America's Future and the America Project, had separate booths. America's Future offered $99 annual memberships as well as T-shirts and other merchandise.

All of this is bewildering to some of those who knew Flynn in his former life, as a celebrated intelligence officer in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and watched his spectacular fall from grace with bafflement and regret. It is as if Flynn has managed to burrow his way from a Beltway graveyard into a subterranean afterlife, where he has been welcomed by a Trumpian demimonde that deified him at first sight.

Flynn possesses unique credibility among the ex-president's followers, with his own compelling story line: that of a distinguished intelligence official who, he claims, experienced firsthand the nefariousness of the deep state. He is a MAGA martyr of such stature that the faithful have been willing to overlook some complicating elements of history. There is the fact that Trump fired Flynn from his post as national security adviser for the same lie that led to his indictment by the Justice Department, and the fact that Flynn, after pleading guilty, spent 2018 cooperating with the Justice Department investigation of other Trumpworld figures. In the right's transfigured portrayal of Flynn, ''America's general'' was at most guilty of being a conservative who dared to accuse Obama of being soft on Islamic extremists, who dared to chant ''lock her up'' about the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton -- and who dared to ally himself with Donald Trump at a moment when doing so, for a retired military figure of his stature, was still deeply taboo. That an American three-star general had faced such persecution -- that, as Eric Trump said, ''they did it to him'' -- meant, by extension, that no conservative patriot was safe.

In the year since Flynn sought to enlist the military in overturning the election, he has continued to fight the same battle by other means. He has been a key figure in spreading the gospel of the stolen election. Speaking at a rally in Washington on Jan. 5 of last year, the night before the Trump faithful stormed the Capitol, he declared that ''everybody in this country knows who won'' on Election Day and claimed without evidence that more dead people had voted in the election in some states than were buried on famous Civil War battlefields.

In November, the House of Representatives' Jan. 6 committee issued a subpoena to Flynn ordering him to testify, noting his reported presence at the Dec. 18 Oval Office meeting. In his speech the night before the Capitol riot, Flynn pledged: ''Tomorrow, we the people are going to be here, and we want you to know that we will not stand for a lie.'' The same day, Flynn was photographed with the longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone at the Willard Hotel, where several of the president's loyalists had assembled. Flynn was also seen that evening down the street from the Willard at the Trump International Hotel, where other Trump advisers and family members had gathered and where Byrne had paid for Flynn's lodging.

Flynn has sued to block the subpoena; his attorney, David Warrington, said in a statement, ''General Flynn did not organize or speak at any of the events on Jan. 6, and like most Americans, he watched the events at the Capitol unfold on television.''

But the committee's interest has both reflected and fueled a suspicion that Flynn is something more than a MAGA circuit rider. In addition to his role in the Dec. 18 meeting, Flynn is set apart by the 33 years he spent in the military establishment and the intelligence community, and by his persistent connections to that world. His brother Lt. Gen. Charles A. Flynn was an Army deputy chief of staff when rioters overtook the Capitol and took part in a phone call that day about whether to bring in the National Guard to assist the overwhelmed Capitol Police force. (Charles Flynn later denied to reporters that his brother's views influenced the military's response to Jan. 6.) Flynn's suggestion at a conference last May that a Myanmar-style military coup ''should happen'' in the United States led Representative Elaine Luria, a moderate Democrat from Virginia and former Navy commander, to argue that Flynn should be tried for sedition under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Flynn has denied calling for a coup. He did not respond to a detailed request for comment for this article. In Phoenix, he described his motive for his ongoing activities as the patriotic urge to ''stand here and fight for this country'' and alluded to the scandal and financial ruin that followed for his family. ''What we experienced was unbelievable,'' he said.

His war against the federal government is all the more dangerous because it's personal. ''If you think of the classic case studies in how radicalization occurs, it all happened with Mike Flynn,'' a fellow military veteran who later did business with Flynn observed. ''You're vilified. Your family's ostracized. You don't see any hope economically. This is how to make an extremist.''

Long before his descent into election conspiracism, Flynn was known for his unorthodox information-gathering methods. Those who worked with him at the Joint Special Operations Command, where he arrived in 2004, and his later posting in Afghanistan, where he was the top intelligence officer for the coalition commander, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, recalled his approach as obsessive, omnivorous, high-velocity.

''He was incredibly rapid,'' one of his colleagues in Afghanistan recalled. ''He'd take in intelligence from unusual sources, from the grass roots'' -- coalition soldiers in far-flung units -- ''and from open-source, not relying on signals. And he ran things in a very horizontal fashion. When you sent in a report, his first instinct was, 'Who needs to see this?' And he'd put 30 people on the email chain. It was interesting to see someone function not according to the usual rules.''

Former colleagues recall Flynn reviewing reports at his desk late into the night, a half-eaten plate of tater tots beside him. His tenacity seemed to be exactly what the U.S. military effort needed. By 2004, it was clear to everyone on the ground in Iraq that one year after the invasion, U.S. troops remained at pains to understand who the enemy was, much less to defeat it. Flynn's team closed the information gap in a hurry.

But Flynn's intelligence-gathering operation was invariably chaotic, embodied by the general himself -- who, the former Afghanistan colleague said, ''would contradict himself three or four times over a 10-minute period.'' His determination to get actionable intelligence into the right hands also led him to defy protocol on occasion, as when a colleague saw Flynn sharing classified information on his computer with a Dutch officer in 2009. Around the same time, according to a Washington Post account, Flynn also shared sensitive intelligence with Pakistani officials, for which he was reprimanded by the Pentagon's top intelligence official at the time, James Clapper.

Flynn's discernment as an intelligence analyst also left something to be desired, recalled one former military intelligence officer who worked with him: ''During the interrogations at Abu Ghraib, you just couldn't explain to him that 'Look, a lot of these guys that were taken off the battlefield just don't know anything. And they're all not interconnected.' And he'd be like, 'There's got to be some connection that we're not making.' And we'd be like, 'No, it's just not there.''' Still, Flynn's teams provided intelligence on the whereabouts and capabilities of Iraqi and Afghan militants of such value to America's war-fighting efforts in both countries that his problematic tendencies were largely overlooked at the time.

In his book, ''The Field of Fight,'' Flynn describes how, after the Sept. 11 attacks, he came to believe that radical Islam was an organized global project to destroy the West, akin to the Soviet Union's designs on the developing world during the Cold War (which Flynn experienced firsthand as a young Army lieutenant participating in the U.S. invasion of Communist-controlled Grenada in 1983). By family tradition, Flynn, the ***working-class*** son of an Army sergeant from Rhode Island, was a registered Democrat. But he also regarded the left as useful idiots in the radical Islamists' plans, if not outright accomplices. While in Afghanistan, he disdainfully opined to a colleague that Obama wanted to ''remake American society.''

His misgivings about the president became personal in June 2010, when Obama fired McChrystal, Flynn's mentor, after a Rolling Stone article quoted McChrystal's team mocking members of the Obama administration. Six years later, Flynn would say in ''The Field of Fight'' that McChrystal's ''maltreatment is still hard for me to digest.''

Still, Flynn's service under McChrystal had garnered significant admiration in Washington, and Clapper, who by this point was serving as the director of national intelligence, brought Flynn to work at the O.D.N.I. in 2011. A year later, Flynn became the new director of the D.I.A. On paper, bringing in the top intelligence officer in Iraq and Afghanistan made perfect sense. On the other hand, Flynn's experience as the supervisor of a small operation would not readily scale to an organization of 17,000 employees within a top-heavy and doctrinaire intelligence bureaucracy.

One former senior intelligence official recalled trying to warn Flynn that running a large agency required different management techniques from those to which he was accustomed. Flynn, undeterred, wasted little time upending the D.I.A. He shuffled the responsibilities of the agency's senior executives and made significant structural changes to the Defense Clandestine Service in defiance of the instruction of his Pentagon superiors. He often ignored his civilian chain of command, according to one of his subordinates.

Woven into the mythology of Flynn's martyrdom is that his dire warnings about the growing threat of Islamic extremism were what ultimately cost him his job at the D.I.A. In ''The Field of Fight,'' he claimed to have been given his walking papers in February 2014 ''after telling a congressional committee that we were not as safe as we had been a few years back.'' In fact, the only evidence I could find of Flynn saying anything along these lines was his remarks to an audience at the Aspen Institute fully five months after being asked for his resignation by James Clapper and Michael Vickers, the under secretary of defense for intelligence, not Obama. ''President Obama wouldn't have known Flynn if he'd fallen over him,'' Clapper told me. ''We told Susan Rice'' -- Obama's national security adviser -- ''what we'd done after the fact.'' Their reasons for ending Flynn's tenure, he added, included insubordination and erosion of morale at the agency. Clapper termed Flynn's fired-for-telling-the-truth narrative ''baloney.''

Flynn was permitted to retire with the full benefits accorded a three-star general. His retirement ceremony on Aug. 7, 2014 was well attended. He bought a three-bedroom house in the Old Town neighborhood of Alexandria, Va., and set up a consulting shop, Flynn Intel Group, in an office overlooking the Potomac River. And he began venturing into politics. Six months after his retirement, he went on ''Fox News Sunday'' to criticize the Obama administration's terrorist-fighting ''passivity.'' A string of further appearances on the network followed. Flynn also began consulting with Republican presidential contenders, including Carly Fiorina and Scott Walker.

But in the private sector, too, Flynn was reckless. His admirers were horrified to see him form a partnership with Bijan Kian, an Iranian American businessman who would later be indicted on charges of acting as an unregistered agent of the Turkish government (the case has not been resolved). Kian epitomized, in the words of a former colleague, ''these guys in the D.C. swamp who prey on generals fresh out of the military with no understanding of how the business world works.''

Even more concerning was Flynn's acceptance of more than $45,000 for a speaking appearance in Moscow, at the 10th anniversary gala of Russia's state-run RT channel in December 2015, where he was photographed sitting next to President Vladimir Putin. Friends and at least one intelligence official advised Flynn against attending the party to celebrate a Russian propaganda organization that was at the time openly spreading misinformation about and within the United States and other NATO countries. Flynn assured them that he knew what he was doing.

Trump did not find Flynn's views on Russia disqualifying in the least. By the time the candidate had wrapped up the Republican nomination, Flynn was his senior foreign-policy adviser -- and, briefly, the only nonpolitician under consideration to be Trump's running mate, according to a former Trump campaign adviser. Like most of those in Trump's orbit, Flynn did not seem to be staking his career on a victory in November. Beginning in the final weeks of the campaign, Flynn's consulting firm accepted over a half-million dollars from a Dutch group with ties to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. On Election Day in 2016, The Hill published an op-ed by Flynn (in which he failed to disclose his consulting relationship) titled ''Our Ally Turkey Is in Crisis and Needs Our Support.''

Even for those conservatives who reject the most garish Trump-centric conspiracy theories, there is a tendency to view Flynn as a pawn in a chess match between Trump and federal officials who had reason to wonder if the new president sought help from the Russian government during his campaign. This is true to an extent, but Flynn had placed himself on the chessboard. He lied about discussing the Obama administration's sanctions on Russia with that country's ambassador to the United States, Sergey Kislyak, during the presidential transition -- first to incoming Vice President Mike Pence, then to White House officials, then to the media and finally to two F.B.I. agents. One former senior intelligence official who reviewed the transcript of Flynn's conversation with Kislyak told me that he was struck by the ''plain stupidity'' of Flynn's lies -- knowing that Trump's campaign was already drawing scrutiny for its contacts with Russia and knowing as well that any phone conversation with a Russian diplomat was likely to be recorded by U.S. intelligence agencies.

When Flynn resigned in February 2017, Trump did not pretend to be heartbroken by the loss. As one of Trump's senior advisers told me, Flynn ''had no chemistry with Trump and didn't come across as a guy who had it together.'' But according to another adviser, the firing of Flynn constituted an early show of weakness in the eyes of the president's son-in-law and consigliere, Jared Kushner, who confided to this individual in 2020 that throwing Flynn to the wolves was ''the biggest mistake we ever made.'' (Kushner could not be reached for comment.)

The following December, Flynn struck a plea deal with the special counsel, Robert Mueller. Over the course of a year, Flynn sat for about 20 interviews and acknowledged, in private and later in court, that he had willfully not told the truth about the nature of his conversations with Kislyak. Though the summaries of these interviews suggest Flynn was far from expansive and at times evasive, Mueller's team was clearly hopeful that Flynn's experience would encourage others in Trump's circle to come forward. The prosecutors indicated that they would not object to Flynn's receiving no jail time.

Still, Flynn was racking up immense legal fees and could not find work. In the spring of 2019, he decided to fire his attorneys and replace them with the Dallas-based lawyer Sidney Powell, his future partner in the crusade to overturn the 2020 election. Powell withdrew Flynn's guilty plea and claimed that the prosecutors were withholding what she called a crucial report that, as it turned out, did not exist. In May 2020, Attorney General William Barr intervened and moved that the case against Flynn be dismissed. A federal judge was still weighing whether to accept Barr's recommendation when Trump rendered the matter moot by issuing his pardon on Nov. 25.

Less than a month after receiving his pardon, Flynn was face to face with the man who had given it to him, presenting what Byrne called the ''beautiful operational plan'' for deploying the military to six contested states. When both the White House and Ezra Cohen declined to enact this plan, Flynn continued to hype fraud conspiracy theories -- and intended to do the same in a speech at Trump's rally on the morning of Jan. 6, until he was informed at the last minute that his and Byrne's slots had been canceled.

Byrne wrote that ''Flynn and I sunk into our seats in despair'' in the V.I.P. section throughout the program. They had hoped the president would make an evidentiary case for there having been an election-fraud conspiracy, but he had done nothing of the sort. According to Byrne's account in his self-published book ''The Deep Rig,'' the two men repeatedly said to each other: ''He does not get that it is not about him. He put on a [expletive] pep rally.'' They returned to their hotel, hurriedly packed their bags and did not follow the throng to the Capitol, Byrne wrote.

Like several other Trump allies, Flynn refused to testify as scheduled before the Jan. 6 Committee in December and sued to block its subpoena of his phone records. Flynn's defiance of the committee fuels suspicions in some corners that Flynn has something to hide -- though his reticence would also be in keeping with someone who insists an election was stolen by the same deep-state operatives who engineered his dismissal from the White House five years ago. ''They did a masterful job of getting rid of me early on, because they knew exactly what I was going to do,'' Flynn told Paul Vallely on a podcast in November.

In September, I was attending a rally near the Capitol in support of those facing charges in the Jan. 6 riot when a short, muscular man with a shaved head approached me. He wore a T-shirt with Flynn's face on it. Noticing my press badge, he held his iPhone up to my face and demanded to know: ''Why aren't you guys reporting on the 12th Amendment that's going to potentially be triggered after Arizona, Georgia and Wisconsin nullify their electors?''

I tried to explain that I was not writing about the election, but the man continued to talk. The next morning, I learned that a video of the encounter had been posted on the man's Telegram account. His name was Ivan Raiklin, and he was a former Green Beret and lawyer.

Raiklin has often emphasized his dealings with Flynn. When he briefly tried to run for the U.S. Senate in Virginia in 2018, Raiklin was endorsed by Flynn's son Michael Flynn Jr., and he sat in the federal courtroom next to Sidney Powell during the elder Flynn's hearing that December; Flynn has been photographed with Raiklin elsewhere and once described him on Twitter as ''a true American patriot.'' Beyond that, Flynn has never confirmed their relationship, and Flynn's brother Joe Flynn, in a brief statement on behalf of their family, said, ''We do not have any association with Ivan Raiklin.''

Raiklin is one of a cohort of military-intelligence and law-enforcement veterans who have found or at least claimed places in Flynn's general orbit since the 2020 election and are engaged in ongoing efforts to relitigate its results. Others include Seth Keshel and Jim Penrose from the group that gathered at Lin Wood's estate that November; Phil Waldron; Thomas Speciale, the leader of the group Vets for Trump, who worked at the D.I.A. during Flynn's directorship and has provided security for Flynn; and Robert Patrick Lewis and the former Michigan police officer Geoffrey Flohr of the First Amendment Praetorian, a right-wing paramilitary outfit that has provided security for Flynn and others more than once at Flynn's behest.

Several of these men were present at the Capitol on Jan. 6, though in what capacity, and to what end, is still unclear. Flohr can be seen in video footage on the grounds near the west side of the Capitol talking on his cellphone just before the attack, though it is not known if he entered the building. Speciale was also on the west side of the building that afternoon, though he maintains that he never entered. Raiklin, too, was at the Capitol but insists he did not go inside the building.

What is less ambiguous is the role that some of these figures have played in the effort to reverse 2020's outcome by other means. Since the election, Trump's claims of thwarted victory have given rise to a wave of state-level organizing aimed at using legislatures and other levers of power to audit the 2020 election results, on the theory that they will void enough Electoral College votes to force a rerun of the election. Although the handful of state and local audits that activists and Republican lawmakers have managed to set in motion -- most significantly in Arizona -- have in no cases changed the election results, it remains an area of fervent activity, in which Flynn's name is regularly invoked.

In November in New Hampshire, I attended an ''election-security seminar,'' presented by an organization called the New Hampshire Voter Integrity Group. The conference room was standing room only. The speakers included a state representative, a Republican candidate for Congress and Seth Keshel, who argued that their foremost mission should be ''the remediation of the 2020 election.''

The final speaker was Ivan Raiklin. In his hypercaffeinated cadence, Raiklin devoted his talk to enumerating the supposed conspirators whose ongoing presence helped explain ''why we haven't remedied 2020 yet.'' Those forces, he said, included the F.B.I., the Bushes, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., former Vice President Mike Pence and former Vice President Dick Cheney. This was the deep state that Trump was up against, Raiklin said.

And, he added, ''who's the first person of any stature whatsoever who has any credibility, other than within his family and the Trump Organization, that comes in and bats for him? This is important. This is the most important thing. Say it louder: General Flynn.'' Flynn and Trump's independence was a threat to the deep state, Raiklin insisted, which led to Flynn's indictment and Trump's defeat. ''The reason why a million people showed up on Jan. 6,'' he said, was that ''they know bits and pieces of the story. And they knew that something had to be called out publicly. ''

The same month as the New Hampshire event, the Jan. 6 committee heard testimony from a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania named Everett Stern, who has said he was approached last April by two associates of Raiklin at a Republican gathering in Berks County. Stern, who owns a private intelligence firm, told me that the associates wanted to enlist his help in persuading high-ranking Republican officials in Pennsylvania to support an audit in that state. When Stern asked whom they were working with, one of them replied, ''General Flynn.''

Later, Stern said, Raiklin communicated directly with him through text messages to find out more about his professional and personal life. After this vetting, Stern says that he was tasked with finding unflattering information about a particular Republican congressman so he could be ''pushed'' toward supporting an audit. Stern says he was also set up to meet personally with Flynn in Dallas in mid-June. By this time, however, Stern had reported his communications to the F.B.I. and was afraid of his legal exposure. He canceled at the last minute.

Joe Flynn told me: ''We do not have anything to do with what Everett Stern is alleging,'' adding, ''He's nuts.'' Raiklin, too, denied to me that he helped recruit Stern to pressure elected officials into supporting a 2020 election audit. But I heard a similar story from J.D. Maddox, a former C.I.A. branch chief who ran unsuccessfully for the Virginia House of Delegates last year. Maddox, who has not previously spoken publicly about his experience, told me that he was at a candidate meet-and-greet in Arlington last May when he bumped into Raiklin. Raiklin again brought up the need for election audits -- and suggested tactics far beyond lobbying legislators. ''If the Democrats don't give us that,'' Maddox recalled him saying, ''then violence is the next step.''

Raiklin proceeded into what Maddox described as ''a wild, contortionist explanation of how they would reverse Biden's election,'' involving a succession of state audits. First Arizona, then Georgia, then Wisconsin and then other state legislatures would nullify the 2020 election results, he envisioned, until Biden's victory margin would evaporate. Maddox told Raiklin he was skeptical. ''But he said he was certain it was going to happen,'' Maddox told me. ''And he kept referring back to Mike Flynn as this linchpin and cog.''

''General Flynn is central to all this,'' Raiklin had similarly claimed in New Hampshire when I spoke with him briefly after his talk. He refused to elaborate, so what that meant, exactly, was hard to say. In the feverish activity that now attends the 2020 election on the right, it can be difficult to distinguish conspiring from conspiracism -- not least in Flynn's own statements. In an interview in late January with the right-wing conspiracy website Infowars, Flynn accused George Soros, Bill Gates and others of creating the coronavirus so they could ''steal an election'' and ''rule the world.'' In another interview, he floated the rumor that ''they'' may be ''putting the vaccine in salad dressing.''

But the Capitol riot demonstrated how quickly such conspiracism could be converted into action. The belief that the 2020 election was stolen holds sway in the Republican Party as much now as it did then: According to a YouGov poll in December, 71 percent of all Republicans believe that Biden was not elected legitimately. The stolen-election myth has fused with a host of other right-wing preoccupations -- the coronavirus vaccines, critical race theory, border security -- into a single crisis narrative, of which Flynn is both purveyor and protagonist: The deep state intends to break America as it tried to break Flynn and the man he had the audacity to serve, Donald Trump.

At the ReAwaken America event in Phoenix, I visited a booth hawking art by a man named Michael Marrone. In addition to the usual hagiographic portraits of Trump in Revolutionary War garb, Marrone had several of Flynn and other hallowed figures in the original effort to overturn the election, like Lin Wood and Sidney Powell. One featured the general seated next to Powell, both in colonial attire, signing the Declaration of Independence. In another, Flynn stood jut-jawed and eagle-eyed, wielding a musket. A third, featuring him beside Trump on a battlefield, bore Flynn's autograph, next to the QAnon slogan WWG1WGA (''where we go one, we go all'').

In real life, the bonds among this band had started to fray. Wood and Flynn endorsed different Republican candidates for governor of Georgia, a state that has become central to the right-wing efforts to overturn the 2020 results and assert partisan control over future elections. Their estrangement deepened and eventually became public when Wood posted text messages and snippets of a phone conversation on the social media app Telegram. In one of them, Flynn expressed his belief that Trump had ''quit'' on America.

When I spoke with Wood in December, he told me that he had begun to reappraise the general. For so long Flynn's partner in conspiracism, he had lately begun to wonder if Flynn himself might not be what he seemed. He told me about attending a Bikers for Trump rally in South Carolina last May, where Flynn led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance, only to fall silent momentarily during the line ''and to the Republic for which it stands.'' At the time, ''I tried to defend him,'' Wood said. ''Now I don't know. Who forgets the Pledge of Allegiance? Draw your own conclusions. It's troublesome.''

It occurred to me that this, one way or another, was probably Flynn's life for the foreseeable future: The prospect of a normal retirement long gone, he now belonged to a MAGA storybook world of heroes and villains and nothing in between. That world ''is filled with strong personalities, which is a complication in any movement,'' said J.D. Rucker, a conservative podcaster who is acquainted with and admires Flynn. ''When you're fighting for a cause, you're also fighting for a spotlight within that cause. The left is less susceptible to this -- whether because they have a more collectivist view or because they're not as capitalistic, I don't know.''

''It's a challenge to call out a grifter,'' Rucker mused, ''because usually they have a very passionate, cultlike following. And sometimes we get this situation where we have these multiple grifters going after each other. It's entertaining, but it's also dangerous for everybody involved.''

Robert Draper is a contributing writer for the magazine. He is the author of several books, most recently ''To Start a War: How the Bush Administration Took America Into Iraq,'' which was excerpted in the magazine.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/04/magazine/michael-flynn-2020-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/04/magazine/michael-flynn-2020-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (MM32-MM33)

A merchandise booth at the ReAwaken America event in Phoenix in January. Opening pages: Michael Flynn speaking at the gathering.ï¿½ï¿½ (MM35)

Flynn onstage with Eric Trump in Phoenix.ï¿½ï¿½ (MM36)

The crowd at the ReAwaken America event in Phoenix. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK PETERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM39)

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[***Trump, Biden and the Tough Guy, Nice Guy Politics of 2020; News Analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616C-FFS1-DXY4-X068-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The 2016 election was a referendum on many things, including what Americans thought a woman could do or be. Now it’s a question of what a man should be.

**Body**

Kindness. Humility. Responsibility. These traits were once “the definition of manliness,” Barack Obama told a crowd [*on Saturday*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0), campaigning in Flint, Mich., for his former running mate, Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Though he did not name him, it was clear whom the former president was talking about.

“It used to be being a man meant taking care of other people, not going around bragging,” Mr. Obama said.

The words were evocative, and not simply because Mr. Obama followed them by [*knocking down a slick three-point*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) basketball shot at the gymnasium of the high school where the drive-in rally was held — a kind of viral punctuation mark to his thoughts on manliness.

In two days, Americans will take their shot, making a choice between two presidential candidates who resemble vastly different case studies in what a man, even in 2020, should do or be.

On the one extreme is President Trump, who leaves little subtlety in his approach: bragging about his sexual prowess, along with the [*size of his nuclear button*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0), proclaiming “domination” over coronavirus and mocking his opponent for [*the size of his mask*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) (“the biggest mask I’ve ever seen”), as if mask-wearing is somehow [*weak*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0). (The two dozen [*sexual assault allegations*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) against him have not hampered the bragging.)

He has said he believes men who change diapers are “[*acting like the wife*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).” “Macho Man” is the song that plays at his rallies, even after the [*Village People objected*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0). “He seeks to distinguish himself as the manliest — and thus, in his mind, the most-qualified — person to be president,” said Kelly Dittmar, a scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

On the other end of the spectrum, or perhaps somewhere in the middle, is Mr. Biden, a “Dad-like” figure, as the philosopher [*Kate Manne*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) put it, who has vowed to [*be America’s protector*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) through a dark period, with some combination of strength, empathy and compassion.

He chose Kamala Harris, a barrier-breaking woman, as his running mate. He has surrounded himself with strong women. “He’s offering a more paternalistic type of masculinity, in that you can be a strong leader but still be compassionate and empathetic,” said Marianne Cooper, a sociologist at Stanford University who studies gender and work.

Mr. Obama, the man with whom Mr. Biden served, had to navigate the more complex demands of Black masculinity in the public eye. He did it with a “[*cool-dad”*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) approach — self-confident but without [*crowding out the love*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).

Mr. Biden is perhaps a more [*sensitive new-age grandfather*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0), who speaks tenderly of his family — he’s made a point to take phone calls from his grandchildren at any time, especially in front of cameras — and isn’t afraid to express emotion. But he will also [*drive a Corvette in a campaign ad*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) or challenge a voter (and his opponent) to a push-up contest. (Yes, he will call Mr. Trump a “clown” during a debate but he will later say he [*regretted the language*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).)

“He reads as a man who won’t start a fight, but would punch back if provoked,” said Robb Willer, a sociologist, also at Stanford, who has studied the way [*threats to masculinity influence men’s behavior*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).

Remember four years ago, when Democrats planned to celebrate the election of the first woman as president by [*dropping 200 pounds of confetti*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) shaped like glass shards to signify the crumbling of that “highest, hardest” glass ceiling? Or how, just last year, the Democratic field was [*still the most diverse*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0), and female, in history?

It seems hard to parse how, in 2020, against a backdrop of a global pandemic that has left a [*disproportionate number of women out of work*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) — and with polls predicting what may be the biggest gender gap in electoral history — the presidential election has become, among other things, a referendum on masculinity.

And yet here we are.

“Ultimately, masculinity still matters, we’ve learned. It’s how candidates still try to prove they are the best candidate,” said Ms. Cooper. “And so, even in 2020, Democrats decided the safest bet to beat a white man in his 70s is another white man in his 70s.”

Hard Hats and Military Tanks

White American masculinity has been a factor in nearly every presidential election since the nation’s founding. “Trump is an exaggeration of an existing phenomenon, but he didn’t create it,” said Jackson Katz, the author of “[*Man Enough? Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).”

From Richard Nixon to Ronald Reagan and right on through Mr. Trump, largely white, Christian, heterosexual presidential candidates have “performed” manhood in all sorts of ways: Donning hard hats and posing [*inside military tanks*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0); battling over who would be the better guy to have a beer with; and implying their opponents were soft, weak or “[*sleepy*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).”

Reagan, a former Hollywood actor, began dressing the part (cowboy hats, bluejeans) while George W. Bush — a graduate of Yale and Harvard — bought a ranch in Texas (along with a series of very big belt buckles) shortly before announcing his candidacy.

Sometimes these men were Democrats, but often they were Republicans — a party that has long recognized the power of “strong man identities” to appeal to ***working-class*** white voters, said David Collinson, a professor of leadership and organization at Lancaster University who, with colleague Jeff Hearn, professor of gender studies at Örebro University in Sweden, has [*written on the contrasting masculinities of Biden and Trump*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).

In 1987, when George H.W. Bush, who had once described his quest for a “kinder, gentler nation,” appeared on the cover of Newsweek with the phrase, “[*The ‘Wimp Factor*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0),’” his advisers, which included Lee Atwater and Roger Ailes, quickly shifted into gear.

“Michael Dukakis had a 17-point lead over Bush in the summer of 1988,” said Mr. Katz, whose book on presidential masculinity has been adapted into a documentary called “[*The Man Card*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).” “So what did they do? They relentlessly attacked his manhood. They suggested he was a failed protector, that he was ‘soft,’ that he wasn’t a ‘real man.’”

A decade later, when the younger Bush ran against John Kerry, he took a similar tack: He taunted his opponent [*for speaking French*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) and painted him as an out-of-touch aristocrat even as he tried to present himself as a “war president.”

“This happens all the time,” said Tristan Bridges, an associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the co-editor of the journal, [*Men and Masculinitie*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) [*s*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0). “One guy presents himself as a kind of salt of the earth, a person you could hang out with, and then effectively emasculates the other by presenting them as the opposite.”

“I think the performance of masculinity means a lot,” he noted, “because it has the potential to eclipse all else.”

One notable performance, Mr. Bridges said, was in 1840, when William Henry Harrison, a presidential newcomer, relentlessly pilloried the incumbent, Martin Van Buren (“Marty,” as he called him) as “effeminate and obsequious.”

Harrison won by a landslide, but there was a twist. He delivered the [*longest inauguration speech on record*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0), on a cold day in Washington in the middle of winter, and refused to wear a coat. Three weeks later, Harrison fell ill with pneumonia. He was dead a month into his term.

‘Become’ a Woman, ‘Be’ a Man

Not wearing a coat — or, say, a candidate rolling up his sleeves when talking with voters — are small contests with dignity, said Mr. Bridges. But they can have big consequences.

Ms. Dittmar, the author of a book on [*stereotypes in political strategy*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0), explained it this way: Political strategy 101 involves paying attention to what voters want in a candidate. They look at polling data, and inevitably hear words like “tough” and “strong,” or issues like “national security.” The words in and of themselves are not gendered, and yet, have historically been associated with men — and often, certain types of men.

Which leaves not only men, but also women to display masculinity traits, though it tends to be more complicated for them. When women exhibit traits that tend to be associated with male leadership — like toughness — they are [*often viewed as too aggressive*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0), but they must also not seem too “soft” to lead. It leads to a complicated dance.

Ms. Dittmar noted that Hillary Clinton’s one-time adviser, Mark Penn, [*wrote in a 2006 memo*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) to Mrs. Clinton that while voters may not be ready for “the first mama” president, they could be open to “the first father being a woman,” whatever that was supposed to mean.

(When she ran again eight years later, of course, the guidance [*was different*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0).)

Part of what makes the role of gender in politics so complicated, said Ms. Cooper, is that while women are still contorting into a masculine framework, men are continually having to prove themselves as man “enough.”

Social scientists call this “precarious masculinity,” the idea that manhood is something that must be proven over a lifetime while womanhood is perceived to be fixed. Girls receive a message that they “become” women — typically through a biological event like menstruation — while men are told throughout their lives to “be” men or to “man up,” as if masculinity is something that can be easily lost.

“You don’t really say ‘be a woman’ the way you say ‘be a man’ or ‘man up,’” she said.

It’s that enduring need to prove, she said, that can have far-reaching implications.

Research by Robb Willer, of Stanford, [*found that*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) when masculinity is challenged, men tend to overcompensate by increasing their support for more stereotypically masculine things, like war or wanting to purchase an SUV.

Daniel Cassino, a political scientist at Fairleigh Dickinson University, found in 2016 that just the mention of women as breadwinners led some men to [*abandon their support for Hillary Clinton*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) and express support for President Trump. (The same was not true for those who supported Bernie Sanders, indicating that people were responding to a woman as a potential leader, not a Democrat.)

And [*2018 research*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) by Ms. Cooper and four colleagues, published in the Journal of Social Issues, found that the need to prove one’s masculinity can be particularly damaging in a workplace context — leading to unreasonable or unnecessary risk-taking, bragging, cutting corners, bullying, even sexual harassment.

Such behavior was most likely to be found in male-dominated environments characterized by a “winner-takes-all approach” — and where winners tended to exhibit traits like toughness or ruthlessness, the study found.

In Ms. Cooper’s view, those traits are central to presidential politics today.

“Trump is the personification of this masculinity contest culture,” Ms. Cooper said. “It’s bad for organizations, it’s terrible for a country.”

If the return to masculinity, exaggerated or calibrated, is dispiriting to some, there is perhaps a silver lining: Americans — or at least, American women — may finally be more cleareyed about its limits.

Since the 1980s, women have [*turned out to vote in higher numbers*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) than men — and the latest [*polls*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-politics-virus-outbreak-f928ebb315d4dd1d3ecdffdc4592dda0) predict a potentially historic gender gap between the candidates.

Maybe women were always the intended audience for the contests. Whether that’s true, they seem to be ready to render a clear judgment. Mr. Biden is leading among women by as much as 20 points.

PHOTO: President Donald Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr., shown during their first presidential debate, represent two versions of masculinity. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL ACKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2020

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[***Greenport, N.Y.: A Casual Village on the Waterfront; Living in***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60VH-0GV1-JBG3-60J5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1835 words

**Byline:** Jan Benzel

**Highlight:** With its quiet streets, serious dining and plentiful beaches, the Suffolk County community attracts those looking for a low-key alternative to the Hamptons.

**Body**

With its quiet streets, serious dining and plentiful beaches, the Suffolk County community attracts those looking for a low-key alternative to the Hamptons.

Greenport, the mile-square waterfront village on the North Fork of Long Island, has had to reinvent itself numerous times since its days as a 19th-century whaling port. Necessity struck again this year with the coronavirus pandemic, which tested the resilience and adaptability of a local economy that relies on a seasonal influx of visitors, and wound up fueling an already heated real estate market.

“Even in the spring, when we couldn’t show a house or tour a house in person, there were bidding wars,” said Sally Heitel, an agent who manages the Greenport office of Century 21 Albertson Realty. “Houses are closing at asking price or above.”

The rental market was particularly tight this year, she added, because people who normally rent out their homes for at least part of the summer stayed put.

Walkability, varied and historic architecture, harbors, convivial restaurants, bars and shops, and convenient transportation have long made Greenport a hub for weekenders and vacationers, particularly those who prefer its more casual feel to the ever-ritzier and traffic-choked Hamptons. On quiet residential streets, instead of formidable hedges you’ll see roses and hydrangeas growing over picket fences in front of shingled saltboxes and farmhouses with generous porches.

Joanne Greenbaum, an artist based in Manhattan, rented places in Greenport for several years. “I wanted to have a place to go when I’m an old lady,” she said. “Wait, I’m already an old lady!” (She’s 66.)

In May, Ms. Greenbaum bought a newly renovated four-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom farmhouse on Sterling Place for $580,000, with a separate two-car garage. “I’ve basically turned the whole house into a studio,” she said. Even the garage is set up for painting and sculpture.

She’s not ready to abandon the city completely. “You have to show your face in the art world,” she said. “But I love it here. It’s quiet. I go to the beach. I walk my dog into town to get a coffee. I’m working well. The casualness of Greenport is totally up my alley. People are neighborly, but there isn’t a scene. You can choose to be social or choose not to; you won’t be judged.”

Ms. Greenbaum prefers the small-town feel of Greenport to the open spaces she might have found elsewhere. “Even though I live alone, I don’t feel alone,” she said. “I like it that there are people around, and I like that it’s a diverse community.”

Jill Dunbar, an agent in the Greenport office of Douglas Elliman and a former owner of the Greenwich Village bookstore Three Lives &amp; Company, moved to Greenport about 30 years ago. “The town was a bit down and out, rough around the edges, but people were welcoming,” she said. “Then the New Yorkers moving here were from Greenwich Village. Now they’re from Brooklyn.”

Greenport is interesting in its blend, she continued, with its long-established Black community, continuing waves of immigrants — Greek, Mexican, Guatemalan, Colombian — and the influx from the city. “The infusion of new energy and creativity is thrilling,” she said.

Longtime North Forkers are vital to the mix. At the Halyard, the restaurant at the Sound View motel with highly Instagramable sunset views, the locally sourced menu is the work of Stephan Bogardus, the young executive chef, who grew up in nearby Mattituck and was formerly the chef at another local favorite, North Fork Table &amp; Inn, in Southold.

What You’ll Find

The village of Greenport, on the banks of the Peconic River, is a North Fork headquarters of sorts for those in pursuit of serious local food and wine, fishing, gardening, beach-going, water activities, bicycling and bird-watching (there’s an Audubon Society). Beaches are plentiful along the river, which flows west from Gardiners Bay and surrounds Shelter Island (a 10-minute [*ferry ride*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/11/nyregion/shelter-island-ferries.html) away), and north across Route 48, on Long Island Sound.

Part of Southold Town in Suffolk County, Greenport, with a population of about 2,200, is incorporated, and offers municipal services like water, sewers and brush pickup. There’s a 70-bed hospital and a beloved public library. Greenport West, a 3.3-square-mile census-designated place with a population of about 2,100, surrounds the village on its three landward sides.

Greenport was laid out as a ***working-class*** enclave in the 19th century, so residences are on small lots, rarely bigger than a quarter or half acre. Gracious Victorians, farmhouse fixer-uppers, two-family clapboard dwellings, beach cottages and an increasing number of waterside condos make up the housing stock.

Greenport West has more typically suburban homes, as well as a couple of vineyards and farms. Vineyard View, 50 newly built units of much-sought-after affordable housing, will be filled through a lottery system (a first round was scrapped after it was determined that not all applications had been included in the draw). Peconic Landing, a 144-acre retirement community, includes private beachfront on Long Island Sound.

What You’ll Pay

As of Sept. 11, there were 28 residences for sale in Greenport, including single-family homes, multifamily homes, condos and co-ops — about half the usual inventory, Ms. Dunbar said. Current listings range from a 650-square-foot cottage for $215,000 to a grand waterfront house for $2.75 million. Of the other available listings, three are multifamily homes, one is operating as a bed-and-breakfast, and one is a restored church.

In the past 12 months, sales of 69 residences have closed in Greenport, Ms. Dunbar said, citing figures from One Key Multiple Listing Service. The numbers reflect a year in which there was very little activity for six months, she noted, although sales picked up in July, once Phase 4 of Suffolk County’s reopening began. Of those residences, 56 were single-family homes with a median sale price of $633,000; 12 were condos or co-ops with a median price of $385,750. One multifamily house sold, for $540,000.

In the previous year, sales of 66 residences closed. Of those, 51 were single-family homes, with a median sale price of $690,000. Four multifamily homes sold, with a median price of $797,500; 11 condos and co-ops sold, with a median price of $405,000.

While in the past it was possible to find a year-round rental for as little as $1,200 a month, this year they are scarce, and priced at $2,000 or more, Ms. Heitel said.

The Vibe

“Part of what’s funky and neat about the village is that it’s got its own little government,” said Bridget Elkin, an agent at Daniel Gale Sotheby’s who moved to Greenport five years ago after living in San Francisco and New York City. She and her husband, Eric, have a 15-month-old daughter, and were part of a successful push to get the village speed limit lowered from 30 to 25 miles an hour.

The Art Deco movie theater on Front Street used to be open only during summer months until Lisa Gillooly, an agent for Corcoran, and her partner, Tony Spiridakis, a writer for film and television, made an arrangement with Josh Sapan, the chief executive of AMC Networks, who bought and restored it as a labor of love. Mr. Sapan agreed that they could show movies there for free on winter weekends, if they could figure out how to get the ancient heating system working (they did). They also took charge of making popcorn for cold-weather crowds and changing the letters on the marquee. For now, the letters spell Greenport/Six Feet Apart/Standing Together.

That D.I.Y. ethos has been in high gear in recent months. Although the antique carousel in Mitchell Park is silent and the Monday night summer dance parties with live music are on hold, the village has created parklets on its two perpendicular commercial streets, Main and Front, where restaurants and shops have set up tables and awnings. Restaurants like Claudio’s (which caters dockside to the boating crowd), 1943 Pizza Bar and First &amp; South have devised inventive systems for takeout food. Beall &amp; Bell, a popular vintage furniture store in a former Masonic temple, is selling its finds on Instagram.

North Fork Yoga Shala, usually upstairs from Beall &amp; Bell, is holding distanced pop-up classes in grassy yards and on the deck of the Menhaden, the fancy new hotel in town. Shops like Greenport Wines and Spirits, which carries many local wines, and the independent Burton’s Bookstore made deliveries until they were able to open to masked customers. Clarke’s Garden and Home set up an honor-system box in its courtyard.

The Schools

Greenport has one school building, housing students in prekindergarten through 12th grade. In December 2019, the school district approved a $17.18 million bond for major infrastructure improvement, the Suffolk Times reported.

In 2018-19, there were 333 students enrolled in the Greenport Elementary School, serving kindergarten through sixth grade, and 332 in the high school. On state tests, 20 percent of third-grade students demonstrated proficiency in English language arts, compared with 51 percent statewide; 30 percent demonstrated proficiency in math, compared with 54 percent statewide. The overall number of students tested was low — [*the opt-out movement is strong in Suffolk County*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/11/nyregion/shelter-island-ferries.html).

In spring 2019, Greenport High School’s graduation rate was 59 percent, compared with a statewide rate of 83 percent.

The Commute

The 95-mile drive from Greenport to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel takes about two hours, depending on traffic. On the Long Island Rail Road, the trip takes about three and a half hours; two eastbound and four westbound trains stop in Greenport daily. The Hampton Jitney bus stops several times a day in Greenport, depending on the season. The ferry from Greenport Harbor to Shelter Island runs continuously from 5:15 a.m. to midnight.

The History

Religious life has long been part of the fabric of Greenport, and as congregations flourished and then dwindled, churches were built and then closed or sold and revived by other denominations, according to “Greenport,” by David S. Corwin and Gail F. Horton. Beginning in the 1830s, as the village prospered from whaling and shipbuilding, newcomers began arriving from around the world to find work on the docks, in brickyards and on the railroad. As they settled in, they established their own houses of worship. The cornerstone for the Reform synagogue was placed in 1903. The Clinton Memorial AME Zion Church was established in the 1920s by Black families, some of whom had come to Greenport [*to find work opening oysters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/11/nyregion/shelter-island-ferries.html). In June 2020, the church’s pastor, the Rev. Natalie R. Wimberly, spoke as [*hundreds attended a vigil there for George Floyd*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/11/nyregion/shelter-island-ferries.html).

For weekly email updates on residential real estate news, [*sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/11/nyregion/shelter-island-ferries.html). Follow us on Twitter: [*@nytrealestate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/11/nyregion/shelter-island-ferries.html).

PHOTO: Stirling Square, a festive setting for nightlife in Greenport, N.Y., has restaurants, bars and a pizzeria. The village has been a longtime hub for weekenders and vacationers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC STRIFFLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 17, 2020

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[***A Wine Sentinel Stands Down***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60VG-N2Y1-JBG3-653K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Eric Asimov

**Body**

Joseph DeLissio, ''a blue-collar kid in a white-collar job,'' saw the rise of American wine culture and put together an ever-changing, world-class list.

Joseph DeLissio never felt called to become a master sommelier. He didn't post Instagram photos of himself posing with cult wines. He didn't try to make his own wine, start an import company or initiate a podcast, all standard activities for 21st-century sommeliers.

For 43 years, he just did his job. At least he had a great view.

Until last month, Mr. DeLissio, 65, was wine director of the River Café, the glassy, glittery barge restaurant moored on the Brooklyn waterfront. The Brooklyn Bridge soars overhead, and the majestic skyline of Lower Manhattan dazzles from across the water.

Every year thousands of diners from around the world arrived to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and business deals. Some came simply to take in the view. Many enjoyed a few of the bottles Mr. DeLissio carefully accumulated over his many years overseeing the comprehensive wine list.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, as the restaurant industry sinks into an alarming unknown, Mr. DeLissio decided earlier this summer that he had had enough. It was time to retire.

After putting the wine program in shape for the River Café to reopen for outdoor dining in July, he turned in his keys in mid-August.

''I was heading in this direction -- 43 years is a long time, but the pandemic certainly pushed it,'' he said. ''Like much of the industry, I lost my health care. A horrible thing has happened, but it's the best time for me to go.''

Joey D., as he is widely known in the wine world, was the dean of New York City sommeliers. In an industry where stability is rare, he never felt the need to find something better or different, or even to call much attention to himself.

Since he was hired in 1977, the city has risen from the depths of financial ruin to an almost arrogant prosperity. Stick-figure towers and needle-nose high-rises now lay claim to the skyline, and everybody with money is a wine collector.

From his post, Mr. DeLissio has seen New York stunned by 9/11, rocked by the 2008 financial meltdown, washed over by Hurricane Sandy and closed down by the coronavirus. Until now, it has always bounced back.

He also helped set in motion the rise of American wine culture. When he joined the River Café shortly after it opened, he said, the wine list included just 12 bottles. Spirits made up 90 percent of bar sales. Now, wine dominates sales, and the list offers roughly 800 choices, pruned from a peak of 1,150 bottles before Sandy.

Back in the mid-1970s, few restaurants beyond fancy French places employed sommeliers. Mr. DeLissio's title at first was beverage manager.

''The term 'wine director' hardly existed,'' Mr. DeLissio said. ''Kevin Zraly might have been the first with that title.''

Mr. Zraly was part of the team at Windows on the World, which opened atop the north tower of the World Trade Center a year before the River Café, in 1976. It was the beginning of a revolution in American dining, paralleled by rising consumption of wine and a boom in the American wine industry.

In the 1960s and early '70s, French wines were synonymous with fine dining. Italian restaurants offered Chianti in straw bottles. The California wine industry still produced mostly cheap jugs and fortified wines.

But, as Mr. DeLissio recalled, restaurants like Windows, the River Café, the Four Seasons and Sparks Steak House were making an effort to feature California wines from emerging producers like Robert Mondavi, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Chateau Montelena and Heitz Cellar.

Mr. DeLissio was right there in the thick of it, traveling to California to meet and taste with producers, getting to know Napa Valley titans like Mr. Mondavi, Joe Heitz and André Tchelistcheff, a legendary Napa winemaker and consultant.

''It was very unusual back then for anybody from a top New York restaurant to come to visit,'' Mr. DeLissio said. ''I'm 24 years old, and I'm tasting wine with André Tchelistcheff. The people running the industry were farmers, before the big corporations bought the properties and turned Napa into a mini-Disney World.''

That Mr. DeLissio got involved with wine at all was something of a surprise, not least of all to him. He was born in Marine Park, Brooklyn, in November 1954. His father ran a neighborhood bar in Bensonhurst where wine was an afterthought.

''Wine was what my father's friends drank when they went on the wagon,'' he said. ''It wasn't considered drinking.''

Young Joey was a music major at Queensborough Community College and an aspiring rock star who played drums. His funk band, the Starbabies, even had a single, ''Oh Boy,'' that Mr. DeLissio said charted for a couple of weeks.

Nothing came of the music business, and when he needed to get a real job, he turned to his mother, who worked in the office of Michael O'Keeffe, a restaurateur better known as Buzzy, who had just opened the River Café. With experience working after school in his father's bar, Mr. DeLissio was hired to order beverages and, most important, he said, to make sure nothing was stolen. He knew nothing about wine.

''None of us knew much then,'' Mr. O'Keeffe said. ''I used to say to some of the wine salesmen, 'Pick your favorite five reds and five whites,' and I took the common denominators.''

Mr. DeLissio started tasting the wines, and he found himself becoming interested. He took a wine class from Mr. Zraly, who was a great educator as well as a wine director.

''I think that was the point where I changed a job into a career,'' Mr. DeLissio said.

For Mr. O'Keeffe, Mr. DeLissio's interest was a godsend. ''He picked it up so quickly, I didn't have to do anything,'' Mr. O'Keeffe said. ''I just let Joey go. He was always on target. I could just relax.''

That was fine with Mr. DeLissio. ''Once I got to the point where he trusted me, he left me alone,'' he said. ''Creative freedom is really important to me. I got to evolve the wine program, and that kept it fresh for me.''

His early interest in California wine was spurred on by the excellent 1974 vintage, which came in the middle of a series of particularly bad vintages for French wines.

''We were the first restaurant to carry Jordan, Dominus, Dunn, Opus One, Screaming Eagle,'' Mr. DeLissio said. ''I made my bones on California, that's how everybody knew me.''

The River Café was also developing as a food destination. Its early chefs included Larry Forgione, Charles Palmer, David Burke, Rick Moonen and Rick Laakkonen, all of whom later achieved renown.

''I liked working with people like that,'' Mr. DeLissio said. ''It really was an exciting time,''

Tastes and the American wine industry changed, and so did the River Café wine list. Mr. DeLissio continued to buy high-end California wines, but as they were getting more powerful and alcoholic in the 1990s, he turned more toward European wines, building excellent selections of Burgundy and Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

He fell in love with Spanish wines, and developed a personal passion for Madeira, the Portuguese fortified wine, putting together an extraordinary collection of old and rare bottles.

''Madeira is almost like a conversation,'' Mr. DeLissio told me in 2007. ''It's the most thoughtful wine there is.''

Of the California cult cabernets that he collected, he said: ''We were the first to put those on, and maybe the first to take them off. The wine list used to be 80 percent California, and now maybe it's 25 percent.''

He reaffirmed his assessments after Hurricane Sandy, which poured seawater through the restaurant, destroying the kitchen, the electrical system, a new Steinway grand piano and gushing through the wine storage room on the dining-room level, ruining a significant portion of the 10,000-bottle collection.

Some were damaged on the outside, rendering them unsellable. But they were still drinkable, which gave Mr. DeLissio a chance to taste many precious California bottles.

''Quite often, the most expensive, the most allocated, the most highly rated wines were just not worth it,'' he said in 2014. ''It took Sandy to make me say, 'Man, what was I thinking?'''

Through it all, Mr. DeLissio, lean and angular, has remained at his post, overseeing the cellar and list. As sommeliers became superstars, developing a cliquish and competitive New York culture, he preferred to keep his distance.

''Joey marches to his own tune, always,'' said Daniel Johnnes, who for years was the wine director at Montrachet in TriBeCa and later for the Daniel Boulud group of restaurants. ''He was never dragged into the politics of it. He's bought to his own taste and done his own thing.''

For years, Mr. DeLissio has lived in Bay Street Landing on Staten Island, taking the ferry to work and back. He has been divorced for 20 years, and has three grown children -- Krista, Joseph and Julia -- and a 3-year-old grandson, Julian.

''I always considered myself a blue-collar kid in a white-collar job,'' he said. ''I'm still a ***working-class*** kid.''

Though he is retired, he has no plans to stop working. For years, Mr. DeLissio has nursed an ambition to write screenplays. He has finished two of them -- one, he said, is about a failed baseball player who visits the Hall of Fame and winds up snowed in with a claustrophobic escort -- and is working on a third.

''I've been a closet screenwriter,'' he said. ''Maybe it's time to come out of the closet.''

As he looks back on his 43 years, a few things stick out: the camaraderie of the wine community in the 1980s, before it grew; watching diners order a second bottle of something they loved; the 25th anniversary of the River Café, when all the chefs came back to cook together.

Most of all, he'll remember looking out the window.

''Having a glass of something, sitting at the bar when the weather was horrible,'' he said. ''Watching a violent snowstorm or the ice floating down the river, that was magical.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/dining/drinks/river-cafe-wine-joseph-delissio.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/dining/drinks/river-cafe-wine-joseph-delissio.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: After 43 years, Joseph DeLissio retired as wine director at the River Café in Brooklyn last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SEPTEMBER DAWN BOTTOMS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (D1)

Top, Joseph DeLissio on the deck of the River Café in 1986. Above left, Mr. DeLissio in 1984, when he worked the harvest at Stags Leap Wine Cellars in California. Above right, at the River Café last month. When Mr. DeLissio began working there, the wine list had just 12 choices. It now features about 800. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSEPH DeLISSIO

SEPTEMBER DAWN BOTTOMS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (D7)

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 4

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**Body**

Walk a mile in a Brooklynite's shoes, whether on brownstone-lined blocks or the streets filled with vinyl-sided houses, and you're bound to notice address plates crowded with fractions. On Norman Avenue in Greenpoint, you'll find three in one short stretch: 68½, 72½ and 78½.

When hailing an Uber, repeating street names might give you pause: Are you going to Washington Street in Dumbo or Washington Avenue in Clinton Hill?

Today's Brooklyn map is a relic of a huge 19th-century project to renumber every building and rename dozens of streets -- an example of how decisions made by bureaucrats can leave an imprint on urban life for decades or even centuries.

Suddenly, A Tale of One City

Brooklyn experienced unprecedented growth in the mid-1800s, years before Brooklyn became a borough of New York City, much of it driven by immigration: Irish fleeing famine; Germans fleeing political chaos. And when the City of Brooklyn annexed Williamsburg, Bushwick and Greenpoint -- called the ''Eastern District'' -- in 1855, it became the third-largest city in the country.

That growth, paired with a city government that wasn't adept at urban planning, led to incoherent street numbering schemes, and repeated names and numbers across Kings County. South Fourth Street had three buildings numbered 42, while Furman Street reportedly had no fewer than four No. 1s. Commuters would find one block called a street and the next an avenue for no discernible reason. Five presidents -- Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe -- saw double duty.

The confusion about both street names and numbers was far from comical, as basic government services like mail delivery and police response suffered. The lack of attention and haphazard planning, which occurred disproportionately in poor areas, often Black and Irish neighborhoods, reflected who counted and who didn't.

But as Brooklyn grew, even well-planned areas and the city's business interests were affected by the duplications. City officials tried to solve these problems, but in the end, planners only managed to partly rationalize the system. The frustration was chronicled by the press under a kind of Victorian-era hashtag: ''Renumbering the Streets.''

The streets saga stands as one of the few attempts in New York's history to make such a sweeping change to the city's layout -- one that would eventually affect nearly every Brooklyn resident.

Haphazard Numbering:Forty-Four Duplicate Streets

George T. Lain was 23 when he took over publishing the Brooklyn City Directory in 1867. Lain & Company's alphabetical guide listed residents' names, addresses and occupations, a task that grew increasingly difficult the bigger and more disorganized the city became.

Mr. Lain inherited the problem of duplicate names and numbers from his father, Jonathan, whose prefaces to early 1860s directories contained fiery admonitions against the evils of haphazard numbering.

In 1868, with his penchant for numerical precision, Mr. Lain informed readers of The Brooklyn Daily Eagle newspaper that there were ''forty-four instances where the streets have duplicate names; five cases where the street name occurs three times; and three instances where the same name for a street occurs four times.''

Where the Streets Have No Number

What Mr. Lain didn't mention was that in predominantly Black neighborhoods, street numbers sometimes didn't even exist. Maps of the Black community of Weeksville, for example, showed ''No official numbers'' for important thoroughfares like Hunterfly Road, and the areas often weren't included in city directories.

All in all, by the 1860s, Brooklyn residents were at a breaking point.

A Scalding Hot Disaster

On Feb. 7, 1867, The Eagle reported that the police had responded to a complaint that Mrs. Chadwick of 5 Willow Street had thrown scalding water on the young child of Mrs. Connor, her neighbor.

Four days later, The Eagle published a letter from Nicholas Espenscheid, the owner of a hat store in Manhattan, who wrote that he lived at 5 Willow Street and that no such incident had happened.

Mr. Espenscheid suggested that 5 Willow Place was the scene of disorder: ''Please inform those who do not know that No. 5 Willow Street and No. 5 Willow Place are not in the same neighborhood.''

It appeared that the well-to-do merchant was annoyed about having his house in the tony end of Brooklyn Heights mistaken for one in the ***working-class*** end.

Two days later, The Eagle published another letter, this one from M. Whelan of 5 Willow Place, who wrote, ''relative to the child scalding affray which you say occurred at No. 5 Willow Place, which is not the case.''

In fact, the Eagle's story was correct. The scalding incident did occur at 5 Willow Street. The problem, which the editor could explain but not fix, was that two houses were designated as 5 Willow Street: one just south of Brooklyn Heights, where the incident occurred, and the other farther north in Brooklyn Heights, where Mr. Espenscheid lived.

Bad Numbers Were Bad For Business

In 1865, Thomas Shearman, a lumberyard owner in South Brooklyn (the neighborhood name used at the time for the area south of Brooklyn Heights), wrote to The Eagle complaining about similar confusions. He said his house, 299 Hicks Street, had the same number as another building on Hicks Street just a few blocks away.

''The annoyance to visitors, expressmen and letter carriers is some,'' Mr. Shearman wrote, ''leaving my own feelings out of the question.''

Left unsaid, but perhaps a bigger cause of dismay than errant deliveries, was that the other No. 299 was the home of John Bracken's liquor saloon, which had a boarding house on its upper floors that catered to sailors and dockworkers.

For Mr. Lain, the directory compiler, his reputation was tied to a useful guide, which depended on accurate addresses.

Bad numbers were bad for business.

A 'Large Force of Men' Of Dubious Utility

By the time Mr. Lain had written a series of letters to the editors of various local papers in the late 1860s, exhorting Brooklyn to fix the addresses, political leaders were beginning to act.

Hugh McLaughlin, Brooklyn's leading local legislator, set up the Renumbering Committee of Brooklyn's Common Council in 1865. It, in turn, organized a bureau for Renaming and Renumbering Streets, which was tasked with devising and executing a plan to eliminate duplicate street names and assign unique building and lot numbers.

''Although we have the finest city in the world,'' Mr. McLaughlin said, ''its streets are the worst arranged and numbered of any in the country.''

Mr. McLaughlin had a reputation for cronyism, however, and the renumbering bureau reportedly squandered its initial $10,000 budget by outfitting its office with expensive furniture and adding to the payroll a ''large force of men'' of dubious utility, according to The Eagle.

Accomplished Little, Then Disbanded

The bureau accomplished little before being disbanded just under a year later, in 1866, but it did manage to propose several numbering schemes. However, Mayor Martin Kalbfleisch of Brooklyn vetoed each proposal because he thought Mr. McLaughlin was spending too much money.

In The Eagle, Mr. Lain urged the city to ''let the committee go on, whether the grumblers like or dislike it.''

Then, in 1869, the Renumbering Committee came up with a plan to renumber each block in ascending order, eliminate duplicate numbers and fractional numbers, and reserve an adequate store of numbers for empty lots. The plan was simple in theory but an enormous undertaking: Almost every building would see its number change.

The committee also finalized a list of 75 streets whose names would change.

The city hired Richard Toombs, a surveyor, to create a series of maps that would show every block in Brooklyn with the new numbers and names.

The Big Day Arrives:Toombs the Enumerator

The 1870 rollout of the numbering scheme was no less chaotic than the years spent complaining, arguing, planning and backtracking.

City officials initially made no announcement about when or how renumbering would take place, but a trickle of news reports that spring suggested implementation was imminent. Some reports referred to a July 4 deadline, yet daily news bulletins on the renumbering made clear that only a few residents had complied by then.

Part of the problem was that the plan required each building owner to go to City Hall (now Borough Hall) with a tax bill and obtain the new number by finding it on the maps made by Mr. Toombs. The tax assessors, however, wanted nothing to do with the process, so the city set up Mr. Toombs himself in the tax office in City Hall to distribute the numbers.

The city eventually placed ads explaining the process in local papers in the second half of July. The press reported status updates weekly from Mr. Toombs on how many residents had obtained new numbers, giving ''Toombs the Enumerator'' more than his 15 minutes of fame as the public face of the renumbering affair.

John Stanton, writing under the pen name ''Corry O'Lanus'' in The Eagle, had dryly suggested two years earlier that Brooklyn should roll out the new addresses by notifying the public ''to bring their front doors up to the City Hall and have the numbers chalked on them.''

Little did Mr. Stanton know that his satire was not much more ridiculous than the reality. Forcing tens of thousands of building owners to visit one small office in City Hall caused long lines down the block for much of July.

Complaints poured into the papers throughout the summer: the lines were too long; the office's employees were too surly.

With compliance lagging, the city moved the deadline to Oct. 1. Yet the process lingered into the spring of 1871, when Mr. Lain published the first version of his Brooklyn City Directory containing the new building numbers.

Seemingly, the only Brooklynites happy with the renumbering were the silver engravers, who promptly took out ads hawking new number plates and the exchange of old ones.

21st-Century Destiny:Toombs Maps Lost!

This piece of Brooklyn's history was not well recorded, and without any collective memory of the process, geohistorians and homeowners alike are often vexed when tracing building histories.

The Toombs maps -- the Rosetta Stone to link the previous numbers to the current numbers -- appear to have been lost. Today, there is no clear record of every pre-1870 building number.

About five years ago, the owner of 307 Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights painted the name ''Creighton'' on the house's transom. The signage commemorates James Creighton, the star pitcher of Brooklyn's Excelsior Base Ball Club in the 1860s, who was known for his fast-pitch technique.

Mr. Creighton's style was so unorthodox that some baseball aficionados believe it caused the abdominal hernia that suddenly killed him in 1862 at age 21. Newspapers widely covered the story of his death in his home, at 307 Henry Street, just four days after the injury.

The problem with the transom painting is that Mr. Creighton did not die in the Brooklyn Heights house, but in a house several blocks away in Cobble Hill. Today, Mr. Creighton's former house is No. 461; the address was changed in 1870.

And because Brooklyn never really solved the problem of how to reserve enough whole-number addresses on each block to accommodate future construction, fractional numbers returned on many streets after the renumbering. Today, Brooklyn has the most addresses that end in ''A'' or ''½'' of New York City's five boroughs, according to PLUTO, the city's land use and geographic database.

Brooklyn's new 19th-century names and numbers also didn't change the 20th-century destiny of some of its neighborhoods. Weeksville, which never had all of its streets numbered, faded into the cityscape of Crown Heights until some of its buildings were rediscovered in the 1960s.

Then Came Moses.Wiped Off the Map!

Consider the ''other'' Willow Street of Mr. Espenscheid's ire. The two-block road near the waterfront docks became Emmett Street in 1870. Then, 80 years later, it met a force who remade the map more than anyone in the 19th century.

Around 1950, the master planner Robert Moses wiped tiny Emmett Street off the map to make way for his Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.Jeremy Lechtzin writes about Brooklyn's buildings and streets. His house was renumbered to 58, from 48, in 1870.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/28/nyregion/14brooklyn-streets-print.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/28/nyregion/14brooklyn-streets-print.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ferry House, foot of Atlantic Street (now Avenue) in 1850. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE, VIA MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK)

A detail from an 1852 Brooklyn map. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY) (MB4)

A bird's-eye view of the city in 1859. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES MAGNUS & CO., VIA NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY)

Above, Brooklyn longshoreman and horse-drawn wagons, circa 1872-87. On the cover, from top: Walt Whitman's carpenter shop on Cumberland Street in 1852

a man walking in Brooklyn, circa 1872-1887

Fulton Street in 1872. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE BRADFORD BRAINERD, VIA BROOKLYN MUSEUM -- BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY, CENTER FOR BROOKLYN HISTORY) (MB4-MB5)

Fractions returned on many streets after the renumbering. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

A shop in Weeksville, Brooklyn, circa 1900. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER A. MOORE, VIA WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER) (MB5)

In 1867, The Brooklyn Daily Eagle reported that a dire occurrence happened at 5 Willow Street, but which 5 Willow Street? Or was it Willow Place? (PHOTOGRAPH BY BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE, VIA BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY)

From top, Willow Street and Willow Place in Brooklyn Heights. There was also a Willow Street in Cobble Hill. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM PERRIS, VIA NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY)

Street cleaners on cobblestones, circa 1872-87.

Washington Street at the waterfront, 1870s. (MB6)

At Brooklyn City Hall, circa 1872-87.

A view of the Brooklyn Bridge in Brooklyn Heights.

Martin Kalbfleisch, 1860s mayor of Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEORGE BRADFORD BRAINERD, VIA BROOKLYN MUSEUM -- BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY, CENTER FOR BROOKLYN HISTORY

FAR RIGHT, MATHEW BRADY, VIA NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY M. DRIPPS, VIA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS) (MB6-MB7)

George T. Lain, publisher of the Brooklyn City Directory. His reputation was tied to a useful guide, which depended on accurate addresses. He wrote letters to editors, exhorting the city to fix the problem. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA CENTER FOR BROOKLYN HISTORY, BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY)

Silver engravers took out ads hawking new number plates and the exchange of old ones. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BROOKLYN DAILY TIMES, VIA BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY) (MB7)

The transom of 307 Henry Street honors the pitcher James Creighton, third from left, of the Excelsiors. But he died at a different 307 Henry Street. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY) (MB8)

Major construction outside a business in Williamsburg, 1867. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA CENTER FOR BROOKLYN HISTORY, BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY)

In Greenpoint, 72½ Norman Avenue. (MB8-MB9)

The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway wiped out Emmett Street. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

This used to be Emmett Street, at Amity Street. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VIA BROOKLYN MUSEUM)

Basic government services like mail delivery suffered in the confusion over street names and numbers in Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE BRADFORD BRAINERD, VIA BROOKLYN MUSEUM -- BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY, CENTER FOR BROOKLYN HISTORY) (MB9)

**Load-Date:** February 14, 2021

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[***Jill Biden Is a Teacher. And She’s Not About to Change That.; In Her words***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61GG-MG71-JBG3-646F-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Alisha Haridasani Gupta

**Highlight:** In choosing to continue teaching at a community college, Dr. Biden is breaking with precedent and modernizing the persistently anachronistic first lady role.

**Body**

In choosing to continue teaching at a community college, Dr. Biden is breaking with precedent and modernizing the persistently anachronistic first lady role.

“The expectations of first lady are always at least a generation behind.”

— Katherine Jellison, history professor at Ohio University

In Her Words is available as a newsletter. [*Sign up here to get it delivered to your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words).

Eleanor Roosevelt never wanted to be first lady. For her husband, of course, she was “glad” that he was elected president of the United States in 1932. But for herself, not so much.

She knew that when she moved into the White House in a few months she would have to give up her teaching job. “I’ve liked teaching more than anything else I’ve ever done,” she told an [*Associated Press reporter*](https://www.amazon.com/Eleanor-Roosevelt-Reluctant-First-Lady-ebook/dp/B088T8RC11/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&amp;qid=&amp;sr=). “But it’s got to go,” she added, a decision she hated making.

Almost nine decades later, [*Jill Biden, also a teacher*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/07/us/politics/jill-biden-teaching.html) preparing for her life in the White House, has indicated she will make a very different choice.

Dr. Biden, who started her career in the 1970s, has worked as an English teacher at an adolescent psychiatric hospital, high schools and community colleges, while earning two master’s degrees and a doctorate in education along the way.

She didn’t quit teaching when her husband served as vice president, returning to the classroom just days after the inauguration. She juggled her two worlds by [*grading papers on Air Force Two*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZDfztfau9A) or bringing a change of clothes to work so that she could “[*leave from the campus straight to a State Dinner*](https://wjla.com/news/local/will-dr-jill-biden-teach-at-nova-community-college-as-first-lady).” When students asked if she was married to the vice president, she would deflect palace intrigue by simply saying [*she was one of his relatives*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/01/us/politics/joe-jill-biden-2020.html).

Come January, when her husband’s job title changes, hers will stay the same: Unlike every other first lady in American history, she has said she will keep her full-time job.

“I’m going to continue to teach,” she said in an interview on “CBS Sunday Morning” in August. “It’s important — I want people to value teachers.”

That Dr. Biden’s career ambitions, beyond the formal duties of a first lady, are of note is a telling sign of how unrepresentative first families have become, a far cry from the reality of many American families.

Since at least the late 1950s, presidential families — at least while occupying the White House — have reflected the old-school nuclear family of the “Leave It to Beaver” sitcom variety: a heterosexual couple, married, with children; husband in the public sphere, bringing home an income; a perfectly coifed mother in the domestic sphere, managing everything from meal planning to Christmas decorations.

Through the ’50s and ’60s, this model mirrored a majority of American households and reflected the country’s broad attitudes at the time toward marriage, class and traditional gender roles.

But in the 1970s and ’80s, a combination of the women’s movement and declining wages made single-income households both impractical and undesirable.

“You had the beginnings of the unraveling of the economic prosperity of the 1950s, and it became harder and harder to get that American dream,” said Stephanie Coontz, social historian at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash. “Many women were joining the work force, some of them because they felt so trapped at home by this monolithic idea of what a good family is, and some because they had to.”

Except the first ladies. Even those who had carved out their own careers and identities before their husbands were elected president had to contort themselves to fit into a vintage first lady mold.

The ‘folksy’ first lady

“The title ‘first lady’ is a social title. It’s simply about being the first lady of society,” said Lisa Kathleen Graddy, curator of the National Museum of American History’s first ladies collections. The role came about in the 19th century when the White House needed a hostess to entertain guests, Ms. Graddy explained, and back then, that wasn’t necessarily the job of the president’s wife. The hostess role was more frequently occupied by other people, like daughters, daughters-in-law, or, in the case of President James Buchanan, the only American president never to marry, his [*young niece*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/first-ladies/harriet-lane/).

The tide really turned in the 1950s with Mamie Eisenhower, who was praised in the press as a “happy home manager,” known for entertaining large groups, writes Betty Boyd Caroli in her book “First Ladies: The Ever-Changing Role, From Martha Washington to Melania Trump.”

She was seen as “familiar and folksy as the woman next door” and also came to be known for staying in bed for most of the day in “her pink bed jacket” and “a pink ribbon holding back her hair” (some have noted that she was bedridden in part because of poor health). Her name became forever associated with a hairstyle (the Mamie bangs) and a recipe for chocolate fudge.

At the time, when a wife’s role was broadly seen as “secondary and supportive,” Mrs. Eisenhower was the perfect representation of the prevalent “model of femininity,” Ms. Caroli writes.

Only 18 percent of American children were born into families in which both parents were employed back then, said Ms. Coontz, who is also author of “American Families: A Multicultural Reader,” and more than half of Americans disapproved of married women who worked if their husbands were capable of supporting them, according to [*a Gallup survey*](https://news.gallup.com/vault/214328/gallup-vault-sea-change-support-working-women.aspx).

But as the feminist movement started to take off in the 1960s, the Mamie model began to feel outdated, and successive first ladies slowly pushed the boundaries of their roles.

Jacqueline Kennedy, known as a fashionable tastemaker, decided to redecorate (though she hated that term) the White House so it could become “a showcase of American art and history.” She curated antiques and art collections and gave tours of the White House on national television. She was the original first lady to have a formal project, though it still fell squarely in the domestic sphere.

“It is now quite all right for a woman to be a bit brainy or cultured,” declared [*a 1962 New York Times article*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1962/01/20/82036567.html?pageNumber=14) about the Kennedys, when referring to Mrs. Kennedy in particular. “As long as she tempers her intelligence with a ‘t’rific’ girlish rhetoric.”

Claudia Alta “Lady Bird” Johnson took the role a step further with her [*campaign to beautify American cities and clean up the environment*](https://www.pbs.org/ladybird/shattereddreams/shattereddreams_report.html), which made her the first to work on a sustained public and political cause, closely coordinating her efforts with the West Wing and Congress. Her work set up the expectation for her successors to follow suit, Ms. Graddy said.

A split emerges

From the ’70s onward, as women gained more freedoms, graduated from college at higher rates, delayed marriage and childbirth, Americans grew increasingly comfortable with the idea of women working outside the home and the country has reached a point where [*more women were holding payroll jobs than men*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/21/upshot/womens-gains-in-the-work-force-conceal-a-problem.html) at the start of the year and [*77 percent of mothers*](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/famee.pdf) were working or looking for work in 2019.

But that comfort never seemed to extend to the White House; the anachronistic expectation of a first lady who picked out the right china and supported her husband, all while wearing pearls and heels, continued to be foisted onto increasingly modern women.

“The expectations of first lady are always at least a generation behind,” said Katherine Jellison, a history professor at Ohio University who has researched and focused on first ladies. “I mean, the first first lady to wear pants in public was Pat Nixon in the 1970s. That’s just one example of how the expectations of the women fulfilling this role have lagged.”

Mrs. Roosevelt, after giving up teaching, continued writing for a magazine but donated all of her income to organizations like the Red Cross to quell criticism.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, who at 26 served as a lawyer for the Watergate committee and eventually went on to become a corporate litigator earning a six-figure income, nevertheless felt compelled to emphasize her domesticity and soften her image to help her husband’s presidential campaign, Ms. Caroli writes. She participated in a pre-election [*cookie bake-off against Barbara Bush*](https://qz.com/762881/the-blatantly-sexist-cookie-bake-off-that-has-haunted-hillary-clinton-for-two-decades-is-back/) and, for her first in-depth interview as first lady, spoke with [*a New York Times food critic*](https://www.nytimes.com/1993/02/02/us/hillary-clinton-s-new-home-broccoli-s-in-smoking-s-out.html) about the White House menu (it included more broccoli and less French food than prior administrations).

Mrs. Clinton initially tried to take the first lady’s role into an unprecedented space by working directly with her husband on a crucial policy initiative as the head of a task force on health care reform, but the fallout — mainly in the media and among aides — forced her to revert to a safe and “traditional first lady mode” for the rest of her time in the White House, Ms. Caroli writes. Mrs. Clinton wrote books about raising children and family recipes, stood by her husband through his scandalous second term and advocated women’s rights around the world.

Her immediate successors may or may not have viewed her experience as a cautionary tale, but Laura Bush and Michelle Obama chose to steer clear of controversial, partisan, inside-the-Beltway projects during their time in the White House.

At a time of heightened divisions in Washington and a war abroad, Mrs. Bush advocated literacy and education (“There’s nothing political about American literature,” she [*told The New York Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/07/us/white-house-letter-quietly-the-first-lady-builds-a-literary-room-of-her-own.html)).

Mrs. Obama, a Harvard-educated lawyer who worked as a hospital executive before moving to Washington, got a taste early on during her husband’s campaign of the heightened, racially charged scrutiny that she, as the country’s first Black first lady, would experience. She was called “angry,” “abrasive” and “[*emasculating*](https://www.mercurynews.com/2007/04/28/michelle-obamas-just-a-bit-too-quick-to-deflate-hype/).” Her sizable, six-figure salary as a top executive at the University of Chicago Hospitals was [*questioned and seen as suspect*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/03/10/the-other-obama).

“She got so much backlash from some quarters when she did unconventional things, and some of that criticism was in such racialized terms,” Ms. Jellison said. “So she had to play up some of those traditional factors in order to gain acceptance. She had to play it safer.”

When she moved to the fishbowl that is the White House, she carefully carved out a space for herself that was politically neutral, focusing on military families and childhood obesity.

“Who can question that healthful living is a good thing?” [*Politico wrote at the time*](https://www.politico.com/story/2009/09/michelle-obama-turns-to-health-care-027258).

By the time she left the White House, she was one of the most popular political figures in recent memory, with a clean reputation of rising above the mudslinging.

The divergence between the gendered expectation around what a first lady ought to be and the actual reality of what women’s lives are dovetails with the [*rise of the conservative religious right*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/06/obituaries/phyllis-schlafly-conservative-leader-and-foe-of-era-dies-at-92.html) that fiercely opposed the feminist cultural changes of the 1970s and ’80s. Large pockets of American voters still aspired to so-called traditional family values — often equating divorce, single motherhood and lower marriage rates with increased crime — and seemed to look for that in their leaders.

Americans have voted for a divorced president only twice — Ronald Reagan in 1980 and Donald Trump in 2016 — and it isn’t a coincidence that both have hewed closely to the socially conservative beliefs of [*right-wing, Christian voters*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDIueebd12M) and upheld [*patriarchal notions of family with traditional gender roles*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/30/upshot/trump-biden-masculinity-fatherhood.html) (“I’ll supply the funds and she’ll take care of the kids,” Mr. Trump said of his wife, in [*a 2005 interview*](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/andrewkaczynski/donald-trump-thinks-men-who-change-diapers-are-acting-like-t)).

Perhaps by extension, Melania Trump, who engaged in such few minimal public appearances during her husband’s term that there was early speculation that Mr. Trump’s daughter [*Ivanka might occupy the first lady role*](https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/12/let-ivanka-trump-be-first-lady-214537), is seen by experts to have snapped back to a more traditional model of first lady that predates even the Mamie model.

“She reminded me of Mrs. Truman,” who was famously private and shy and spent much of her time as first lady playing bridge back in her hometown in Independence, Missouri, Ms. Jellison said.

And now, there’s Dr. Biden, whose decision to keep working as a community college professor will finally begin to close the gaping divide between the White House and working American women, creating her own, potentially enduring model of first lady.

“We have this opportunity with Jill Biden to have a first lady who is going to live the life that most American women do,” Ms. Jellison said.

“It’s another way the Bidens are seen as reaching out to the ***working class***.”

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PHOTO: Jill Biden at a drive-in rally for her husband on the eve of Election Day in November. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Erin Schaff/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***2016 Nonvoters, a Key Prize for Biden and Trump, Turn Out in Droves***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:615W-PJR1-JBG3-6196-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

In Pennsylvania and other battlegrounds, both parties are succeeding in coaxing infrequent voters off the sidelines. The all-important question is who does it better.

[Follow our [*live Trump vs Biden 2020 election updates and analysis.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election)]

GREENSBURG, Pa. — At 32, Ryan Walsh has never voted in a presidential election. He didn’t identify with either party before this year. But in the spring, he registered as a Republican, and he plans to cast a ballot in person on Tuesday for [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election).

“I’m petrified of Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi getting power and doing all this stuff that’s going to totally destroy the economy,” said Mr. Walsh, who works for a social services agency of state government.

He cited a string of proposals that trouble him — broad tax increases, the Green New Deal, “Medicare for all” — that Mr. Biden has said he opposes. Mr. Walsh does not believe him.

Voters who didn’t show up in 2016 are Mr. Trump’s “secret weapon,” said Mr. Walsh, who lives outside Pittsburgh and works in Westmoreland County, an exurb where the Trump campaign is indeed hoping to expand its margin compared with 2016. Mr. Walsh called [*polls showing the president trailing*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election) “a joke,” adding, “He will do nothing but gain in the areas he won last time.”

With recent electoral history and current polls suggesting that Democrats are likely to make gains in the vote-rich suburbs nearly everywhere, Mr. Trump’s path to re-election has always required expanding his support in rural and exurban counties in [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election), as well as in other industrial states where he squeezed out victories in 2016.

Now that early voting is underway, the question of whether he can increase that support is no longer academic. Mr. Trump is attracting tens of thousands of voters like Mr. Walsh who sat out 2016 in Pennsylvania. Around 24 percent of the 424,000 registered Republicans who have cast early mail-in votes in the state did not vote four years ago, [*according to TargetSmart*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election), a Democratic elections data firm.

But before the Trump campaign takes a victory lap, [*the same data analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election)shows that in Pennsylvania — where at least 1.9 million voters had returned ballots as of Thursday — Democrats are keeping pace. About one in four of the 1.3 million registered Democrats who have voted did not vote in 2016.

Both parties are succeeding in one of their chief goals this year: to motivate large numbers of infrequent voters or nonvoters to come off the sidelines for what supporters of both nominees call the most crucial election of a lifetime. It was a goal that eluded Senator Bernie Sanders during the Democratic primary, but with Democrats united, Mr. Biden is pulling it off. And Mr. Trump is answering critics who said his appeal was limited to those in his base who voted for him four years ago.

The trends playing out in Pennsylvania are seen across 14 battleground states, where more than [*10 million people*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election) who didn’t vote in 2016 have already cast ballots this year, making up 25 percent of the early vote in those states.

“The fact that one in four didn’t vote in 2016 suggests there’s a whole lot of these turnout targets who didn’t come out before, who have been motivated to come out,” said Tom Bonier, the chief executive of TargetSmart.

So far, the data shows that more Democratic-leaning voters who didn’t cast ballots in 2016 are turning out than Republican-leaning voters. “Nationally, Democrats have a modeled advantage of 14.5 percent with those non-2016 voters,” Mr. Bonier said.

But that is partly because Mr. Trump has made mail-in ballots toxic to many of his supporters through his frequent ([*and unfounded*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election)) claims that mail voting is ripe for fraud. Trump supporters are expected to dominate in-person voting on Election Day in some battleground states. The current Democratic advantage with non-2016 voters could even out by Election Day.

Remarkably, the surge of voters who did not vote four years ago is not primarily driven by people who have turned 18 since 2016. Nationally, [*the number of early voters this year who are 50 and over and didn’t turn out in 2016*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election), which was 6.4 million as of Thursday, was greater than those under 30, about 4.9 million. All age groups are exhibiting an intense interest in voting.

Geraldine Folk, 82, of Fleetwood, Pa., recently sent in a mail ballot for Mr. Biden, her first presidential vote ever. “I’ve never seen a president like this in all my life, and I went through a lot of presidents,” she said of Mr. Trump.

“He was on with Stahl last night on ‘60 Minutes’ and he was obnoxious and left — he’s not a decent person,” Ms. Folk said of Mr. Trump’s [*bolting from an interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election) with the CBS journalist Lesley Stahl. “I hate the way he’s running this country. It’s just a disgrace.”

Ms. Folk worked as a sewing machine operator in a factory until she was injured in an auto accident. Her husband, who died a dozen years ago, was an electrician in a cement plant. Today she has a partial disability. “If my legs were good, I’d be out there campaigning, and they wouldn’t like what I had to say — I’m a very outspoken woman,” she said. “I think he’s a useless you-know-what.”

TargetSmart’s data is different from a poll. The firm matches every early vote to the name of a person in state databases of registered voters. Although it is impossible to know how a person voted, the voter file unlocks a trove of information, including a voter’s age, race, sex and history of past voting. In states without partisan registration, the firm models voters’ likely party preference based on other information.

Mr. Trump’s 44,000-vote victory in Pennsylvania four years ago, in which he won by less than one percentage point, hinged on places like Westmoreland County, once a blue-collar Democratic stronghold, which the president carried by 31 points, a wider margin than in any of the state’s other populous counties.

The Trump campaign and its allies have pumped resources into expanding that margin. Route 30 into Greensburg, the county seat, features a pro-Trump billboard promising to “Keep Nat Gas and Coal Jobs” and another attacking Mr. Biden as “a totally corrupt politician.”

Brittney Robinson, the Republican National Committee’s state director in Pennsylvania, said the party had made a “huge investment” in data that it has used to “find these people who are likely to support the president who may not have voted for him in 2016” and try to turn them out.

The Biden campaign said that Mr. Trump’s share of voters has not grown even if he is turning out new supporters.

It pointed to internal data that Democratic early voters who didn’t participate in the last presidential election outnumber [*Republican voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election) who didn’t turn out by two to one.

“Our strategy in Pennsylvania has always been to energize, mobilize and turn out our base in Democratic strongholds, expand on Democratic gains in the suburbs and collar counties, and win back voters who gave Trump a shot in 2016 or may have sat out that election,’’ said Brendan McPhillips, the Biden campaign’s state director.

Without the state’s 20 electoral votes, Mr. Trump would have an extremely narrow path to re-election. Mr. Biden has wider options, based on current polling in battleground states.

Despite efforts by the president’s campaign and outside groups to expand his support with the voters most likely to back him — white blue-collar workers — polling shows him trailing his 2016 benchmarks. In the latest [*New York Times/Siena College poll of*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election)Pennsylvania, the president led Mr. Biden among white voters without four-year college degrees by 13 points — a considerable narrowing from his 32-point edge among these voters against Hillary Clinton in 2016, according to exit polls.

Four years ago, polls of congressional districts with large numbers of white ***working-class*** voters were [*a little-noticed*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election) alarm signaling Mrs. Clinton’s vulnerability in the state. Now, public and private polls of those districts in Pennsylvania suggest trouble for Mr. Trump.

A Muhlenberg College [*survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election) in September of the Seventh Congressional District, in the Lehigh Valley, showed Mr. Biden with a seven-point lead over Mr. Trump. Pennsylvania’s districts were redrawn two years ago; Mr. Trump lost the equivalent of the new Seventh District to Mrs. Clinton by one percentage point.

Representative Mike Kelly, a Republican representing the 16th District in northwest Pennsylvania, which includes the city of Erie, boasted to reporters last week of record-high enthusiasm for the president, citing farmers who “take time to paint the sides of their barns” with Mr. Trump’s name, as well as the rising number of newly registered Republicans.

Mr. Kelly pointed to internal polls showing “a lead of 9, 10 percent” for the president in the district.

The problem for Mr. Trump, though, is that he carried the equivalent of the 16th District by twice that much, 20 points, in 2016, according to [*a New York Times analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election).

In Erie County, where Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden have both recently campaigned, Marie Zamiska, 65, cast a mail ballot this year for Mr. Biden, the former vice president. She did not vote four years ago.

“To be honest, in 2016 I didn’t think either candidate would have made a good president, so I chose to abstain,” said Ms. Zamiska, a retired health care consultant. “The last four years have been very painful. He has certainly not brought any unity to the country,” she said of Mr. Trump. “He hasn’t solved any problems other than his own that he feels he can make money on. I certainly don’t want to live through another four years of Trump.”

On the other end of the state, in Allentown, Salena Sanchez is a 2016 nonvoter who is still on the fence about whether she will vote this year.

Registered as a Democrat, Ms. Sanchez, 37, who works the overnight shift in a warehouse, said she leaned Republican these days.

She was all set to vote for Mr. Trump — until the first debate, with [*the president’s constant interrupting*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/04/us/trump-biden-election) and Mr. Biden’s retort of “Shut up, man.”

“About 20 minutes in, I shut it off,” she said. “I was really leaning toward Trump, but with the debate, that’s what turned me away from wanting to vote.”

Ms. Sanchez had to work last week during the final debate, but she plans to catch up with a recording. Depending on what she sees, she said, she will make up her mind about whether to cast a ballot or not.

PHOTOS: Joseph R. Biden Jr. at a campaign event on Friday at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES); President Trump at a rally on Friday at the Oakland County airport in Waterford Township, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Geraldine Folk, 82, of Fleetwood, Pa., voted by mail for Joseph R. Biden Jr..; In Greensburg, the county seat of Westmoreland County, which once was a Democratic stronghold. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14)

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[***The Fear That Is Shaping American Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62CT-2TK1-DXY4-X0R1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** It affects everyone from Joe Manchin to Joe Biden.

**Body**

It affects everyone from Joe Manchin to Joe Biden.

Why is the Republican Party so determined to constrain the franchise?

One answer is provided by the changing demographics of the children in the nation’s public schools, a leading indicator of shifts in the racial and ethnic makeup of the country.

According to the [*National Center for Education Statistics*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/):

The percentage of public school students who were white was 64.8 percent in 1995, and this percentage dropped below 50 percent in 2014 (to 49.5 percent). N.C.E.S. projects that in 2029, white students will make up 43.8 percent of public school enrollment.

The changing racial and ethnic makeup of the schools, something visible to parents and to anyone who walks by at recess, is a leading indicator of the day (in [*roughly 2045*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/)) when non-Hispanic whites of all ages will drop under 50 percent of the U.S. population, soon to be followed by the day when whites become a minority of the electorate (although that will depend on how voters [*self-identify*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) — among other things, data suggests that many mixed-race Americans [*identify as white*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/)).

Hispanics and Asian-Americans are driving the ascendance of America’s minority population, while the Black share of the population will increase by a small amount. [*Pew Research estimates*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) that over the 50-year period from 2015 to 2065, the non-Hispanic white share of the population — as defined by the [*U.S. census*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) — will drop to 46 percent from 62 percent, while the Hispanic share will grow to 24 percent from 18 percent, and the Asian-American share to 14 percent from 6 percent. The Black share will go to 13 percent from 12 percent.

[*Richard Alba*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), a sociologist at the City University of New York, [*and other experts*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) have argued that predictions of a white minority in a little over 20 years have created a false narrative because it fails to account for the numerous second- and third-generation children of interethnic and interracial marriages, many of whom see themselves (and are seen by others) as white.

False or not, the white-minority prediction has become a dominant political narrative — particularly insofar as [*Republicans exploit*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) this characterization — and in the process this framing has become a central element in the worldview of many conservative whites.

How does the expectation of a majority-minority America affect the thinking of white Americans?

[*Maureen Craig*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) at N.Y.U. and [*Jennifer Richeson*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) at Yale reported in their 2018 paper “[*Majority No More?*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) The Influence of Neighborhood Racial Diversity and Salient National Population Changes on Whites’ Perceptions of Racial Discrimination”:

White Americans considering a future in which the white population has declined to less than 50 percent of the national population are more likely to perceive that the societal status of their racial group — in terms of resources or as the “prototypical” American — is under threat, which in turn leads to stronger identification as white, the expression of more negative racial attitudes and emotions, greater opposition to diversity, and greater endorsement of conservative political ideology, political parties, and candidates.

Biden, more than any of his three Democratic predecessors — Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama — is putting this white reaction to the test.

Not only is Biden actively supporting [*voting rights reform*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) designed to protect and strengthen Black and Hispanic political participation; he has also taken [*assertive stands*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) on racial issues, both in terms of appointments and in supporting [*racially targeted provisions*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) in his stimulus and infrastructure legislation.

The question for Biden is whether a Democrat can firm up the party’s multiracial coalition with a double-edged strategy: first, winning over enough ***working-class*** whites by disbursing [*substantial benefits*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) in his stimulus and infrastructure legislation; and second, by targeting generous programs to racial and ethnic minorities to reduce disparities in income and education.

The underlying question is whether more white voters will turn against Biden in the 2022 midterm elections, as they turned against Clinton [*in 1994*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) and Obama [*in 2010*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/).

A large number of white people already believe that they suffer higher levels of discrimination than Black people and other minorities do.

Craig and Richeson write:

Organizational messages that are favorable to racial diversity have also been found to enhance the sense among whites of personal and group discrimination against them compared with race-neutral messages.

In addition, many Republican and conservative-leaning whites are convinced that as minorities become more powerful, the left coalition will become increasingly antagonistic to them. Craig and Richeson write:

This research suggests, in other words, that whites are likely to perceive more antiwhite discrimination under circumstances in which they perceive that their group’s position in society is under threat.

[*Nour Sami Kteily*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), a professor of management and organizations at Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management, emailed to say that he and Richeson have been conducting a study that asks whites how much they agree (7) or disagree (1) with statements like:

If Black Americans got to the top of the social hierarchy, they would want to stay on top and keep other groups down.

and:

If Black Americans got to the top of the social hierarchy, they would put all of their effort toward creating a more egalitarian social system for all groups.

On average, whites fell at the midpoint, but, Kteily wrote, there was:

large variation associated with being Republican vs. Democrat, with Republicans being more likely to believe that Black Americans would use power to dominate. The difference is highly statistically significant.

In a December 2019 article, “[*Demographic change, political backlash, and challenges in the study of geography*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/),” [*Ryan Enos*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), a political scientist at Harvard, wrote:

The relationship between diversity and reactionary politics should be considered one of the most important sociopolitical issues facing the world today — it is a near certainty that almost every developed country and many developing countries will be more diverse a generation from now than they are today.

Thus, Enos continued:

if increasing diversity affects political outcomes, the relationship can point in two consequentially different directions: toward increased diversity liberalizing politics or toward increased diversity causing a reactionary backlash.

The 2020 election of Biden combined with Democratic control of the House and Senate have contained, at least momentarily, the reactionary backlash, but a liberalized politics has not yet been secured. What are the prospects for Democrats seeking to maintain, if not strengthen, their fragile hold on power?

Looking toward the next two sets of elections, [*Brian Schaffner*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), a political scientist at Tufts, argued in an email that Biden will have to tread carefully if he wants to maintain winning margins for his party in 2022 and for himself in 2024:

I think much of the survey data we have seen over the past several years indicates that many whites have quite favorable attitudes toward the social welfare programs that the Democratic Party supports while they are often turned off by the party’s rhetoric and platform on the issue of race and racism.

If the Biden administration, Schaffner wrote,

can continue to deliver on popular policy programs like the American Rescue Plan and make the midterm elections a referendum on those policies rather than on discussions of racism then he may be able to hold together the coalition that helped him win in 2020.

[*Robert Griffin*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), research director of the nonpartisan Democracy Fund Voter Study Group, wrote by email that he expects “the national environment to be worse for Democrats in 2022 than it was in 2020.”

The shift, he continued,

will almost certainly include a loss of support among white voters who — if history is any guide — will represent a larger share of the electorate in 2022 because of midterm turnout dynamics.

Griffin wrote that “it’s not obvious to me that this shift will be dependent on Biden’s ability or failure to overcome white racial resentment,” because “these midterm dynamics are pretty baked in and it would be shocking to see them defied.”

On the plus side for Democrats, Griffin noted:

The growing educational divide among white Americans does present an interesting opportunity for the Democratic Party. One of the things most people don’t appreciate is that white overrepresentation among voters is driven almost entirely by white college voters. This overrepresentation of white college voters is even greater in midterm elections. The growing educational divide among white voters — with Biden viewed much more favorably by white college voters — potentially blunts some of those midterm dynamics I described.

I asked Griffin what the prospects are for Biden to build a stronger and more durable Democratic coalition. He is doubtful:

If you had to pick one group that would do the most to solidify the Democratic coalition electorally, it would be white non-college voters. They make up more than 40 percent of voters and are exceptionally well represented in the Electoral College, the House and the Senate.

Biden, Griffin continued,

improved slightly on Hillary Clinton’s margin among these voters, but it wasn’t anything massive. Given the long-term trends away from the Democratic Party among these voters, even holding onto his 2020 margins would likely represent an achievement.

Based on his actions to date, Biden clearly disagrees and remains intent on strengthening both the white and minority side of the Democratic multiracial coalition through legislative action.

In one of the ironies of politics, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia — who personifies in the extreme the Democratic Party dilemma on race, ethnicity and immigration — has become a critical stumbling block to Biden’s ambition to enact a transformative agenda.

West Virginia is [*92 percent white*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), the [*third-highest percentage in the nation*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), exceeded only by Maine and Vermont. In a generation, it has undergone a virtually complete Republican realignment.

Just 25 years ago, in 1996, Bill Clinton [*won West Virginia*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), decisively beating Bob Dole 52-37, with 11 percent going to Ross Perot. By 2012, in contrast, Mitt Romney not only beat Barack Obama [*62-35*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) in this once reliably Democratic state, but he also carried every one of West Virginia’s 55 counties, a pattern repeated in 2016 and 2020.

Manchin stands out among his colleagues in the Senate as a Democrat who can win in what has become a deep-red state, but the going is getting tougher. In 2012, he won by 25 points, [*61 percent to 36 percent*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/). In his most recent election in 2018, he won by 3.4 points, [*49.6 percent to 46.2 percent.*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/)

In 2020, the state voted for Trump over Biden [*68.6 percent to 29.7 percent*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/). Trump’s margin of victory in West Virginia [*was higher*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) than it was in all the other states [*except Wyoming*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), 43.7 points, 70.4 to 26.7.

West Virginia voters are not only conservative and Republican but also overwhelmingly fit the demographic and ideological portrait of those most threatened and angered by the prospect of whites becoming a minority. The [*2020 poll of West Virginia voters*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) by NORC at the University of Chicago showed that they were 95 percent white (higher than the state’s residents); 69 percent without college degrees; 74 percent small-town or rural; 71 percent in favor of building a wall on the border with Mexico; 70 percent with an unfavorable view of the Democratic Party; and 63 percent with a favorable view of the Republican Party.

In light of these facts, it is little wonder that Manchin has emerged as the key Democratic holdout in the Senate, demanding the near impossible — [*that at least some Republicans support*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) a top Biden agenda item, voting rights reform. In addition, Manchin has declared his [*opposition*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) to killing the legislative instrument currently used to protect the interests of whites, the filibuster — delighting his West Virginia constituents but angering many of his Democratic colleagues.

There are good, some would say persuasive, arguments for both the elimination of the filibuster and for enactment of the voting rights legislation currently before the Senate.

[*Jessica Bulman-Pozen*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) and [*David Pozen*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), of Columbia Law School, developed an apt description of the contemporary use of the filibuster in their 2015 law review article “[*Uncivil Obedience*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/),” arguing that while civil disobedience “violates the law in a bid to highlight its illegitimacy and motivate reform,” there is a “less heralded form of social action that involves nearly the opposite approach.” Dissenters, they write, may attempt “to disrupt legal regimes through hyperbolic, literalistic, or otherwise unanticipated adherence to their formal rules,” i.e., through uncivil obedience.

In an email, Jessica Bulman-Pozen wrote:

The filibuster is the most potent tool of obstruction. Today’s filibuster threatens American democracy, but its adherents hold themselves out as defenders of the rules.

Those making use of the filibuster to delay or kill legislation “cast themselves as meticulous law-followers while they subvert representative democracy,” she wrote.

[*Alexander Theodoridis*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), a political scientist at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, expanded on the argument that polarization has weaponized the filibuster:

Increasingly, voters and elites find those on the other side repugnant and not worthy of trust. Any win for “them” is tantamount to a loss for “us.”

In the case of the voting rights bill, Theodoridis argued:

The prospect of the filibuster thwarting efforts to reduce democratic backsliding amounts to the use of a minoritarian legislative tactic to enable a minoritarian electoral strategy.

Along parallel lines, [*Nate Persily*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/), a law professor at Stanford, said in an email:

The next two years may be the last chance for the Democrats (and the country) to pass significant election reform. The filibuster stands in the way. Declaring that only voting policy that can attract 60 votes should be passed is tantamount to saying that no voting reform should be passed.

Inaction by the federal government “will necessarily lead to greater divergence among the states,” Persily continued:

One set of states will codify the accommodations that were made to deal with the pandemic and to make voting more accessible. Another set of states will make voting more difficult in the name of election integrity but in service to the Big Lie that the 2020 election was marred by fraud.

Despite the logic of these claims, Manchin — who has held statewide office in West Virginia for the past 20 years and is also the last Democrat to hold statewide office there at all — could emerge, at least momentarily, as a hero to fellow liberals across the country. But joining forces with fellow Democrats has the earmarks of political suicide.

Manchin has repeated his demand for bipartisanship and his support of the filibuster, but he did take one stand that could signal his openness to negotiation, voting twice to convict Trump on impeachment charges filed by the House.

Those votes were not cast by a politician calculating his best chances for re-election.

Biden and Democrats in the Senate are asking Manchin to help move the nation past the divisive forces of white racial and ethnic animosity. In doing so, they are asking the Democratic senator under the most pressure to accede to these forces to abandon political self-interest. It will be a tough sell.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2020/07/bar-chart-races-changing-demographics-in-k-12-public-school-enrollment/).

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PHOTO: Senator Joe Manchin, Democrat of West Virginia. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Erin Schaff for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2021

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[***Biden, Not Bernie, Is the True Scandinavian***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YD6-5BX1-JBG3-602D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 11, 2020 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22

**Length:** 1384 words

**Byline:** By Thomas L. Friedman

**Body**

Sanders totally misunderstands what's behind Denmark's safety net.

Bernie Sanders often cites Denmark as the kind of country he would like America to be under his ideology of ''democratic socialism.'' Well, here's a news flash: Bernie Sanders, with his hostile attitudes toward free trade, free markets and multinational corporations, probably couldn't get elected to a municipal council in Denmark today. Ironically, Joe Biden, with his more balanced views on trade, corporations and unions, probably could. And therein lies a column.

I can explain this best by starting with a few questions that I'd love to ask Sanders about his democratic socialism, beginning with the most basic one: Senator Sanders, where do you think jobs come from?

They come from risk-takers who borrow money from banks or relatives or max out their credit cards or spend their own savings to start companies they hope will become profitable. If that is what Sanders believes, you'd never know it from listening to him.

To listen to him (and his surrogates) is to listen to someone who seems to believe that the American economic pie just miraculously appeared and exists on its own. He never discusses where that pie came from, how to bake it or how to enlarge it. His only interest is how to redivide it.

Second: Senator Sanders, is there a single American entrepreneur or corporate leader whom you admire? Or is each and every one of them part of the ''corporate greed and corruption'' responsible for ''destroying the social and economic fabric of our society,'' as you put it on your website. When was the last time you even visited a big U.S. multinational and sat down with its employees and executives?

Third, Senator Sanders, do you believe the free enterprise system is the best means for growing jobs, the economy and opportunity -- or do you believe in more socialist central planning? I ask because I have often heard you praise Scandinavian countries, like Denmark, as exemplars of democratic socialism. Have you ever been to Denmark? It's democratic but not socialist.

Denmark is actually a hypercompetitive, wide-open, market economy devoted to free trade and expanding globalization, since trade -- exports and imports -- makes up roughly half of Denmark's G.D.P.

Indeed, Denmark's 5.8 million people have produced some of the most globally competitive multinationals in the world, by the names of A.P. Moller-Maersk, Danske Bank, Novo Nordisk, Carlsberg Group, Vestas, Coloplast, the Lego Group and Novozymes. These are the very giant multinationals Sanders constantly rails against.

As the former Danish prime minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen once remarked in a speech at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government to those who might not fully grasp the Danish model: ''I would like to make one thing clear, Denmark is far from a socialist planned economy. Denmark is a market economy. The Nordic model is an expanded welfare state, which provides a high level of security for its citizens, but it is also a successful market economy with much freedom to pursue your dreams and live your life as you wish.''

It is through these engines of capitalism, free trade, economic openness and globalization that Denmark has managed to become wealthy enough to afford the social safety net that Sanders rightly admires -- as do I: access for all to child care, medical and parental leave from work, tuition-free college, a living stipend, universal health care and generous pensions.

But there is nothing free about these services. According to Investopedia, Denmark's progressive income tax tops out at 55.8 percent, and the average individual pays 45 percent. The Danes pay an 8 percent labor market tax, a 5 percent health care tax, as well as hefty municipal taxes and a social security tax. Denmark also has the highest national sales tax in the European Union -- 25 percent -- on most goods and services, a big tax on the middle class.

In short, Sanders cherry-picks Denmark. He stresses what he loves -- all that the Danish state provides -- and then he ignores two things: one obvious and important and one less obvious and even more important.

The obvious and important one is the relentlessly entrepreneurial capitalism that generates Denmark's prosperity and that is celebrated there. The less obvious, but more important, feature of Denmark's success is the high-trust social compact among its business community, labor unions, social entrepreneurs and government. That's the real secret of Denmark's sauce.

I know a little something about this because in March 2018 Rasmussen, who was then still the prime minister, invited me to give a talk about globalization to a retreat at Marienborg, his official residence, as part of a meeting of the Danish ''Disruption Council.'' It brought together all the country's stakeholders -- corporate leaders, national union leaders, educators, social entrepreneurs and cabinet ministers -- to brainstorm about how they should work together to prepare the country for the rest of the century.

It was fascinating for me to watch them respectfully interact. Obviously, in a small, largely homogeneous country of 5.8 million people, it is a lot easier to generate that kind of social trust than in a diverse nation of 327 million. But the point is, no one was demonizing others as ''corrupt'' by the very fact of who they were -- whether labor organizer or corporate titan or someone of wealth.

They understood that it was the balancing of all their interests that made Denmark's economic growth and generous social safety net possible.

In nature, ecosystems thrive the most when they are ''in balance.'' Mother Nature achieves that balance in her own ways, some quite brutal. Political systems also thrive when they are in balance. Denmark has found a healthy balance of the interests of capital, labor, social entrepreneurs and government. The thriving and adapting by each reinforces the other.

America is now out of balance. We all sense it in the gross and widening inequality we see around us. Sanders sincerely wants to eliminate that. Alas, so do a lot of us. Michael Bloomberg was running on a platform advocating a 5-percent surtax on incomes of over $5 million annually.

But when you begin that conversation, as Sanders does, by effectively demonizing all risk-taking American entrepreneurs as corrupt, by vowing to redistribute their income -- which Sanders seems to believe is all ill gotten by definition -- by pretending that all the benefits can be paid for by the wealthy and nothing from the middle class and by voting against the new version of NAFTA -- which was supported by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and Nancy Pelosi as precisely the kind of trade deal with the very union and environmental protections Democrats have long sought -- then your true model country is not Denmark. It's a socialist fantasy.

The truth is, Joe Biden would make a much better Scandinavian-type leader than Bernie Sanders.

Biden, in my view, would be much more likely to -- and able to -- build a new social contract in America than a President Sanders, because Biden not only genuinely cares about the ***working class*** and the homeless -- and understands the need for access to lifelong education and health care -- he also knows that you don't get there by demonizing the engines of capitalism and job creation. You have to find a way to work with them.

Denmark did not become Denmark because of a revolution. It evolved where it is today through a steady iteration -- unleashing its entrepreneurs on the world to generate as much wealth as they could while constantly forging a dialogue at home among all the stakeholders about how best to share enough of the profits to have a truly just safety net, while not destroying the free-market, free-trade engines of growth, and while maintaining a high sales tax so everyone contributes something.

If Denmark's social contract is your model -- and it's a good one -- then I'd trust Biden much more than Bernie to head us there.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/10/opinion/sanders-biden-socialism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/10/opinion/sanders-biden-socialism.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Bernie Sanders at a rally in Grand Rapids, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Chang W. Lee/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2020

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[***Joe Biden, Not Bernie Sanders, Is the True Scandinavian***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YD2-N901-DXY4-X03W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 10, 2020 Tuesday 13:10 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1403 words

**Byline:** Thomas L. Friedman

**Highlight:** Sanders totally misunderstands what’s behind Denmark’s safety net.

**Body**

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PHOTO: Bernie Sanders at a rally in Grand Rapids, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Chang W. Lee/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***After 43 Years, the Wine Sentinel of the River Café Stands Down; The Pour***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60T8-CWW1-DXY4-X3XR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 10, 2020 Thursday 15:31 EST

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**Section:** DINING; drinks

**Length:** 1763 words

**Byline:** Eric Asimov

**Highlight:** Joseph DeLissio, “a blue-collar kid in a white-collar job,” saw the rise of American wine culture and put together an ever-changing, world-class list.

**Body**

Joseph DeLissio, “a blue-collar kid in a white-collar job,” saw the rise of American wine culture and put together an ever-changing, world-class list.

Joseph DeLissio never felt called to become a [*master sommelier*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html). He didn’t post Instagram photos of himself posing with cult wines. He didn’t try to make his own wine, start an import company or initiate a podcast, all standard activities for 21st-century sommeliers.

For 43 years, he just did his job. At least he had a great view.

Until last month, Mr. DeLissio, 65, was wine director of [*the River Café*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), the glassy, glittery barge restaurant moored on the Brooklyn waterfront. The Brooklyn Bridge soars overhead, and the majestic skyline of Lower Manhattan dazzles from across the water.

Every year thousands of diners from around the world arrived to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and business deals. Some came simply to take in the view. Many enjoyed a few of the bottles Mr. DeLissio carefully accumulated over his many years overseeing the comprehensive wine list.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, as the restaurant industry sinks into an alarming unknown, Mr. DeLissio decided earlier this summer that he had had enough. It was time to retire.

After putting the wine program in shape for the River Café to reopen for outdoor dining in July, he turned in his keys in mid-August.

“I was heading in this direction — 43 years is a long time, but the pandemic certainly pushed it,” he said. “Like much of the industry, I lost my health care. A horrible thing has happened, but it’s the best time for me to go.”

Joey D., as he is widely known in the wine world, was the dean of New York City sommeliers. In an industry where stability is rare, he never felt the need to find something better or different, or even to call much attention to himself.

Since he was hired in 1977, the city has risen from the depths of financial ruin to an almost arrogant prosperity. [*Stick-figure towers and needle-nose high-rises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html) now lay claim to the skyline, and everybody with money is a wine collector.

From his post, Mr. DeLissio has seen New York stunned by 9/11, rocked by the 2008 financial meltdown, washed over by Hurricane Sandy and closed down by the coronavirus. Until now, it has always bounced back.

He also helped set in motion the rise of American wine culture. When he joined the River Café shortly after it opened, he said, the wine list included just 12 bottles. Spirits made up 90 percent of bar sales. Now, wine dominates sales, and the list offers roughly 800 choices, pruned from a peak of 1,150 bottles before Sandy.

Back in the mid-1970s, few restaurants beyond fancy French places employed sommeliers. Mr. DeLissio’s title at first was beverage manager.

“The term ‘wine director’ hardly existed,” Mr. DeLissio said. “Kevin Zraly might have been the first with that title.”

Mr. Zraly was part of the team at [*Windows on the World*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), which opened atop the north tower of the World Trade Center a year before the River Café, in 1976. It was the beginning of a revolution in American dining, paralleled by rising consumption of wine and a boom in the American wine industry.

In the 1960s and early ’70s, French wines were synonymous with fine dining. Italian restaurants offered Chianti in straw bottles. The California wine industry still produced mostly cheap jugs and fortified wines.

But, as Mr. DeLissio recalled, restaurants like Windows, the River Café, [*the Four Seasons*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html) and [*Sparks Steak House*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html) were making an effort to feature California wines from emerging producers like Robert Mondavi, Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars, Chateau Montelena and Heitz Cellar.

Mr. DeLissio was right there in the thick of it, traveling to California to meet and taste with producers, getting to know Napa Valley titans like Mr. Mondavi, Joe Heitz and [*André Tchelistcheff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), a legendary Napa winemaker and consultant.

“It was very unusual back then for anybody from a top New York restaurant to come to visit,” Mr. DeLissio said. “I’m 24 years old, and I’m tasting wine with André Tchelistcheff. The people running the industry were farmers, before the big corporations bought the properties and turned Napa into a mini-Disney World.”

That Mr. DeLissio got involved with wine at all was something of a surprise, not least of all to him. He was born in Marine Park, Brooklyn, in November 1954. His father ran a neighborhood bar in Bensonhurst where wine was an afterthought.

“Wine was what my father’s friends drank when they went on the wagon,” he said. “It wasn’t considered drinking.”

Young Joey was a music major at Queensborough Community College and an aspiring rock star who played drums. His funk band, the Starbabies, even had a single, “Oh Boy,” that Mr. DeLissio said charted for a couple of weeks.

Nothing came of the music business, and when he needed to get a real job, he turned to his mother, who worked in the office of [*Michael O’Keeffe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), a restaurateur better known as Buzzy, who had just opened the River Café. With experience working after school in his father’s bar, Mr. DeLissio was hired to order beverages and, most important, he said, to make sure nothing was stolen. He knew nothing about wine.

“None of us knew much then,” Mr. O’Keeffe said. “I used to say to some of the wine salesmen, ‘Pick your favorite five reds and five whites,’ and I took the common denominators.”

Mr. DeLissio started tasting the wines, and he found himself becoming interested. He took a wine class from Mr. Zraly, who was a great educator as well as a wine director.

“I think that was the point where I changed a job into a career,” Mr. DeLissio said.

For Mr. O’Keeffe, Mr. DeLissio’s interest was a godsend. “He picked it up so quickly, I didn’t have to do anything,” Mr. O’Keeffe said. “I just let Joey go. He was always on target. I could just relax.”

That was fine with Mr. DeLissio. “Once I got to the point where he trusted me, he left me alone,” he said. “Creative freedom is really important to me. I got to evolve the wine program, and that kept it fresh for me.”

His early interest in California wine was spurred on by the excellent 1974 vintage, which came in the middle of a series of particularly bad vintages for French wines.

“We were the first restaurant to carry [*Jordan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), [*Dominus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), [*Dunn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), [*Opus One*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), [*Screaming Eagle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html),” Mr. DeLissio said. “I made my bones on California, that’s how everybody knew me.”

The River Café was also developing as a food destination. Its early chefs included Larry Forgione, Charles Palmer, David Burke, Rick Moonen and Rick Laakkonen, all of whom later achieved renown.

“I liked working with people like that,” Mr. DeLissio said. “It really was an exciting time.”

Tastes and the American wine industry changed, and so did the River Café wine list. Mr. DeLissio continued to buy high-end California wines, but as they were getting more powerful and alcoholic in the 1990s, he turned more toward European wines, building excellent selections of Burgundy and Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

He fell in love with Spanish wines, and developed a personal passion for Madeira, the Portuguese fortified wine, putting together an extraordinary collection of old and rare bottles.

“Madeira is almost like a conversation,” Mr. DeLissio [*told me in 2007*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html). “It’s the most thoughtful wine there is.”

Of the California cult cabernets that he collected, he said: “We were the first to put those on, and maybe the first to take them off. The wine list used to be 80 percent California, and now maybe it’s 25 percent.”

He reaffirmed his assessments after Hurricane Sandy, which [*poured seawater*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html) through the restaurant, destroying the kitchen, the electrical system, a new Steinway grand piano and gushing through the wine storage room on the dining-room level, ruining a significant portion of the 10,000-bottle collection.

Some were damaged on the outside, rendering them unsellable. But they were still drinkable, which gave Mr. DeLissio a chance to taste many precious California bottles.

“Quite often, the most expensive, the most allocated, the most highly rated wines were just not worth it,” [*he said in 2014*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html). “It took Sandy to make me say, ‘Man, what was I thinking?’”

Through it all, Mr. DeLissio, lean and angular, has remained at his post, overseeing the cellar and list. As sommeliers became superstars, developing a cliquish and competitive New York culture, he preferred to keep his distance.

“Joey marches to his own tune, always,” said Daniel Johnnes, who for years was the wine director at Montrachet in TriBeCa and later for the [*Daniel Boulud group*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html) of restaurants. “He was never dragged into the politics of it. He’s bought to his own taste and done his own thing.”

For years, Mr. DeLissio has lived in Bay Street Landing on Staten Island, taking the ferry to work and back. He has been divorced for 20 years, and has three grown children — Krista, Joseph and Julia — and a 3-year-old grandson, Julian.

“I always considered myself a blue-collar kid in a white-collar job,” he said. “I’m still a ***working-class*** kid.”

Though he is retired, he has no plans to stop working. For years, Mr. DeLissio has nursed an ambition to write screenplays. He has finished two of them — one, he said, is about a failed baseball player who visits the Hall of Fame and winds up snowed in with a claustrophobic escort — and is working on a third.

“I’ve been a closet screenwriter,” he said. “Maybe it’s time to come out of the closet.”

As he looks back on his 43 years, a few things stick out: the camaraderie of the wine community in the 1980s, before it grew; watching diners order a second bottle of something they loved; the 25th anniversary of the River Café, when all the chefs came back to cook together.

Most of all, he’ll remember looking out the window.

“Having a glass of something, sitting at the bar when the weather was horrible,” he said. “Watching a violent snowstorm or the ice floating down the river, that was magical.”

Follow [*NYT Food on Twitter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html) and [*NYT Cooking on Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html), [*YouTube*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html) and [*Pinterest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html). [*Get regular updates from NYT Cooking, with recipe suggestions, cooking tips and shopping advice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html).

PHOTOS: After 43 years, Joseph DeLissio retired as wine director at the River Café in Brooklyn last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SEPTEMBER DAWN BOTTOMS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (D1); Top, Joseph DeLissio on the deck of the River Café in 1986. Above left, Mr. DeLissio in 1984, when he worked the harvest at Stags Leap Wine Cellars in California. Above right, at the River Café last month. When Mr. DeLissio began working there, the wine list had just 12 choices. It now features about 800. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSEPH DeLISSIO; SEPTEMBER DAWN BOTTOMS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (D7)

**Load-Date:** September 17, 2020

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[***Beans, Boycotts And the Politics Of Pantry Items***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60D4-BD11-DXY4-X0GK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Farah Stockman, Kate Kelly and Jennifer Medina

**Body**

The boycott and counter-boycott of Goya comes as the major political parties seek to energize Hispanic support ahead of the 2020 election.

For years, the Goya brand was synonymous with the Latino-American dream. The sheer number of products that lined the grocery store aisles -- from refried pinto beans to sazón con azafran seasoning -- spoke to the growing number of Hispanic immigrants who bought them. Goya, the nation's largest Hispanic food company, has sponsored Dominican art shows, mariachi contests and soccer programs.

Advisers to President Trump considered it a victory when Goya's chief executive, Robert Unanue, agreed to appear at the White House rollout of what it called the Hispanic Prosperity Initiative, an executive order that promised better access to education and employment for Hispanics.

In the Rose Garden on July 9, Mr. Unanue praised Mr. Trump and compared him to his grandfather, who founded Goya.

''We're all truly blessed at the same time to have a leader like President Trump, who is a builder,'' Mr. Unanue said. ''And that's what my grandfather did.''

And just like that, a once-beloved brand became anathema in many Latino homes across the United States. People posted videos and photos of themselves clearing out their pantries and tossing cans of Goya beans into the trash. It became a symbol of political resistance to share recipes for Goya product substitutes. ''Oh look, it's the sound of me Googling 'how to make your own Adobo,''' Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York wrote on Twitter, referring to a popular seasoning that Goya sells.

Almost immediately, Trump loyalists pushed back -- filling shopping carts full of Goya products and posting videos of themselves dutifully swallowing Goya beans.

By the time Ivanka Trump tweeted an endorsement of Goya, one thing had become clear: In a polarized country, at a polarized time, the buying of beans had become a political act.

Even as Mr. Trump's support has cratered among many demographics, he has held on to a small but durable slice of Hispanic voters, many of them in Florida, a state full of Cuban Republicans that is known for razor-thin electoral margins.

Polls consistently show Mr. Trump with an approval rating among Hispanic voters hovering around 25 percent, within the lower end of the range that Republican presidents have attracted for decades. Before the coronavirus pandemic tanked the economy, the Trump campaign repeatedly pointed to the low unemployment rate among Hispanics as an indication that the administration was delivering for the community, a group he has also offended with inflammatory remarks about immigration.

Now Goya has fallen into this boiling pot of politics and anger, a strange turn of events for a company that has prided itself on knowing its customers intimately.

With each wave of Hispanic immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, Goya has added new products to suit their cuisine, and over the years it has distributed millions of pounds of food to pantries after hurricanes and during the pandemic.

The company was founded in 1936 by Mr. Unanue's grandparents, who moved from the Basque region of Spain to Puerto Rico, and then New York City, where they sold sardines and olive oil from a storefront on Duane Street in Lower Manhattan.

As the company expanded, it changed its name from Unanue & Sons to Goya Foods -- reportedly buying rights to its new name for $1 because it was easier to pronounce than ''oo-NA-new-way'' -- and branched into manufacturing. During the mid-1970s, Joseph Unanue, one of the founders' four sons, took over as chief executive, and the company relocated to New Jersey. By the time he stepped down, the company had established relationships with Walmart and other big grocers and its annual revenue had grown to $1 billion from $20 million.

Some noted that Robert Unanue's remarks at the White House showcased the glaring disconnect between the wealthy executive whose family hailed from Spain and the largely ***working-class*** Latinos who make up his customer base. The harshest critics questioned whether he considered himself Latino.

The speed and size of the boycott speak to ''how raw people in the community feel about the president,'' said Clarissa Martinez de Castro, the deputy vice president for policy and advocacy for UnidosUS, a Latino civic engagement organization. She said many Latinos blamed Mr. Trump's attacks on undocumented immigrants for inciting discrimination and violence against Latinos, particularly the massacre last summer in El Paso.

For the first time, she said, anxieties about racial discrimination have ranked in the top concerns among Latino voters in surveys. But Mr. Trump's supporters are betting that this is a winning issue for them and that Americans won't understand or empathize with the boycott.

The day after the Rose Garden ceremony, Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, tweeted: ''Goya is a staple of Cuban food. My grandparents ate Goya black beans twice a day for nearly 90 years. And now the Left is trying to cancel Hispanic culture and silence free speech. #BuyGoya.''

And suddenly, the once-beloved Hispanic brand became a cause célèbre on the right.

Mr. Cruz said in an interview that he saw the boycott as an example of ''spirit of intolerance.''

''The offense is he dared to say he supported the president,'' Mr. Cruz said, adding that ''anytime anyone dares disagree from their rigid orthodoxy, they seek to punish, cancel or destroy to the dissenter.''

Mr. Unanue, who has contributed to the campaigns of both Democrats and Republicans and worked with Michelle Obama on an anti-obesity initiative, appeared unprepared for the firestorm. Neither he nor Goya officials responded to requests for comment. But Mr. Unanue defended his remarks at the White House, telling The Wall Street Journal that he went there out of respect. ''I remain strong in my convictions that I feel blessed with the leadership of our president,'' he told the newspaper.

Trump supporters filmed themselves filling shopping carts full of Goya products, relishing in the opportunity to defend a Hispanic businessman and accuse Democrats of being anti-Latino. Dinesh D'Souza, a conservative political commentator, shared a video of himself swallowing beans, which he admitted he rarely ate.

A few days later, Mr. Trump circulated a photo of himself sitting in the Oval Office, smiling widely and with his thumbs up, in front of several Goya products, including a package of chocolate wafers and coconut milk.

Responding to questions about whether Ms. Trump's tweet violated federal law forbidding government employees from using their positions to endorse products, Carolina Hurley, a White House spokeswoman, said the president's daughter ''has every right to express her personal support'' for the company.

''Only the media and the cancel culture movement would criticize Ivanka for showing her personal support for a company that has been unfairly mocked, boycotted and ridiculed for supporting this administration -- one that has consistently fought for and delivered for the Hispanic community,'' Ms. Hurley said.

Some political scientists said Mr. Trump appeared eager for the free publicity that came by associating himself with a beloved Hispanic brand.

''It's the Republican version of 'Hispandering,''' said Geraldo Cadava, a history professor at Northwestern University and author of ''The Hispanic Republican.'' ''He's pandering to Hispanics the same way that politicians have peppered their stump speeches with a few words in Spanish. It's the same kind of signal.''

Mr. Trump has occasionally made visible efforts to reach Hispanic voters. The Hispanic Prosperity Initiative, which included few details, came during a week in which he also met with Venezuelans who had fled socialism and held an interview with Telemundo, a Spanish-language television station. Mr. Trump spoke in the interview about a ''road to citizenship'' for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children, even as his administration has pledged to fight a Supreme Court decision upholding the Obama-era program that protected them.

It remains to be seen whether Hispanics who do not already support Trump will be swayed by his sudden association with Goya or his attempt to bring Hispanics onto the conservative side of the nation's long-simmering culture war.

But for a few Latinos, the message resonated.

Alexander Otaola, a Cuban-American in Florida with 105,000 followers on Instagram, issued a video in Spanish that likened the Goya boycott to the destruction of statues and other cultural icons.

''What is Goya in the Latino community? It's an icon, a statue,'' he said in the YouTube video. ''The left wants to destroy all icons.''

It is not clear how deeply the boycott has cut into Goya's bottom line, or whether the impact of the ''buycott'' has canceled it out. Goya is a privately held company, so its records are not public.

In Jerry's Supermarket in the predominantly Latino Oak Cliff community in Dallas, Goya products lined the shelves, as usual, and were bought by a steady stream of customers last weekend. In San Antonio's Alamo Heights community, one cashier said managers of La Michoacana Supermarket have not said they would quit carrying Goya products. Guava paste and Salvadoran pickled salad, among other items, remained on the shelves.

But in Tucson, Ariz., Patrick Robles, a 19-year-old student at the University of Arizona, said his whole family was boycotting Goya products even though the company's chickpeas had always been perfect for cocido, or Mexican stew.

''It was a punch in the stomach for us,'' Mr. Robles said of Mr. Unanue's comments praising a president who Mr. Robles felt has routinely devalued Latinos. Now, they are going to turn to brands like La Costeña or Rosarita.

But Pamela Ramirez, a 48-year-old Mexican-American small-business consultant in East Los Angeles, said she strongly opposed the Goya boycott. Since there is a large number of Latinos employed by the company, she thinks that boycotting the product could harm her own community. For every one of her Facebook friends who has posted about boycotting the product, Ms. Ramirez bought $10 worth of Goya products and donated them to a food bank, she said.

''You've got to put your money where your mouth is,'' she said. ''If you don't, then you're just part of the problem.''

Contributing reporting were Elda Lizzia Cantú, Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio, Marina Trahan Martinez, Erin Coulehan and David Montgomery. Sheelagh McNeill contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/19/us/goya-trump-hispanic-vote.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/19/us/goya-trump-hispanic-vote.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Trump fans are buying Goya. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGIO FLORES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2020

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[***Biden's Playbook of Persuasion Appeals to Voters in Wisconsin***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60D4-BD11-DXY4-X0H4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Mr. Biden is running a risk-averse campaign in states like Wisconsin, where a broad coalition of supporters is emerging. Even Republicans are noticing.

ADAMS, Wis. -- Nate Zimdars, a Democratic candidate for the Wisconsin State Assembly, arrived at the V.F.W. lodge here after marching in the local Independence Day parade, ready to meet voters at an annual outdoor chicken cookout called the ''Chic Nic.'' Although the event was hosted by the local Republican Party, Mr. Zimdars was far from nervous being behind enemy lines. He was eager.

The county flipped from blue to red in 2016, Mr. Zimdars noted, which meant it could flip again. Plus, national Democrats had done him a favor -- they chose former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. for the top of their ticket.

''Biden comes across as someone who's moderate and has experience on both sides of the aisle,'' Mr. Zimdars said. ''My close family and friends, who are a little more on the Republican side of the fence, said if Biden became the nominee they would vote for him.''

Such persuasion is at the core of Mr. Biden's campaign strategy, designed to bring together moderates, seniors, ***working-class*** voters across races and former supporters of President Trump. The approach has helped him jump out to an early lead in polling, both in national surveys and in swing states like Wisconsin, where Mr. Trump won by less than 23,000 votes in 2016. It has also helped him fend off attacks from Mr. Trump, who has sought to cast Mr. Biden as a radical progressive despite his lengthy career as a moderate lawmaker.

But if Mr. Biden hopes to maintain his advantage as November draws near, Wisconsin Democrats like Mr. Zimdars have some advice, akin to the famous medical principle of ''do no harm,'' or the cautionary words of the hit HBO series ''The Wire'': ''Keep it boring.''

Being politically milquetoast is Mr. Biden's appeal, they said, driving his ability to attract progressives in Milwaukee, moderates in suburbs like Waukesha and more rural voters in places like Adams County, one of the 22 counties in the state that voted for Mr. Trump after backing President Barack Obama in 2012.

They don't lament that Mr. Biden is not a historic candidate like Mr. Obama or Hillary Clinton, or that he lacks bumper-sticker progressive policies like Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders -- they're grateful for it.

After the 2016 election, Mrs. Clinton was lambasted for running a risk-averse campaign that seemed to rely on voters finding Mr. Trump's conduct inherently repugnant. Four years later, facing a changed electoral landscape, many Wisconsin Democrats think Mr. Biden can win the state with that exact playbook.

Mr. Biden is ''the perfect candidate for this area at this time,'' said Matt Mareno, the chairman of the Waukesha Democratic Party.

''Trump's whole rallying cry was that he was an outsider coming to fix the establishment, and now he is the establishment,'' Mr. Mareno said. ''We're seeing more and more college-educated white voters leaving him and we're seeing more seniors leave him. We're seeing that coalition just completely dissolved down to the very core base of his support.''

Several characteristics inform Mr. Biden's strategy, including his lengthy career as a bipartisan legislator, Mr. Trump's panned response to the pandemic, and Mr. Biden's identity as an older white man, the type of politician easily categorized as ''presidential.''

There are a range of ways Mr. Biden can build a general election coalition in a battleground state like Wisconsin.

He could focus on winning back voters in low-population areas, where Mrs. Clinton suffered big losses in 2016.

He could build on recent Democratic efforts to target the college-educated white voters that Mr. Trump has, at times, repelled, particularly in suburban counties like Waukesha, Ozaukee and Washington, where Mrs. Clinton outperformed Mr. Obama but also lost some votes to third-party candidates.

Or he could seek to motivate reliable Democratic voters like young people, Black voters and Latino voters in Milwaukee, the Democratic stronghold where voter turnout was down significantly in 2016.

Mr. Biden's advisers say he will seek to both appeal to persuadable voters and motivate the party's base, mimicking the successful campaign of Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, a progressive who won re-election in 2018 by an eye-popping 10 points. Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump by 11 points in Wisconsin in a poll by The New York Times and Siena College last month, and more recent polling from other battleground states like Pennsylvania has been even better for him.

Representative Mark Pocan, a Democrat who represents Madison, said Mr. Biden's campaign had already outpaced Mrs. Clinton's in terms of investment in and attention to Wisconsin. Mr. Pocan said the Clinton campaign ''took the purple state for granted,'' citing both a lack of visits and financial support for down-ballot candidates.

''Donald Trump came and lied to us, but at least he showed up,'' he said, calling the Democrats' losses in 2016 a ''duh moment'' for the party. It was Democratic voter drop-off across Wisconsin -- not big Republican turnout -- that most helped Mr. Trump win there, he said.

''When one candidate doesn't campaign and the other one does, you would expect that you might get the results that we got,'' Mr. Pocan said. ''But no one will ever make that mistake again.''

This does not mean that Mr. Biden has avoided skepticism from core Democratic constituencies like young people and progressive minority voters -- the same groups that frequently needled Mrs. Clinton and backed Mr. Biden's rivals in the primary.

In fact, the same polls that show Mr. Biden securely ahead of Mr. Trump also find Mr. Biden with tepid numbers among young people and minority voters. His favorability rating decreased in a recent survey by NBC and The Wall Street Journal, driven by shifts among younger Democrats.

At a protest in Milwaukee in support of Black Lives Matter this month, Larissa Gladding, 23, said she viewed voting for Biden as the unfortunate cost of beating Mr. Trump. ''It doesn't even feel like it's an election about young people or he wants the young vote anymore,'' she said, adding that she planned to vote for Mr. Biden anyway.

Dominique Tonneas, 24, who was interviewed at a fireworks show in Muskego and who plans to vote for Mr. Trump in November, said Mr. Biden's age and long career meant he wouldn't bring a new perspective to the table. She said she planned to vote for Mr. Trump, who is only a few years younger, because she preferred his economic policies.

What is already clear: The last several months, which have featured the largest protest movement in American history and a pandemic that continues to kill thousands and upend the country's social and economic fabric, has forced Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump to adjust the structure, and the message, of their campaigns.

Sue Schaetzka, who attended the Chic Nic in Adams, said she voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 and planned to do so again in November. But she said the events of the past few months, and particularly the nation's response to the coronavirus, had changed the way people in her social circles felt about the president.

Ms. Schaetzka was unsure Mr. Trump could win the state again this year, particularly against a Democrat like Mr. Biden.

''With everything that's going on with Covid, I know some people are rethinking,'' Ms. Schaetzka said.

''People just like Biden more than they like Hillary,'' she added. ''I don't know if it's her past and all that, but they didn't trust her.''

At the protest in Milwaukee, young liberals said they planned to vote for Mr. Biden, but the exact things that help him appeal to people like Ms. Schaetzka are what makes them begrudging, even resentful, supporters.

They portrayed Mr. Biden as too moderate ideologically and as a doddering elder personally, a critique that mimics the ''Sleepy Joe'' moniker Mr. Trump has sought to popularize.

Diarelis Rodriguez, who marched in the protest, said she understood the young people who saw Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump as two sides of the same coin.

''Biden is part of the problem. He helped with the War on Drugs and doesn't really understand the issues we need him to,'' said Ms. Rodriguez, 18. ''The people I talk to don't want to vote because they don't want to participate in a corrupt system.''

But Ms. Rodriguez still said she planned to vote for Mr. Biden in November, though both she and Ms. Gladding wished he embraced more activist rhetoric on matters of racial equality and defunding the police.

There's a reason he has not. Twenty miles away, leaders of the Waukesha Democratic Party said they recently fielded a phone call from a skeptical voter who said she wanted to vote for Mr. Biden, but she was worried Democrats were becoming hostile to police officers.

A volunteer named Scott Prindl called the woman back. Mr. Prindl, 65, said the woman had family in law enforcement and he does also. During the phone call, he explained the Black Lives Matter movement and its goals, as he saw them.

''The real Black Lives Matter protests are the ones who are peaceful,'' Mr. Prindl, who is white, assured the woman over the phone. ''It's outsiders who are coming in and wreaking havoc,'' he said, alluding to the destructive political groups that protesters say turned some of the demonstrations violent.

The woman was comforted. She will be voting for Democrats in November, she said, and for Mr. Biden over Mr. Trump.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/19/us/politics/joe-biden-wisconsin-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/19/us/politics/joe-biden-wisconsin-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Nate Zimdars, a Wisconsin Democrat, said his Republican relatives would vote for Mr. Biden.

Larissa Gladding, 23, a Black Lives Matter protester, will back Mr. Biden to defeat Mr. Trump.

''People just like Biden more than they like Hillary,'' said Sue Schaetzka, a Trump supporter.

Diarelis Rodriguez, 18, said, ''Biden is part of the problem,'' but she is planning to vote for him.

A Fourth of July parade in Friendship, Wis., part of Adams County, which flipped from being a Democratic area in 2012 to a Republican county in 2016.

An Independence Day protest in Milwaukee. Mr. Biden has been able to attract progressives from Wisconsin's cities. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Why a ‘Do No Harm’ General Election Strategy Could Work for Joe Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CY-7M41-DXY4-X0MH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 19, 2020 Sunday 07:59 EST

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**Byline:** Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** Mr. Biden is running a risk-averse campaign in states like Wisconsin, where a broad coalition of supporters is emerging. Even Republicans are noticing.

**Body**

Mr. Biden is running a risk-averse campaign in states like Wisconsin, where a broad coalition of supporters is emerging. Even Republicans are noticing.

Follow our [*latest coverage of the Biden vs. Trump 2020 election here*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden).

ADAMS, Wis. — Nate Zimdars, a Democratic candidate for the [*Wisconsin*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden) State Assembly, arrived at the V.F.W. lodge here after marching in the local Independence Day parade, ready to meet voters at an annual outdoor chicken cookout called the “Chic Nic.” Although the event was hosted by the local Republican Party, Mr. Zimdars was far from nervous being behind enemy lines. He was eager.

The county flipped from blue to red in 2016, Mr. Zimdars noted, which meant it could flip again. Plus, national Democrats had done him a favor — they chose former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. for the top of their ticket.

“Biden comes across as someone who’s moderate and has experience on both sides of the aisle,” Mr. Zimdars said. “My close family and friends, who are a little more on the Republican side of the fence, said if Biden became the nominee they would vote for him.”

Such persuasion is at the core of Mr. Biden’s campaign strategy, designed to bring together moderates, seniors, ***working-class*** voters across races and former supporters of President Trump. The approach has helped him jump out to an early lead in polling, both in national surveys and in swing states like Wisconsin, where Mr. Trump won by less than 23,000 votes in 2016. It has also helped him fend off attacks from Mr. Trump, who has sought to cast Mr. Biden as a radical progressive despite his lengthy career as a moderate lawmaker.

But if Mr. Biden hopes to maintain his advantage as November draws near, Wisconsin Democrats like Mr. Zimdars have some advice, akin to the famous medical principle of “do no harm,” or the cautionary words of the hit HBO series “The Wire”: “Keep it boring.”

Being politically milquetoast is [*Mr. Biden’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden) appeal, they said, driving his ability to attract progressives in [*Milwaukee*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden), moderates in suburbs like Waukesha and more rural voters in places like Adams County, one of the 22 counties in the state that voted for Mr. Trump after backing President Barack Obama in 2012.

They don’t lament that Mr. Biden is not a historic candidate like Mr. Obama or Hillary Clinton, or that he lacks bumper-sticker progressive policies like Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders — they’re grateful for it.

After the 2016 election, Mrs. Clinton was lambasted for running a risk-averse campaign that seemed to rely on voters finding Mr. Trump’s conduct inherently repugnant. Four years later, facing a changed electoral landscape, many Wisconsin Democrats think Mr. Biden can win the state with that exact playbook.

Mr. Biden is “the perfect candidate for this area at this time,” said Matt Mareno, the chairman of the Waukesha Democratic Party.

“Trump’s whole rallying cry was that he was an outsider coming to fix the establishment, and now he is the establishment,” Mr. Mareno said. “We’re seeing more and more college-educated white voters leaving him and we’re seeing more seniors leave him. We’re seeing that coalition just completely dissolved down to the very core base of his support.”

Several characteristics inform Mr. Biden’s strategy, including his lengthy career as a bipartisan legislator, Mr. Trump’s panned response to the pandemic, and Mr. Biden’s identity as an older white man, the type of politician easily categorized as “presidential.”

There are a range of ways Mr. Biden can build a general election coalition in a battleground state like Wisconsin.

He could focus on winning back voters in low-population areas, where Mrs. Clinton suffered big losses in 2016.

He could build on recent Democratic efforts to target the college-educated white voters that Mr. Trump has, at times, repelled, particularly in suburban counties like Waukesha, Ozaukee and Washington, where Mrs. Clinton outperformed Mr. Obama but also lost some votes to third-party candidates.

Or he could seek to motivate reliable Democratic voters like young people, Black voters and Latino voters in Milwaukee, the Democratic stronghold where voter turnout was down significantly in 2016.

Mr. Biden’s advisers say he will seek to both appeal to persuadable voters and motivate the party’s base, mimicking the successful campaign of Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, a progressive who won re-election in 2018 by an eye-popping 10 points. Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump by 11 points in Wisconsin [*in a poll by The New York Times and Siena College*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden) last month, and [*more recent polling*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden) from other battleground states like Pennsylvania has been even better for him.

Representative Mark Pocan, a Democrat who represents Madison, said Mr. Biden’s campaign had already outpaced Mrs. Clinton’s in terms of investment in and attention to Wisconsin. Mr. Pocan said the Clinton campaign “took the purple state for granted,” citing both a lack of visits and financial support for down-ballot candidates.

“Donald Trump came and lied to us, but at least he showed up,” he said, calling the Democrats’ losses in 2016 a “duh moment” for the party. It was Democratic voter drop-off across Wisconsin — not big Republican turnout — that most helped Mr. Trump win there, he said.

“When one candidate doesn’t campaign and the other one does, you would expect that you might get the results that we got,” Mr. Pocan said. “But no one will ever make that mistake again.”

This does not mean that Mr. Biden has avoided skepticism from core Democratic constituencies like young people and progressive minority voters — the same groups that frequently needled Mrs. Clinton and [*backed Mr. Biden’s rivals in the primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden).

In fact, the same polls that show Mr. Biden securely ahead of Mr. Trump also find Mr. Biden with tepid numbers among young people and minority voters. His favorability rating decreased in [*a recent survey by NBC and The Wall Street Journal*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden), driven by shifts among younger Democrats.

At a protest in Milwaukee in support of Black Lives Matter this month, Larissa Gladding, 23, said she viewed voting for Biden as the unfortunate cost of beating Mr. Trump. “It doesn’t even feel like it’s an election about young people or he wants the young vote anymore,” she said, adding that she planned to vote for Mr. Biden anyway.

Dominique Tonneas, 24, who was interviewed at a fireworks show in Muskego and who plans to vote for Mr. Trump in November, said Mr. Biden’s age and long career meant he wouldn’t bring a new perspective to the table. She said she planned to vote for Mr. Trump, who is only a few years younger, because she preferred his economic policies.

What is already clear: The last several months, which have featured [*the largest protest movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden) in American history and a pandemic that continues to kill thousands and upend the country’s social and economic fabric, has forced Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump to adjust the structure, and the message, of their campaigns.

Sue Schaetzka, who attended the Chic Nic in Adams, said she voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 and planned to do so again in November. But she said the events of the past few months, and particularly the nation’s response to the coronavirus, had changed the way people in her social circles felt about the president.

Ms. Schaetzka was unsure Mr. Trump could win the state again this year, particularly against a Democrat like Mr. Biden.

“With everything that’s going on with Covid, I know some people are rethinking,” Ms. Schaetzka said.

“People just like Biden more than they like Hillary,” she added. “I don’t know if it’s her past and all that, but they didn’t trust her.”

At the protest in Milwaukee, young liberals said they planned to vote for Mr. Biden, but the exact things that help him appeal to people like Ms. Schaetzka are what makes them begrudging, even resentful, supporters.

They portrayed Mr. Biden as too moderate ideologically and as a doddering elder personally, a critique that mimics the “Sleepy Joe” moniker Mr. Trump has sought to popularize.

Diarelis Rodriguez, who marched in the protest, said she understood the young people who saw Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump as two sides of the same coin.

“Biden is part of the problem. He helped with the War on Drugs and doesn’t really understand the issues we need him to,” said Ms. Rodriguez, 18. “The people I talk to don’t want to vote because they don’t want to participate in a corrupt system.”

But Ms. Rodriguez still said she planned to vote for Mr. Biden in November, though both she and Ms. Gladding wished he embraced more activist rhetoric on matters of racial equality and defunding the police.

There’s a reason he has not. Twenty miles away, leaders of the Waukesha Democratic Party said they recently fielded a phone call from a skeptical voter who said she wanted to vote for Mr. Biden, but she was worried Democrats were becoming hostile to police officers.

A volunteer named Scott Prindl called the woman back. Mr. Prindl, 65, said the woman had family in law enforcement and he does also. During the phone call, he explained the Black Lives Matter movement and its goals, as he saw them.

“The real Black Lives Matter protests are the ones who are peaceful,” Mr. Prindl, who is white, assured the woman over the phone. “It’s outsiders who are coming in and wreaking havoc,” he said, alluding to the destructive political groups [*that protesters say*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden) turned some of the demonstrations violent.

The woman was comforted. She will be voting for Democrats in November, she said, and for Mr. Biden over Mr. Trump.

PHOTOS: Nate Zimdars, a Wisconsin Democrat, said his Republican relatives would vote for Mr. Biden.; Larissa Gladding, 23, a Black Lives Matter protester, will back Mr. Biden to defeat Mr. Trump.; “People just like Biden more than they like Hillary,” said Sue Schaetzka, a Trump supporter.; Diarelis Rodriguez, 18, said, “Biden is part of the problem,” but she is planning to vote for him.; A Fourth of July parade in Friendship, Wis., part of Adams County, which flipped from being a Democratic area in 2012 to a Republican county in 2016.; An Independence Day protest in Milwaukee. Mr. Biden has been able to attract progressives from Wisconsin’s cities. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 5, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Buying Beans Became a Political Statement***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CY-7M41-DXY4-X0NP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Farah Stockman, Kate Kelly and Jennifer Medina

**Highlight:** The boycott and counter-boycott of Goya come as the major political parties seek to energize Hispanic support ahead of the 2020 election.

**Body**

The boycott and counter-boycott of Goya come as the major political parties seek to energize Hispanic support ahead of the 2020 election.

For years, the Goya brand was synonymous with the Latino-American dream. The sheer number of products that lined the grocery store aisles — from refried pinto beans to sazón con azafran seasoning — spoke to the growing number of Hispanic immigrants who bought them. Goya, the nation’s largest Hispanic food company, has sponsored Dominican art shows, mariachi contests and soccer programs.

Advisers to President Trump considered it a victory when Goya’s chief executive, Robert Unanue, agreed to appear at the White House rollout of what it called the [*Hispanic Prosperity Initiative*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/), an executive order that promised better access to education and employment for Hispanics.

In the Rose Garden on July 9, Mr. Unanue praised Mr. Trump and compared him to his grandfather, who founded Goya.

“We’re all truly blessed at the same time to have a leader like President Trump, who is a builder,” said Mr. Unanue, a registered Republican. “And that’s what my grandfather did.”

And just like that, a once-beloved brand became anathema in many Latino homes across the United States. People posted videos and photos of themselves clearing out their pantries and tossing cans of Goya beans into the trash. It became a symbol of political resistance to share recipes for Goya product substitutes. “Oh look, it’s the sound of me Googling ‘how to make your own Adobo,’” Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York [*wrote on Twitter*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/), referring to a popular seasoning that Goya sells.

Almost immediately, Trump loyalists pushed back — filling shopping carts full of Goya products and posting videos of themselves dutifully swallowing Goya beans.

By the time [*Ivanka Trump tweeted*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/) an endorsement of Goya, one thing had become clear: In a polarized country, at a polarized time, the buying of beans had become a political act.

Even as Mr. Trump’s support has cratered among many demographics, he has held on to a small but durable slice of Hispanic voters, many of them in Florida, a state full of Cuban Republicans that is known for razor-thin electoral margins.

Polls consistently show Mr. Trump with an approval rating among Hispanic voters hovering around 25 percent, within the lower end of the range that Republican presidents have attracted for decades. Before the coronavirus pandemic tanked the economy, the Trump campaign repeatedly pointed to the low unemployment rate among Hispanics as an indication that the administration was delivering for the community, a group he has also offended with inflammatory remarks about immigration.

Now Goya has fallen into this boiling pot of politics and anger, a strange turn of events for a company that has prided itself on knowing its customers intimately.

With each wave of Hispanic immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, Goya has added new products to suit their cuisine, and over the years it has distributed millions of pounds of food to pantries after hurricanes and during the pandemic.

The company was founded in 1936 by Mr. Unanue’s grandparents, who moved from the Basque region of Spain to Puerto Rico, and then New York City, where they sold sardines and olive oil from a storefront on Duane Street in Lower Manhattan.

As the company expanded, it changed its name from Unanue &amp; Sons to Goya Foods — [*reportedly buying rights to its new name for $1*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/) because it was easier to pronounce than “oo-NA-new-way” — and branched into manufacturing. During the mid-1970s, Joseph Unanue, one of the founders’ four sons, took over as chief executive, and the company relocated to New Jersey. By the time he stepped down, the company had established relationships with Walmart and other big grocers and its annual revenue had grown to $1 billion from $20 million.

Some noted that Robert Unanue’s remarks at the White House showcased the glaring disconnect between the wealthy executive whose family hailed from Spain and the largely ***working-class*** Latinos who make up his customer base. The harshest critics questioned whether he considered himself Latino.

The speed and size of the boycott speak to “how raw people in the community feel about the president,” said Clarissa Martinez de Castro, the deputy vice president for policy and advocacy for UnidosUS, a Latino civic engagement organization. She said many Latinos blamed Mr. Trump’s attacks on undocumented immigrants for inciting discrimination and violence against Latinos, particularly the massacre last summer in El Paso.

For the first time, she said, anxieties about racial discrimination have ranked in the top concerns [*among Latino voters*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/) in surveys. But Mr. Trump’s supporters are betting that this is a winning issue for them and that Americans won’t understand or empathize with the boycott.

The day after the Rose Garden ceremony, Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, [*tweeted*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/): “Goya is a staple of Cuban food. My grandparents ate Goya black beans twice a day for nearly 90 years. And now the Left is trying to cancel Hispanic culture and silence free speech. #BuyGoya.”

And suddenly, the once-beloved Hispanic brand became a cause célèbre on the right.

Mr. Cruz said in an interview that he saw the boycott as an example of “spirit of intolerance.”

“The offense is he dared to say he supported the president,” Mr. Cruz said, adding that “anytime anyone dares disagree from their rigid orthodoxy, they seek to punish, cancel or destroy to the dissenter.”

Mr. Unanue, who has contributed to the campaigns of both Democrats and Republicans and worked with Michelle Obama on an anti-obesity initiative, appeared unprepared for the firestorm. Neither he nor Goya officials responded to requests for comment. But Mr. Unanue defended his remarks at the White House, [*telling The Wall Street Journal*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/) that he went there out of respect. “I remain strong in my convictions that I feel blessed with the leadership of our president,” he told the newspaper.

Trump supporters filmed themselves filling shopping carts full of Goya products, relishing in the opportunity to defend a Hispanic businessman and accuse Democrats of being anti-Latino. Dinesh D’Souza, a conservative political commentator, [*shared a video*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/) of himself swallowing beans, which he admitted he rarely ate.

A few days later, Mr. Trump circulated a photo of himself sitting in the Oval Office, smiling widely and with his thumbs up, in front of several Goya products, including a package of chocolate wafers and coconut milk.

Responding to questions about whether Ms. Trump’s tweet violated federal law forbidding government employees from using their positions to endorse products, Carolina Hurley, a White House spokeswoman, said the president’s daughter “has every right to express her personal support” for the company.

“Only the media and the cancel culture movement would criticize Ivanka for showing her personal support for a company that has been unfairly mocked, boycotted and ridiculed for supporting this administration — one that has consistently fought for and delivered for the Hispanic community,” Ms. Hurley said.

Some political scientists said Mr. Trump appeared eager for the free publicity that came by associating himself with a beloved Hispanic brand.

“It’s the Republican version of ‘Hispandering,’” said Geraldo Cadava, a history professor at Northwestern University and author of “The Hispanic Republican.” “He’s pandering to Hispanics the same way that politicians have peppered their stump speeches with a few words in Spanish. It’s the same kind of signal.”

Mr. Trump has occasionally made visible efforts to reach Hispanic voters. The Hispanic Prosperity Initiative, which included few details, came during a week in which he also met with Venezuelans who had fled socialism and held an interview with Telemundo, a Spanish-language television station. Mr. Trump spoke in the interview about a “road to citizenship” for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children, even as his administration has pledged to fight a Supreme Court decision upholding the Obama-era program that protected them.

It remains to be seen whether Hispanics who do not already support Trump will be swayed by his sudden association with Goya or his attempt to bring Hispanics onto the conservative side of the nation’s long-simmering culture war.

But for a few Latinos, the message resonated.

Alexander Otaola, a Cuban-American in Florida with [*105,000 followers on Instagram*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-white-house-hispanic-prosperity-initiative/), issued a video in Spanish that likened the Goya boycott to the destruction of statues and other cultural icons.

“What is Goya in the Latino community? It’s an icon, a statue,” he said in the YouTube video. “The left wants to destroy all icons.”

It is not clear how deeply the boycott has cut into Goya’s bottom line, or whether the impact of the “buycott” has canceled it out. Goya is a privately held company, so its records are not public.

In Jerry’s Supermarket in the predominantly Latino Oak Cliff community in Dallas, Goya products lined the shelves, as usual, and were bought by a steady stream of customers last weekend. In San Antonio’s Alamo Heights community, one cashier said managers of La Michoacana Supermarket have not said they would quit carrying Goya products. Guava paste and Salvadoran pickled salad, among other items, remained on the shelves.

But in Tucson, Ariz., Patrick Robles, a 19-year-old student at the University of Arizona, said his whole family was boycotting Goya products even though the company’s chickpeas had always been perfect for cocido, or Mexican stew.

“It was a punch in the stomach for us,” Mr. Robles said of Mr. Unanue’s comments praising a president who Mr. Robles felt has routinely devalued Latinos. Now, they are going to turn to brands like La Costeña or Rosarita.

But Pamela Ramirez, a 48-year-old Mexican-American small-business consultant in East Los Angeles, said she strongly opposed the Goya boycott. Since there is a large number of Latinos employed by the company, she thinks that boycotting the product could harm her own community. For every one of her Facebook friends who has posted about boycotting the product, Ms. Ramirez bought $10 worth of Goya products and donated them to a food bank, she said.

“You’ve got to put your money where your mouth is,” she said. “If you don’t, then you’re just part of the problem.”

Contributing reporting were Elda Lizzia Cantú, Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio, Marina Trahan Martinez, Erin Coulehan and David Montgomery. Sheelagh McNeill contributed research.

PHOTO: Trump fans are buying Goya. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGIO FLORES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 21, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Conservatives for Labor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60ST-FX41-JBG3-6127-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1758 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. A curtain of smoke hangs over California. Pence and Harris visit Wisconsin. And some conservatives rethink the value of unions.

After decades of setbacks, the American labor movement has made some headway in the last few years.

Striking teachers have won [*better pay and working conditions*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in a few states. Air traffic controllers [*effectively ended*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) a 2019 government shutdown by refusing to work without pay. The percentage of Americans who say they support unions has [*risen to 65 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), according to Gallup.

And Joe Biden has [*sent signals*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that, if elected, he may make labor policy a higher priority than Barack Obama or Bill Clinton did. (Biden [*told A.F.L.-C.I.O. members yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that he would be “the strongest labor president you have ever had.”)

But the most intriguing sign of a potential union resurgence comes from the other side of the political spectrum. As conservative policy experts have begun imagining a post-Trump Republican Party, some are arguing that it should drop its longtime antipathy to unions.

Republicans now [*rely on* ***working-class*** *votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), these experts point out, and unions have [*a long record*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) of lifting workers’ living standards. The decline of unions, on the other hand, has contributed to slow-growing living standards for most Americans. A stronger labor movement, according to this view, would be better than high taxes and big anti-poverty programs.

This past weekend — Labor Day weekend — a group of conservatives released [*a joint statement on the importance of unions*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). The group included Senator Marco Rubio and Jeff Sessions, the former attorney general.

“There are a lot of things we like about free markets,” Oren Cass, the executive director of American Compass, the think tank that organized the letter, told me. “But at the end of the day, those markets are a means to an actual substantive end — a flourishing society and healthy communities and families and a strong nation. And if markets aren’t doing that, then we have a problem.”

Cass emphasized that there was a lot he didn’t like about today’s unions. He is instead intrigued by industrywide unions, which negotiate pay for workers across multiple companies and are common in Europe. They can be more efficient than repeated union sign-up drives and contract negotiations at individual companies.

(Many progressives, including Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, also favor versions of the idea, [*known as sectoral bargaining*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Some pro-business groups counter that it would [*stifle competition*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).)

Whatever the specific approach, Cass said that the key was reducing the power imbalance that exists today between management and workers.

For now, pro-union conservatives make up a tiny minority of the party’s office holders. The Trump administration has repeatedly tried to weaken worker bargaining power, often with support from congressional Republicans. So it is entirely possible that the party will remain opposed to unions for years to come.

But that’s not the only possible outcome.

Related: Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford all forged occasional alliances with unions, Steven Greenhouse, a longtime labor journalist, [*wrote in a Times Op-Ed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

TWO MORE BIG STORIES

1. Pence and Harris vie for Wisconsin

Vice President Mike Pence and Senator Kamala Harris [*both visited Wisconsin on Monday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a state that many see as essential for President Trump’s electoral map. They each addressed the recent demonstrations against police violence, in starkly different ways.

Harris went to Milwaukee, where she met privately with the family of Jacob Blake, the Black man whose shooting by a police officer in Kenosha set off the protests. Pence, visiting the city of La Crosse, talked about the protests but not the shooting.

Wisconsin polls: “Back in the winter/spring and all the way back to 2018, there were plenty of polls showing that the president was highly competitive and even leading in Wisconsin,” [*The Times’s Nate Cohn tweeted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). “Those polls are largely gone — even as the president embraces a strategy purportedly targeted at that state.” Biden leads by about 7 percentage points in Wisconsin, almost identical to his national lead.

The money race: Trump had a huge financial advantage over Biden just a few months ago, but it has essentially evaporated. A big reason, according to a story by Shane Goldmacher and Maggie Haberman: [*Lavish spending by the Trump campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

2. The pandemic budget crisis

State and local governments across the U.S. are [*facing a severe budget crisis because of the coronavirus pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). To compensate, they’re cutting back on health care, education, unemployment benefits and more, at a time when those programs are in high demand.

Economists warn that could prolong the recession. Local leaders are hoping for aid from the next relief bill in Congress.

In other virus developments:

* India has surpassed Brazil as the country with the second-highest number of cases, after the United States. ([*Here’s a map of case counts from around the world.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing))

1. [*Sales of used cars*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)have taken off during the pandemic, as many people try to avoid public transit. That’s driving the price up: In July, the average value of used cars jumped more than 16 percent.

Here’s what else is happening

* New wildfires are burning across California, [*spreading a curtain of smoke over much of the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). A 7,000-acre blaze in San Bernardino County erupted after a [*family set off a “smoke-generating pyrotechnic device”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to announce their baby’s sex.

1. The Russian opposition leader Aleksei Navalny is [*no longer in a medically induced coma*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) after his poisoning, according to the doctors treating him in Berlin.
2. The last prominent protest leader who was still at large in Belarus [*vanished on Monday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Masked kidnappers grabbed her off the street, local news outlets reported.
3. Amazon has [*banned the sale of foreign seeds*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to U.S. customers. The change comes after mysterious seed packets, postmarked from China, began to arrive in mailboxes unprompted this summer.
4. Lives Lived: Constance Weldon is believed to have been the first female tuba player to earn a position in a major American symphony orchestra. It took 50 years for another woman to become the second. [*Weldon has died at 88*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

IDEA OF THE DAY: In praise of mediocrity

In his latest column, Ross Douthat of The Times Opinion pages took issue with [*a recent item in this newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). He suggested that it was unfair for me to compare the U.S. share of official coronavirus deaths around the world (22 percent) with the U.S. share of global population (4 percent).

The U.S. is simply too different from much of the world — like Asia, Africa and Oceania — for global comparisons to be meaningful, Ross argued. To him, the better comparisons are the countries closest or most similar to the U.S., like big countries in Western Europe and the Americas.

“When you compare deaths as a share of population within that group of peer countries, the U.S. starts to look more mediocre and less uniquely catastrophic,” he wrote. Germany has done better, for instance, while Britain, Spain and Italy have done worse. I encourage you to [*read Ross’s full column*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

I still think the evidence points to [*the U.S. being an outlier.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) It has a per capita death rate 80 percent higher than all of Europe’s and [*more than twice as high as Canada’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). In many of those other countries, the virus is also well enough under control that more parts of normal daily life — like in-person school and indoor restaurant dining — have returned.

What do you think? Send us an email at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, PLUMS

Make something seasonal

Here’s a festive sheet pan dinner from Melissa Clark that’s as beautiful as it is easy to make: [*roasted chicken with sweet plums and soft red onions*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Add a squeeze of lemon at the end to balance the sweetness, and serve alongside rice, polenta or warm flatbread.

Preview the 2020 N.F.L. season

Ahead of the N.F.L. season kicking off on Thursday — with the Houston Texans playing the Kansas City Chiefs — here’s a [*team-by-team breakdown of the league*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). And here are [*16 story lines to watch*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), from The Ringer.

The league will look different this year, both because of empty stadiums and because some star players [*have opted out*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) for safety reasons. But Americans will still probably watch in huge numbers: Last year, [*14 of the 25 most-watched prime-time television broadcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), of any kind, were N.F.L. games.

What ‘Tenet’ means for Hollywood

On a regular opening weekend, a blockbuster directed by Christopher Nolan — the filmmaker behind “Inception,” “Dunkirk” and the “Dark Knight” trilogy — might sell more than $50 million worth of tickets in North America. But little about the movie business is normal right now.

Nolan’s latest movie — the [*time-bending spy thriller “Tenet”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — has turned into a test of Americans’ willingness to go to theaters. The verdict: not great, not terrible. The movie grossed an estimated $20.2 million in North America over the holiday weekend. It was Hollywood’s best domestic result since mid-March, when the pandemic forced cinemas to close. “For now, this is as good as it gets,” one expert told The Times.

A large share of moviegoers chose to watch it on an Imax screen, [*Variety’s Rebecca Rubin noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). If they were going to venture out, she explained, they “opted to see it in the best quality possible.”

Related: [*Here’s what it’s like watching a movie*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in American theaters right now.

Diversions

* Take a [*virtual road trip along Route 66*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), the American highway that John Steinbeck called “the Mother Road.”

1. [*Online viewers are flocking to chess matches*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)during the pandemic, entranced by a charismatic grandmaster and his lightning-fast play.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Male friend, in Spanish (five letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. The word “[*slondok*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” — a crispy Indonesian snack made from cassava — appeared for the first time in The Times this weekend, as noted by the Twitter bot [*@NYT\_first\_said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about the Daniel Prude case in Rochester, N.Y. The latest [*Book Review podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) features Jeffrey Toobin on writing about Trump.

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Union members held a caravan rally in Washington this summer. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Drew Angerer/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 8, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Latinos and Young People Come Through for Sanders in California***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBT-32R1-JBG3-62T4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 4, 2020 Wednesday 15:12 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1473 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Medina and Tim Arango

**Highlight:** With millions of ballots left to count, it is impossible to know how the delegates will be allocated.

**Body**

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LOS ANGELES — California appeared to deliver a pivotal victory to Senator Bernie Sanders Tuesday night, driven by a coalition of Latinos, young people and liberal voters up and down the state. With 415 pledged delegates, California is by far the biggest prize of Super Tuesday and Mr. Sanders had been banking on a significant win there.

With millions of ballots left to count, it is impossible to know how the delegates will be allocated, and it may not be clear for several days or even weeks. Roughly two-thirds of California delegates are distributed based on congressional districts, with candidates needing at least 15 percent of the vote to win any delegates.

But with Mr. Sanders receiving more than 70 percent of Latino voters under the age of 30, and about half of Latino voters over all, according to exit polls, his lead over the other candidates looked decisive.

The Associated Press projected Mr. Sanders as the winner of the state just minutes after the polls closed, while thousands of voters in Los Angeles County were still in line to cast their ballots because of problems with voting machines.

A new $300 million voting system caused waits as long as four hours at dozens of polling sites throughout Los Angeles County, including in Westwood, the San Fernando Valley, Los Feliz and the east side of Los Angeles. The sign-in process to check voters against the voting rolls took hours at several sites, and internet issues left many centers with a small fraction of working machines. Lines continued past 10 p.m. at many locations, including several college campuses.

Alex Padilla, California’s secretary of state, called on the county to mail general election ballots to all registered voters and work to improve the operation of the polling sites.

“In Los Angeles County, too many voters faced unacceptably long wait times,” Mr. Padilla said Thursday in a statement. “Voters who waited patiently for hours deserve our praise for their commitment to democracy. Voters deserve better.”

More than 4 million mail-in ballots had been sent in by Tuesday morning, and as many as 5 million ballots were left to count by Wednesday, according to an analysis from Political Data Inc., a California-research group that closely tracks returns.

Along with Mr. Sanders, both former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Michael R. Bloomberg, the former New York mayor, seemed likely to receive delegates in the state, based on early returns. Mr. Bloomberg had poured $66 million into television advertising here, far more than any other candidate.

[Sign up for [*California Today,*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/california-today) our daily newsletter about the Golden State.]

State officials moved up the state’s primary to March this year in an attempt to make California more politically influential when it comes to choosing the Democratic presidential nominee. The change meant that voters saw far more television advertisements: roughly $120 million worth, with the majority coming from Mr. Bloomberg.

Several candidates visited parts of the state that have long been ignored in statewide elections, including Bakersfield and Riverside. Still, California never drew the candidates of early-voting states like Iowa or New Hampshire and most of the candidates relied on national news coverage to gain recognition in the state.

There was a clear generational split in the state, with Mr. Sanders winning among voters under 49, but Mr. Biden was the clear preference with voters older than 50. Mr. Biden won among older voters, black voters and moderates in California, the same coalition that helped him win several other states Tuesday. Mr. Sanders appeared to win among voters at all education levels, according to exit polls.

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In 2016, California proved to be something of a firewall for Hillary Clinton, who beat Mr. Sanders with 53 percent of the vote to his 46 percent. That year, the state voted in June, when the primary race was all but over.

This year it was Mr. Sanders who counted on California to be his own firewall. His campaign frequently referred to the “first five” states, lumping California with Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina. In turn, the campaign poured significant resources into advertising and organizing in a state that has traditionally been viewed as impossible to penetrate by door knocking because of its vast size.

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For Lorena Vellanowth, Mr. Sanders clearly showed a commitment to issues that she believes are important to Latino voters. Ms. Vellanowth came to Los Angeles from Mexico as a baby, and her daughter went on to graduate from U.C.L.A., and then to attend graduate school at the University of Southern California.

But all that success came with a big caveat: Her daughter, who works in public administration for the city of Anaheim, is struggling under the weight of almost a half-million dollars in student loans.

“Bigger than my mortgage,” said Ms. Vellanowth, 43, who works in health care. She said her daughter is getting married this month, and she worries about how her daughter and husband will ever be able to afford having children, or buy a home.

That reason alone was enough to draw her, and many of her family members and friends in the Latino community in Los Angeles to Mr. Sanders, attracted, she said, by his message of fighting the type of inequality they feel every day.

“I’m Latina, and you’d think that’s not someone I’d vote for, an old white guy,” she said on Monday afternoon, standing outside a polling place at a park in the heavily Latino East Los Angeles named for Ruben Salazar, a Los Angeles journalist who was killed in 1970 during a protest against the Vietnam War.

But she worries about her candidate’s future, now that the establishment of the Democratic Party is coalescing around Mr. Biden.

“I just hope the Democratic Party doesn’t screw him,” she said, of Mr. Sanders. Ms. Vellanowth, who became an American citizen in 2013 and cast her first presidential vote for Mr. Sanders in the 2016 primary, said she feared history would repeat itself, with the moderates of the party gathering around Mr. Biden as they did with Hillary Clinton in 2016, thwarting Mr. Sanders’s candidacy.

Mr. Sanders also captured the imagination of California’s young people, many of whom are struggling with the exorbitant cost of living in the state and buckling under student loans.

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In California, which has the fifth-largest economy in the world but is also home to the highest poverty rate in the nation when housing costs are factored, wealth inequality has been a paramount political issue driving voters to the polls.

With such a wealth chasm as a backdrop, Mr. Sanders’s platform of “Medicare for all,” free college tuition and student loan relief has resonated deeply. He has also promised to protect so-called dreamers — immigrants who arrived in the country illegally as children — and roll back the Trump administration’s executive orders on immigration.

It’s not only California’s poor and ***working class*** who have supported Mr. Sanders; some who may not struggle financially have been moved by the stark inequality they see every day.

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Mr. Lussier lives in downtown Los Angeles, which has been engulfed by a worsening homeless crisis. “Living so close to all that makes it harder to vote for anyone who will perpetuate the status quo,” he said.

PHOTO: U.C. Merced students in support of Senator Bernie Sanders during a “March to the Polls” event on campus on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAX WHITTAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2020

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[***Latino and Young Voters Lift Sanders in California***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YBY-8071-DXY4-X1JS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 5, 2020 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 21

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**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina and Tim Arango

**Body**

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/us/politics/California-Bernie-Sanders.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/us/politics/California-Bernie-Sanders.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: U.C. Merced students in support of Senator Bernie Sanders during a ''March to the Polls'' event on campus on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAX WHITTAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2020

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[***‘P-Valley’ Dances to a Different Tune***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:609C-2G11-DXY4-X1KC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 15, 2020 Wednesday 15:23 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1667 words

**Byline:** Alexis Soloski

**Highlight:** This new Starz drama is set in a strip club but “pulses with the female gaze,” said the creator, Katori Hall. Its premise is that sex work is as worthy of exploration as any other kind of work.

**Body**

When Mercedes takes the stage in thigh-high vinyl boots and a matching red G-string, dollars rain down. She struts, she writhes, she flies around the pole, whipping her hair in time to the music. Then the music fades and the crowd quiets and all you can hear are Mercedes’s groans and hard breaths and the creak of vinyl against the pole, chafing the legs beneath.

It’s a scene from the first episode of [*“P-Valley,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) a new drama that premieres Sunday on [*Starz*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c). Set in and around the Pynk, a shake joint deep down in Mississippi’s “Dirty Delta,” and centering on its crew of dancers, most of them Black women, the series makes the argument — as bold as it is obvious — that sex work is work.

“People have to eat,” the “P-Valley” showrunner and creator, [*Katori Hall*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c), said. “People have to shelter themselves. And so, for me, the major political act of the show is saying that women’s choices, women’s lives, all women’s lives, are worthy of being excavated.”

Prestige television hasn’t averted its eyes from sex work, though where those eyes land can be a problem. Many shows have treated dancers and prostitutes as little more than set dressing. Think of the Bada Bing ladies of “[*The Sopranos,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) or many of the brothel girls of [*“Deadwood.”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) The wriggling courtesans of [*“Game of Thrones”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) were deployed so cavalierly, they inspired the term “sexposition” (when naked frolicking livens up an otherwise dull bit of exposition).

More recently, [*“The Deuce,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) on HBO, and [*“The Girlfriend Experience,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) another Starz show, have placed prostitutes and pornographic performers at the center of stories. But only [*“Harlots,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) a historical drama that ran on Hulu for two seasons, backed an emphasis on women’s experiences with an all-female creative team, an approach “P-Valley” shares.

“I just knew that this show needed a laying on of hands that only women can do,” Hall said. “I had this deep desire to have a show that pulses with the female gaze.”

Exotic dance has its origins in the 19th century via English music hall, American sideshow and French cabaret. Designated strip clubs began to appear in the 1950s and 1960s. Pole dancing arrived a few years later and had become a club fixture by the ’80s.

Topless, bottomless or bikini, exotic dance remains a cultural flash point, with the question of whether it exploits or empowers women unresolved. It exists at an intersection of theater, athleticism, circus, sex and glamour.

“When you see a stripper perform, there’s something about it that’s just spectacular, the female body moving live in this way,” said Rachel Shteir, a theater professor and the author of “Striptease: The Untold History of the Girlie Show.”

Hall, 39, [*an actor and playwright*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) by training whose work typically centers Black bodies, grew up in Memphis, Tenn. She experienced strip clubs as part of the cultural fabric, venues for birthday parties, bridal showers, baby showers. A decade or so ago, after pole fitness classes had begun cropping up at gyms and dance studios, she decided to try one.

“It’s hard as hell,” she said. “I actually remember having to leave the class because I got so nauseated.” Which made her curious about the women who danced professionally.

So she met them. Over the next six years, she visited strip clubs throughout the American South and along each coast, interviewing more than 40 women. She spent her 30th birthday in the locker room at the Bronx’s Sin City. In the Black clubs in the South, she marveled at the theatricality of the shows.

“I was like, I can use theater to be able to comment on and excavate this world,” she said.

The resulting play, which has a title very like “P-Valley” but a little more explicit, premiered at the [*Mixed Blood Theater*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c) in Minneapolis in 2015. Reviewers liked it — The Star Tribune called it a “[*daringly raw and raucous drama*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c)” — but most of them had the same criticism, a criticism Hall shared. The play was too big, too diffuse.

“I was like, ‘Oh my God, this is not a play, girl, this is a TV show,’” Hall said.

Starz greenlit the series, and although Hall hadn’t had much TV experience — one unspectacular season as a staff writer on TNT’s short-lived crime drama “Legends” — the network approved her as its showrunner. Susan Lewis, the senior vice president of original programming at Starz, didn’t want another show that used dancers as props.

“Working with somebody who really understands the world and really had a great respect for the women doing the work was the right way to go,” she said.

Despite a few uncomfortable early conversations when executives (not Lewis) suggested less nudity — “Nobody would want to go to that strip club!” Hall said — Starz endorsed Hall’s vision for the series and her intention to hire women, particularly women of color, as directors.

“They understood that the show was going to need a sense of wildness, and a sense of authenticity,” Hall said.

In interviewing potential directors, all women, Hall questioned them about the female gaze, the idea that the show would tell women’s stories from women’s points of view, making them subjects rather than objects. “I can best describe the female gaze as presenting these women and shooting them through the lens of their experience,” said [*Karena Evans*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c), who directed the first episode.

“P-Valley” follows Autumn ([*Elarica Johnson*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGnNkEuS3c)), a new dancer with a dark past, and Mercedes (Brandee Evans), the club queen bee now nearing retirement. If the show stalks them and their co-workers onstage and in and out of the various V.I.P. rooms, it spends just as much time with them as they move, in unglamorous street clothes, from locker room to church to diner to home.

Nudity is frequent, but it’s typically brief, with the camera lens sliding off the women’s bodies as though it has been baby-oiled. The production favors what Hall calls a “Delta Noir” aesthetic, saturated colors and lots of shadows, leaving anatomy to the imagination. Hall noted a tradition of hypersexualized Black women in music videos and on film. She wanted to break with it.

“We could appreciate, and we did appreciate women’s bodies,” Hall said. “But we always wanted to make sure that she was more than just her body, more than just her curves.”

Nancy Schreiber, a cinematographer who shot half of the episodes, used music video techniques for the club scenes — Steadicams, crane shots, long lenses. But she was adamant that the camera shouldn’t exploit or particularize certain body parts. Reviewing dailies for an episode she didn’t shoot, she noticed a scene in which the camera lingered too long on a nude dancer. The scene was reshot.

“We were very careful in having our operators pan off after the suggestion of nudity,” she said.

Preparing the dance scenes and the sex scenes required constant conversation, which began in the audition room. “I wanted to make sure that everyone was good with it, that they were on board for what was going to be a very honest experience and very raw,” Hall said. The show hired intimacy coordinators, carefully choreographed each movement and checked in with the actors frequently about what was and wasn’t OK, allowing changes up to the minute.

“Katori doesn’t play,” Evans, who plays Mercedes, said. “If you know Katori Hall, you know the first thing first is going to be that respect, and making sure that everyone felt comfortable on set.”

While the other principal actresses relied mostly on body doubles for the dance sequences, Evans, a trained dancer, insisted on learning pole dancing and doing many of her own stunts. (Doubles still performed her character’s riskier maneuvers.)

“Oh girl,” she said, as she counted the scars on her legs, “1-2-3-4-5. Yeah, I’m scarred up and I’ll be dropping that behind-the-scenes footage for y’all. But it’s worth it. I look at it and smile. I’m not even mad about it because I wanted to know what these ladies truly did.”

These women, she added, are athletes. And when you see the dancers winging around the pole, sliding, skimming, plummeting, holding their bodies parallel to the floor in a display of core strength that should make your stomach muscles burn vicariously, it would be hard to argue anything else. But “P-Valley” maintains a careful ambivalence about the club itself, which Hall describes as a place of both liberation and exploitation.

On the one hand, exotic dancing allows for a display of athleticism and artistry. If you don’t have a college degree, it pays better than almost anything else. “You surely ain’t going to stack a G in one night slinging burgers or manning the layaway over at Marshall’s,” Uncle Clifford (Nicco Annan), the club’s gender fluid mama bear tells a dancer.

On the other, several of the “P-Valley” dancers have suffered abuse, which doesn’t seem incidental. Others are struggling with addiction. Customers are jerks. Degradation is a given. In the show, as in the real world, if women have a decent exit strategy from exotic dance, many of them will take it. Which suggests the Pynk as a place of survival, not empowerment. And yet, onstage, under the pink LEDs, the dancers spellbind.

“P-Valley” arrives when Hollywood has begun to rethink the stories it tells and who gets to tell them. The show’s characters are mostly Black, mostly women, mostly sex workers and mostly ***working class***, a demographic typically underrepresented or misrepresented onscreen. Which makes the show both a course correction and a test case for how much audiences will identify with characters typically dismissed and dehumanized.

“We’re uplifting these women and giving them power by telling their stories,” Hall said. “Because narrative is power, story is power in this world. And everyone — I will say this, everyone — deserves their story to be told.”

PHOTOS: Top and above, Katori Hall, the creator of “P-Valley,” who said she “just knew that this show needed a laying on of hands that only women can do.” Center from left, Elarica Johnson, Shannon Thornton and Brandee Evans. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIDELIS MORALES ROSADO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JESSICA MIGLIO/STARZ; TINA ROWDEN/STARZ)

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2020

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[***Hong Kong, Changed Overnight, Navigates Its New Reality***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:608Y-N151-DXY4-X416-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** In a city where China has made some ideas suddenly dangerous, people are trying to figure out where the boundaries lie, and how their lives have changed.

**Body**

In a city where China has made some ideas suddenly dangerous, people are trying to figure out where the boundaries lie, and how their lives have changed.

HONG KONG — A barge draped with enormous red banners celebrating [*China’s new security law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) was sailing across [*Hong Kong’s famed Victoria Harbor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) only hours after the legislation passed. The police now hoist a purple sign warning protesters that [*their chants could be criminal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html). Along major roads throughout the city, neon-colored flags hailing a new era of stability and prosperity stand erect as soldiers.

In recent days, as China took a victory lap over the law it imposed on the city Tuesday, the defiant masses who once filled [*Hong Kong’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) streets in protest have largely gone quiet. Sticky notes that had plastered the walls of pro-democracy businesses vanished, taken down by owners suddenly fearful of the words scribbled on them. Parents whispered about whether to stop their children from singing a popular protest song, while activists devised coded ways to express now-dangerous ideas.

Seemingly overnight, Hong Kong was visibly and viscerally different, its more than seven million people left to navigate what the law would mean to their lives. The territory’s distinct culture of political activism and free speech, at times brazenly directed at China’s ruling Communist Party, appeared to be in peril.

For some who had been alarmed by the ferocity of [*last year’s unrest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html), which at times transformed [*shopping districts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html), [*neighborhoods*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) and [*university campuses*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) into [*smoke-filled battlefields*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html), the law brought relief and optimism. For others, who had hoped the desperate protest campaign would help secure long-cherished freedoms, it signaled a new era of fear and uncertainty.

“This is home,” said Ming Tse, sitting in the cafe he manages, which once loudly supported the protesters. “But I don’t think this place loves us anymore.”

For months, Mr. Tse’s love for his home was advertised at his shop in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of North Point. The oat milk carton at the cash register sat behind postcards of protest art. A poster condemned the police shootings of two student demonstrators. Even after opponents of the movement threatened to vandalize the shop last fall, the decorations stayed.

But on Thursday, Mr. Tse, 34, took everything down. [*News reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) said police officers had interrogated owners of restaurants with similar protest paraphernalia. The security law criminalizes “subversion” of the government, a crime that the police say encompasses speech such as political slogans.

All that remained was a small plastic dinosaur on the counter, wearing a yellow hard hat. That inexpensive yet tough headgear, worn by protesters who fought with the police, had become a symbol of their scrappy fortitude.

“I don’t know if they are so sensitive,” Mr. Tse said. “It’s just a helmet on a dinosaur.”

He paused, then reconsidered: “Actually, everything is sensitive.”

That the [*lines of criminality had been redrawn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) became clear on Friday, when the authorities charged a 24-year-old man with terrorism and inciting separatism — the first person to be indicted under the new law. With a “Liberate Hong Kong” flag mounted on the back of his motorcycle, the man careened into a group of police officers on Wednesday, the anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China from British rule.

Most years, that holiday draws large pro-democracy rallies. But this time, they were banned. Protests were scattered, and the police swept in and arrested hundreds. Ten people, including a 15-year-old girl, were accused of “inciting subversion,” a vaguely defined crime under the new law; some had merely waved flags, bearing slogans that had never been explicitly outlawed.

A few dozen relatives and social workers waited on Thursday outside a police station in North Point where more than 100 of those arrested were being held. Such vigils had become a rite for protesters’ loved ones.

But this one felt more perilous, with crimes under the security law punishable by life imprisonment in the most serious cases. A Chinese official said Wednesday that the law was meant to hang over would-be troublemakers like the sword of Damocles.

The police collected DNA samples and searched the homes of the 10 people arrested on suspicion of inciting subversion — measures that seemed excessive when applied to people accused only of possessing pamphlets, said Janet Pang, a lawyer who is helping some of them.

“You’re supposed to only use power that is necessary, and that’s how the law should be,” she said.

Shortly after noon on Thursday, a pro-democracy activist, Tam Tak-chi, emerged from the station, where he had spent the night after being detained. Mr. Tam met a young man inside who said he had been arrested after the police found a banner in his bag reading “Hong Kong Independence, the Only Way Out.” The man wept on his shoulder, Mr. Tam said.

The Hong Kong government has insisted that free speech is not under threat. But on Saturday, the city’s public library system said that books by some prominent activists had been removed from circulation while officials reviewed whether they violated the new law.

The censorship has crept even into private homes.

In June of last year, Katie Lam took her two young sons to a large rally. Her older son wore a cap that read “Hong Konger” and raised a handmade sign saying, “Don’t shoot us.”

Now Ms. Lam, a data analyst, is anxious about what her sons say at home. One of them is having a birthday party in two weeks, and Ms. Lam wondered if she should hide a print displayed on the piano that reads “Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Times,” a slogan that the government says could be considered subversive.

The boys loved singing “Glory to Hong Kong,” the unofficial anthem of the protest movement. She worries that the neighbors will hear it.

“Even though we all knew it would happen one day,” she said of China’s intervention, “it’s still painful.”

But in some corners of the city, China’s move has been welcome.

The successive blows of the unrest, followed by the coronavirus pandemic, emptied malls and grounded flights, eviscerating [*Hong Kong’s economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html). The security law, [*however unpopular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html), seemed poised to end the [*monthslong impasse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) over the protests.

It was Hong Kong’s prosperity and worldliness that drew Harry He, 33, to the city from mainland China 10 years ago. He earned master’s degrees in finance and engineering and fell in love with his new home: its efficient public transportation, its high food-safety standards. He got married, found work as an insurance agent, bought a home, had a daughter.

Last year shattered that serenity. Once, while he was eating at a restaurant with friends, masked protesters smashed a nearby sushi restaurant owned by a company seen as pro-Beijing, he said. His mainland clients began avoiding Hong Kong.

Mr. He said he had supported the protesters at first. But he soon grew convinced that the authorities needed to restore stability, and that the security law would do so.

“I just don’t want to see violence again,” he said in an interview in his office tower in Tsim Sha Tsui, a luxury shopping district that was [*battered by street fighting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html). “I just want Hong Kong to be as developed and prosperous as before.”

Still, even some who embraced stability wondered about its price.

Just as core to Hong Kong’s identity as its freewheeling capitalism has been its proud, even gleeful, outspokenness. Street booths often lined the city’s busiest shopping districts, blasting dueling political messages. Tiny bookstores crammed into overpriced commercial spaces hawked volumes that were banned in the mainland.

Xu Zhe, a 22-year-old recent college graduate, said the law was needed to address the “terrorism” committed by some protesters. He had been horrified by a clash in November, when some demonstrators poured gasoline on a man who had scolded them, then [*set him ablaze*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html).

But Mr. Xu also worried that the law could be used to clamp down on dissent, including speech. Mr. Xu, who grew up on the mainland before attending university in Hong Kong, had never had a chance to protest at home. Last year, he attended his first demonstration, a small gathering against violence.

If Hong Kongers lost the right to protest, he said, “I would feel deeply, deeply regretful.”

Few people in the city know the price of protest better than Rowena He, a historian at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. For more than two decades, Professor He has studied the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, when Chinese troops gunned down protesters in Beijing.

Her office is an informal museum of the massacre, with a miniature replica on her bookshelf of the “Goddess of Democracy” statue that the Tiananmen protesters erected shortly before the killings.

On Wednesday, the day after the security law was enacted, one of Professor He’s students decided to walk around Hong Kong, documenting a city on the cusp of change. He sent her a photo of a row of Chinese flags, flapping in the wind. On a sidewalk railing nearby, a banner supporting a pastor imprisoned on the mainland had been ripped in half.

“You are a real historian,” Professor He responded.

Even as old markers of resistance have come down, subtler ones have surfaced. Some protesters have turned to puns and created new meaning from well-worn phrases, a tactic long adopted by mainland internet users to skirt government censorship.

On Wednesday, in one of the city’s commercial hubs, someone had [*spray-painted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) “Arise, ye who refuse to be slaves” — the opening line of China’s national anthem.

And one shop, in place of protest slogans, [*hung up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/world/asia/hong-kong-elections-security.html) nearly two dozen posters of propaganda from Mao-era China, including one that proclaimed: “Revolution is not a crime, rebellion is reasonable.”

Bella Huang contributed research.

PHOTOS: A float in Victoria Harbor celebrated new legislation on Wednesday, the anniversary of Hong Kong’s independence from British rule.; Protesters in Hong Kong held blank pages on Friday to avoid running afoul of the new security law. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Trump, Adept in Attacking His Opponents, Struggles to Define Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B6-M6M1-JBG3-62RH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Adam Nagourney

**Body**

With only six weeks to the Republican National Convention, President Trump has yet to find a framework for attacking his opponent.

President Trump won the White House in no small part by seizing on Hillary Clinton's missteps and using them to turn many voters against her. But after three unsteady months, and with the Republican convention six weeks away, Mr. Trump is struggling to define Joseph R. Biden Jr. to similarly devastating effect, a critical task at this stage of a presidential race.

By a combination of design and circumstance, Mr. Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, has managed so far to deny Mr. Trump the sort of damaging offhand remarks, campaign clashes and clumsy encounters with voters that he used as weapons against Mrs. Clinton in the last general election, as well as his Republican opponents in the 2016 primary.

This is partly because Mr. Biden has run such a low-profile campaign during the pandemic. He has had few public appearances and news conferences, which can provide the unscripted moments opponents can use to shape the public's perception of a candidate.

But there are other obstacles for Mr. Trump that have become clear since Mr. Biden effectively won his party's nomination in April. Mr. Biden, the former vice president, is viewed more favorably by voters than Mrs. Clinton was in 2016. He is a moderate Democrat who lacks a history of harsh partisanship or scandal. And he has long appealed to white ***working-class*** voters, who are part of Mr. Trump's base.

''It is going to be more difficult for the Trump campaign to go after a man who really is a centrist, has dealings with people across the aisle and knows how to talk to people who disagree with him,'' said Priscilla Southwell, a professor emerita of political science at the University of Oregon. ''And 2020 is a different kind of year. Donald Trump can appeal to his core by being negative, but it's such a difficult time for everybody. I don't think negativity is going to sell as well as it used to.''

Defining an opponent -- putting them on the defensive with caricature -- is a crucial and proven tactic for candidates in competitive races. There is a graveyard of failed contenders -- names like Kennedy, McGovern, Romney, Gore and Hillary Clinton -- who found themselves branded by an opponent in portrayals, often unfair, that ricocheted across the political playing field and the media.

Mr. Trump had been adept at this. But the kind of attacks that seemed so effective when he was a new-to-politics outsider in 2016 also appear to have less resonance coming from inside the White House. Four years of tweets by Mr. Trump have numbed many voters.

''It's almost self-defeating,'' said Ron Christie, a Republican who was a senior adviser to President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney. ''People are exhausted. The president, with every tweet, every insult, will move himself out of favor with the demographic that he needs the most, which is the independent.''

Mr. Trump does have some avenues to use against Mr. Biden before voter attitudes begin to harden. He has sought to tie Mr. Biden to the political unrest that has swept the country since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25 by the police. And Mr. Trump has tried to portray his opponent as senile, ''sleepy,'' corrupt and an ally of China, but none of those lines of attack has resonated with the public, at least up to now.

His aides have signaled that Mr. Trump, incumbent or not, would run as an outsider against Mr. Biden -- who has been a fixture in Washington since he was elected to the Senate in 1972 -- the way he had against Mrs. Clinton. Mr. Biden's long history of votes in the Senate, as well as his eight years as an active vice president under President Barack Obama, could give Mr. Trump plenty of material.

And if Mr. Biden continues to escape definition, Mr. Trump is likely to turn to Mr. Biden's running mate. Going after the vice-presidential candidate would be an unusual but not unprecedented strategy, and might have some resonance in this election given Mr. Biden's age; he is 77. (Mr. Trump is 74.)

Mr. Trump's campaign had calculated that Mr. Biden, given his long history and the stumbles in the early days of his primary, would be an easier opponent to caricature.

But now time is running short. A series of national polls has shown Mr. Trump trailing Mr. Biden, often by double digits. Even more alarming for the president, he is trailing Mr. Biden in battleground states that he won in 2016 and are likely critical to any re-election plan -- including Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. Even states like Georgia, which once seemed clearly in Mr. Trump's column, now appear competitive.

''Trump has much less time to pile up negatives on Biden,'' said Nelson Warfield, a Republican consultant who served as press secretary for Bob Dole's presidential campaign in 1996. ''I made my first negative ad starring Hillary Clinton in 1992 and I kept doing ads criticizing her across the next 24 years. And I was by no means alone. Republicans have months to do to Biden what Republicans had over two decades to do to Hillary.''

Mr. Trump would certainly seem to have a few advantages here to make his case. He has the platform of the White House and his Twitter account. Until two months ago, he enjoyed a huge financial advantage over Mr. Biden. And Mr. Trump, unlike Mr. Biden, never had to worry this year about a primary or uniting his party behind him.

But to the frustration of Republicans, his attempts to define Mr. Biden have seemed fitful. He barely mentioned Mr. Biden during two of his campaign's highest-profile moments in months: his speech in front of Mount Rushmore last week, followed by his July 4 address from the White House South Lawn.

And when Mr. Biden has made mistakes, Mr. Trump's campaign has struggled to turn them to its advantage. When Mr. Biden said that any African-American voter who considered supporting Mr. Trump ''ain't Black,'' the Trump campaign roared into action, but the fallout lasted only a day, particularly after Mr. Biden apologized.

While Mr. Trump has filled the space on the stage that Mr. Biden has left open, he has been the one to make campaign missteps that provided fodder for Democrats, notably when he said at a rally that given the increase in positive tests for Covid-19, ''I said to my people, 'Slow the testing down, please.'''

Mr. Trump has the obstacle of familiarity in trying to draw attention to his attacks. And his credibility has suffered over these past four years, which might make him an imperfect messenger to go after Mr. Biden: 67 percent of voters in a New York Times/Siena College poll last month said they think Mr. Trump promotes falsehoods or conspiracies very or somewhat often.

''The truth is people have heard him mocking and demonizing for four years now,'' said Mark Mellman, a Democratic pollster. ''They are somewhat inured to it, they are sick and tired of it. And by being home, Biden has given him less to shoot at.''

The period before the conventions is typically the time when candidates make the kind of mistakes their opponents can use to set the frame for the fall campaign.

Mr. Trump's campaign pounced when Mrs. Clinton was taped saying half of Mr. Trump's supporters were a ''basket of deplorables.'' Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential candidate in 2012, was caught at a private fund-raiser saying 47 percent of Americans were ''people who pay no income tax'' and were ''dependent upon government.''

John F. Kerry, as the Democratic presidential candidate in 2004, was caught on video windsurfing back and forth across the Nantucket Sound. That provided the perfect image for an attack advertisement by President George W. Bush, which portrayed him as a flip-flopper, his policy positions changing with ''whichever way the wind blows,'' as the announcer put it. (In the process, the advertisement underlined the Bush campaign's effort to portray Mr. Kerry as elite.)

In Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Trump had an unpopular opponent easy to demonize. In the final month before Election Day, 54 percent of respondents had an unfavorable view of her, according to a New York Times/CBS News Poll. Mr. Trump was in similar straits; he was viewed unfavorably by 56 percent of voters, the same percentage he holds today, according to the recent Times/Siena poll.

Mr. Biden, on the other hand, was viewed unfavorably by just 42 percent of voters in the same poll; 52 percent viewed him favorably.

''That was what was historic about that race,'' said Joel Benenson, who was chief strategist for Mrs. Clinton. ''You don't have that now. You have Trump with that high unfavorable rating. But Biden doesn't have that.''

''And he's the president now,'' Mr. Benenson said. ''He ran as a bomb-throwing presidential candidate. He could throw it at any candidate, they were the establishment. He owns it now.''

Ms. Southwell said that Mr. Biden presented a different kind of target than Mrs. Clinton. ''It's not that he hasn't been an insider,'' she said. ''He's had a different kind of upbringing and a different kind of career than Hillary Clinton.''

In many ways, Mr. Biden has turned the tables on Mr. Trump: He is running as if he were the incumbent, while Mr. Trump is acting like the challenger. The question is whether he will be able to maintain that posture through the election.

''Biden's basement Rose Garden strategy has enabled him to play the role of a generic Democratic candidate, without the microscopic scrutiny that he would otherwise have been subjected to,'' said Neil Newhouse, a Republican pollster who worked for Mr. Romney. ''Joe Biden is not Hillary Clinton, in that he doesn't have the built-in negatives that Hillary embodied. So, while we can absolutely still define Biden, we have significantly less time to do so.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/10/us/biden-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/10/us/biden-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A series of polls has shown President Trump trailing Joseph R. Biden Jr., often by double digits. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Trump gave a divisive speech at Mount Rushmore on July 3, where he refrained from any mention of Mr. Biden. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***They Spurned Clinton in 2016, But Like Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:613H-P671-DXY4-X4C6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer and Reid J. Epstein

**Body**

For many Democrats and independents who sat out 2016, voted for third-party candidates or backed Donald Trump, Mr. Biden is more acceptable to them in ways large and small than Mrs. Clinton was.

Samantha Kacmarik, a Latina college student in Las Vegas, said that four years ago, she had viewed Hillary Clinton as part of a corrupt political establishment.

Flowers Forever, a Black transgender music producer in Milwaukee, said she had thought Mrs. Clinton wouldn't change anything for the better.

And Thomas Moline, a white retired garbageman in Minneapolis, said he simply hadn't trusted her.

None of them voted for Mrs. Clinton. All of them plan to vote for Joseph R. Biden Jr.

''I knew early that Trump definitely wasn't the guy for me,'' recalled Mr. Moline, an independent. But when it came to Mrs. Clinton, ''I guess I had a bad taste in my mouth from her husband's eight years in office.'' He voted for Gary Johnson, the Libertarian candidate, a decision he regrets, and he feels at ease backing Mr. Biden.

''I identify more with Biden -- whether that's being a male chauvinist, or whatever you want to call me,'' he said.

The point seems almost too obvious to note: Mr. Biden is not Mrs. Clinton. Yet for many Democrats and independents who sat out 2016, voted for third-party candidates or backed Mr. Trump, it is a rationale for their vote that comes up repeatedly: Mr. Biden is more acceptable to them than Mrs. Clinton was, in ways large and small, personal and political, sexist and not, and those differences help them feel more comfortable voting for the Democratic nominee this time around.

Mr. Biden also benefits, of course, from the intense desire among Democrats to get President Trump out of office. And a majority of voters give the president low marks for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, the dominant issue of the race. But a key distinction between 2020 and 2016 is that, four years ago, the race came down to two of the most disliked and polarizing candidates in American history, and one of them also faced obstacles that came with being a barrier-breaking woman.

Mr. Biden now leads Mr. Trump in many public polls by bigger margins than Mrs. Clinton had in 2016. In private polling and focus groups, voters express more positive views of Mr. Biden than of Mrs. Clinton, though they know far less about his decades in political office, according to strategists affiliated with both Democrats' campaigns.

Interviews with dozens of voters, union members and Democratic strategists reveal a party embracing Mr. Biden -- a 77-year-old white man -- as a familiar political pitch, though some bristled at what they saw as the gender bias in that assessment.

''The Republicans did a fantastic job of making Hillary Clinton seem like the devil for the last 20-plus years, so she was a hard sell,'' said Aaron Stearns, the Democratic chairman in Warren County in northwestern Pennsylvania. ''It's just a lot easier with Joe Biden because he's a guy and he's an old white guy. I hate saying that, but it's the truth.''

Even as Mr. Biden proposes a significantly bigger role for government than Mrs. Clinton did four years ago, some voters view the Democratic nominee as more moderate compared to how they saw her. And they don't see him as being as divisive a political figure as they did Mrs. Clinton, despite Mr. Biden's long record of legislative battles.

''I didn't like Hillary -- I felt that she was a fraud, basically, lying and conniving,'' said Sarah Brown, 27, of Rhinelander, Wis., who regrets her 2016 vote for Mr. Trump and plans to vote for Mr. Biden. ''I'm not a super big fan of him, either, but the two options -- I guess it's the lesser evil.''

Since 2019, Mr. Biden has held an advantage of four to eight points over Mrs. Clinton in key swing districts, according to an analysis by John Hagner, a partner at Clarity Campaign Labs, a Democratic data analytics firm.

Polling shows Mr. Biden scoring higher than Mrs. Clinton among a wide range of demographic groups -- most notably older voters, white voters and suburbanites. But his advantage is stark among those who sat out the 2016 election or backed third-party candidates.

Mr. Biden leads Mr. Trump, 49 percent to 19 percent, among likely voters who backed third-party candidates in 2016, according to recent polling of battleground states by The New York Times and Siena College. Among registered voters who sat out the 2016 election, Mr. Biden leads by nine percentage points, the polls found.

At times, Mr. Biden has been notably critical of his party's 2016 nominee, arguing that she lacked ''vision'' and failed to connect with ***working-class*** voters, and openly relitigating what he saw Mrs. Clinton's debate missteps.

He has also noted ''unfair'' sexism against her, adding at an event in Iowa, ''That's not going to happen with me.''

Mrs. Clinton, too, has reflected on how she was perceived during the race.

''You should also be prepared for the slights, the efforts to diminish you -- you personally, you as a woman,'' she advised Senator Kamala Harris on Mrs. Clinton's podcast before the vice-presidential debate.

In 2016, Mr. Trump's appeal as a political leader was intriguing to many voters, given that he was an outsider and that few expected him to win, while Mrs. Clinton was a Washington veteran.

''Always institutionally, people want to get change,'' said former Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia, a close friend of the Clintons. ''Trump was anti-establishment, anti-swamp. They now have seen the horror that this man has done to our country.''

Yet, even as votes are being cast in 2020, Democrats still worry about some of the reasons for their loss in 2016.

Mrs. Clinton's campaign was criticized over its ground game in some battleground states; Mr. Biden's campaign avoided direct contact with voters for months. Mrs. Clinton was attacked for keeping a lighter schedule than Mr. Trump at times; Mr. Biden made his first visit of the year to Wisconsin in September.

But Mr. Biden has never been torn down like Mrs. Clinton, who had faced more than two decades of unrelenting G.O.P. attacks by the time she ran.

Internal polling conducted for the Bernie Sanders campaign found that Mr. Biden had a reservoir of good will that Mrs. Clinton did not possess.

''He was a hard guy to hit,'' said Ben Tulchin, Senator Sanders's pollster. '' There's not a lot of passion for him, but they like him.''

Republicans, too, have found Mr. Biden to be a much tougher target. Even now, four years after she last ran for any office, Mrs. Clinton has appeared in more Republican ads attacking down-ballot Democratic candidates than has Mr. Biden, according to data compiled by Advertising Analytics. In the final weeks of his campaign, Mr. Trump has tried to reignite controversy over Mrs. Clinton's emails, blasting out fund-raising requests with the subject line: ''HILLARY CLINTON.''

Accounts of focus groups conducted by the two campaigns underscore how perceptions of Mr. Biden and Mrs. Clinton are shaped by voters' genders.

The quality of Mrs. Clinton's that emerged as the most appealing in 2016 groups was not her accomplishments but that she had set aside her own ambitions to serve in President Obama's administration, according to people involved with the campaign.

Winning over female voters entailed walking a particularly tortured path, former campaign aides say.

''She had to show more experience than they did, but not so much experience that they couldn't relate to her,'' said Jennifer Palmieri, the communications director for Clinton's campaign. ''We kept running into those conflicts in people's own heads.''

In focus groups conducted by the Biden campaign after he won the party nomination, voters were generally unfamiliar with his achievements but far less conflicted about him personally, strategists said.

''Biden didn't have as much definition as I thought he would have had in the electorate,'' said Steve Schale, a veteran Florida Democratic operative who is chief executive of Unite the Country, a super PAC backing Mr. Biden. ''They just see him as a nice guy.''

Mrs. Clinton and many others believe she faced a more difficult political calculus because of her gender, indicating in a tweet after the first debate that she would have liked to tell Mr. Trump to ''Shut up, man'' -- as Mr. Biden did -- but had been constrained by how those attacks might backfired against her.

''When you've never had a woman president, it's hard to imagine what that's going to look like,'' said Stephanie Schriock, the president of Emily's List, an organization that seeks to elect Democratic women.

Unlike Mrs. Clinton, who was known as a workhorse legislator and secretary of state and projected that image, Mr. Biden spent decades cultivating a brand as just another guy riding home on the Amtrak.

''There's no doubt there was an element of sexism, but also there was a sense that she was looking down on people,'' said David Axelrod, Mr. Obama's campaign strategist. ''Biden, his cultural sensibilities are different.''

Voters who rejected Mrs. Clinton and who now back Mr. Biden present varying rationales. Midwestern union workers, most of them men, said they had found it hard to identify with Mrs. Clinton, never mind picture her as president.

''I have more faith in Joe Biden than Hillary because I like his background, where he grew up,'' said Dave Clawson, the Democratic treasurer of the United Steelworkers chapter in Lorain, Ohio. ''He's middle class, worked his way up. I saw her as not a very nice person. I don't know how to explain it.''

John Melody, a retired steelworker from South Euclid, Ohio, said he had questioned why Mrs. Clinton wanted the job, attributing most of her success to her husband.

''I thought the girl just wanted the job because she wanted to be the boss, that's all,'' said Mr. Melody, 76, who often votes Democratic for president but supported the Green Party candidate, Jill Stein, in 2016. ''Biden's a regular guy.''

In focus groups, Black voters who sat out 2016 said they hadn't believed that Mrs. Clinton would tangibly improve their lives, said Adrianne Shropshire, the executive director of BlackPAC, a super PAC that aims to energize Black voters.

''With Biden, their assumption is he will mitigate their pain and suffering,'' Ms. Shropshire said.

Democrats say Mr. Biden doesn't provoke the same level of antipathy in rural areas, where vandalism of Mrs. Clinton's yard signs was rampant four years ago.

Rich Fitzgerald, the county executive of Allegheny County, Pa., which includes Pittsburgh and its suburbs, said he sees Biden signs in conservative areas where he had never spotted support for Mrs. Clinton.

''Seeing people that live in some of these Trump counties that feel confident enough to put a Joe Biden sign in their yard just tells you something,'' he said.

Liberal Democrats, too, are showing more willingness to set aside their ideological differences, following the lead of Senator Sanders, who quickly backed Mr. Biden after ending his primary bid.

''In the last election, I didn't see things as being as dire as I do in this election, and I didn't think that Donald Trump could win,'' said Nikki Baker, 66, a Minneapolis waitress who voted for Ms. Stein in 2016. ''When Angela Davis and Noam Chomsky are saying you have to vote for Joe Biden, then I have to vote for Joe Biden.''

Amanda Cox contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/18/us/politics/biden-clinton.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/18/us/politics/biden-clinton.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Thomas Moline voted for the Libertarian candidate in 2016, saying the Clintons had left ''a bad taste'' in his mouth. ''I identify more with Biden,'' he said. Nikki Baker, right, voted for Jill Stein, but said, ''I didn't see things as being as dire as I do in this election.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A21)

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**End of Document**



[***The Sex Worker as More Than Set Dressing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60BF-G7S1-JBG3-6491-00000-00&context=1519360)

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 1625 words

**Byline:** By Alexis Soloski

**Body**

When Mercedes takes the stage in thigh-high vinyl boots and a matching red G-string, dollars rain down. She struts, she writhes, she flies around the pole, whipping her hair in time to the music. Then the music fades and the crowd quiets and all you can hear are Mercedes's groans and hard breaths and the creak of vinyl against the pole, chafing the legs beneath.

It's a scene from the first episode of ''P-Valley,'' a new drama that premieres Sunday on Starz. Set in and around the Pynk, a shake joint deep down in Mississippi's ''Dirty Delta,'' and centering on its crew of dancers, most of them Black women, the series makes the argument -- as bold as it is obvious -- that sex work is work.

''People have to eat,'' the ''P-Valley'' showrunner and creator, Katori Hall, said. ''People have to shelter themselves. And so, for me, the major political act of the show is saying that women's choices, women's lives, all women's lives, are worthy of being excavated.''

Prestige television hasn't averted its eyes from sex work, though where those eyes land can be a problem. Many shows have treated dancers and prostitutes as little more than set dressing. Think of the Bada Bing ladies of ''The Sopranos,'' or many of the brothel girls of ''Deadwood.'' The wriggling courtesans of ''Game of Thrones'' were deployed so cavalierly, they inspired the term ''sexposition'' (when naked frolicking livens up an otherwise dull bit of exposition).

More recently, ''The Deuce,'' on HBO, and ''The Girlfriend Experience,'' another Starz show, have placed prostitutes and pornographic performers at the center of stories. But only ''Harlots,'' a historical drama that ran on Hulu for two seasons, backed an emphasis on women's experiences with an all-female creative team, an approach ''P-Valley'' shares.

''I just knew that this show needed a laying on of hands that only women can do,'' Hall said. ''I had this deep desire to have a show that pulses with the female gaze.''

Exotic dance has its origins in the 19th century via English music hall, American sideshow and French cabaret. Designated strip clubs began to appear in the 1950s and 1960s. Pole dancing arrived a few years later and had become a club fixture by the '80s.

Topless, bottomless or bikini, exotic dance remains a cultural flash point, with the question of whether it exploits or empowers women unresolved. It exists at an intersection of theater, athleticism, circus, sex and glamour.

''When you see a stripper perform, there's something about it that's just spectacular, the female body moving live in this way,'' said Rachel Shteir, a theater professor and the author of ''Striptease: The Untold History of the Girlie Show.''

Hall, 39, an actor and playwright by training whose work typically centers Black bodies, grew up in Memphis, Tenn. She experienced strip clubs as part of the cultural fabric, venues for birthday parties, bridal showers, baby showers. A decade or so ago, after pole fitness classes had begun cropping up at gyms and dance studios, she decided to try one.

''It's hard as hell,'' she said. ''I actually remember having to leave the class because I got so nauseated.'' Which made her curious about the women who danced professionally.

So she met them. Over the next six years, she visited strip clubs throughout the American South and along each coast, interviewing more than 40 women. She spent her 30th birthday in the locker room at the Bronx's Sin City. In the Black clubs in the South, she marveled at the theatricality of the shows.

''I was like, I can use theater to be able to comment on and excavate this world,'' she said.

The resulting play, which has a title very like ''P-Valley'' but a little more explicit, premiered at the Mixed Blood Theater in Minneapolis in 2015. Reviewers liked it -- The Star Tribune called it a ''daringly raw and raucous drama'' -- but most of them had the same criticism, a criticism Hall shared. The play was too big, too diffuse.

''I was like, 'Oh my God, this is not a play, girl, this is a TV show,''' Hall said.

Starz greenlit the series, and although Hall hadn't had much TV experience -- one unspectacular season as a staff writer on TNT's short-lived crime drama ''Legends'' -- the network approved her as its showrunner. Susan Lewis, the senior vice president of original programming at Starz, didn't want another show that used dancers as props.

''Working with somebody who really understands the world and really had a great respect for the women doing the work was the right way to go,'' she said.

Despite a few uncomfortable early conversations when executives (not Lewis) suggested less nudity -- ''Nobody would want to go to that strip club!'' Hall said -- Starz endorsed Hall's vision for the series and her intention to hire women, particularly women of color, as directors.

''They understood that the show was going to need a sense of wildness, and a sense of authenticity,'' Hall said.

In interviewing potential directors, all women, Hall questioned them about the female gaze, the idea that the show would tell women's stories from women's points of view, making them subjects rather than objects. ''I can best describe the female gaze as presenting these women and shooting them through the lens of their experience,'' said Karena Evans, who directed the first episode.

''P-Valley'' follows Autumn (Elarica Johnson), a new dancer with a dark past, and Mercedes (Brandee Evans), the club queen bee now nearing retirement. If the show stalks them and their co-workers onstage and in and out of the various V.I.P. rooms, it spends just as much time with them as they move, in unglamorous street clothes, from locker room to church to diner to home.

Nudity is frequent, but it's typically brief, with the camera lens sliding off the women's bodies as though it has been baby-oiled. The production favors what Hall calls a ''Delta Noir'' aesthetic, saturated colors and lots of shadows, leaving anatomy to the imagination. Hall noted a tradition of hypersexualized Black women in music videos and on film. She wanted to break with it.

''We could appreciate, and we did appreciate women's bodies,'' Hall said. ''But we always wanted to make sure that she was more than just her body, more than just her curves.''

Nancy Schreiber, a cinematographer who shot half of the episodes, used music video techniques for the club scenes -- Steadicams, crane shots, long lenses. But she was adamant that the camera shouldn't exploit or particularize certain body parts. Reviewing dailies for an episode she didn't shoot, she noticed a scene in which the camera lingered too long on a nude dancer. The scene was reshot.

''We were very careful in having our operators pan off after the suggestion of nudity,'' she said.

Preparing the dance scenes and the sex scenes required constant conversation, which began in the audition room. ''I wanted to make sure that everyone was good with it, that they were on board for what was going to be a very honest experience and very raw,'' Hall said. The show hired intimacy coordinators, carefully choreographed each movement and checked in with the actors frequently about what was and wasn't OK, allowing changes up to the minute.

''Katori doesn't play,'' Evans, who plays Mercedes, said. ''If you know Katori Hall, you know the first thing first is going to be that respect, and making sure that everyone felt comfortable on set.''

While most of the principal actresses had body doubles for the dance sequences, Evans, a trained dancer, insisted on learning pole dancing and doing her own stunts.

''Oh girl,'' she said, as she counted the scars on her legs, ''1-2-3-4-5. Yeah, I'm scarred up and I'll be dropping that behind-the-scenes footage for y'all. But it's worth it. I look at it and smile. I'm not even mad about it because I wanted to know what these ladies truly did.''

These women, she added, are athletes. And when you see the dancers winging around the pole, sliding, skimming, plummeting, holding their bodies parallel to the floor in a display of core strength that should make your stomach muscles burn vicariously, it would be hard to argue anything else. But ''P-Valley'' maintains a careful ambivalence about the club itself, which Hall describes as a place of both liberation and exploitation.

On the one hand, exotic dancing allows for a display of athleticism and artistry. If you don't have a college degree, it pays better than almost anything else. ''You surely ain't going to stack a G in one night slinging burgers or manning the layaway over at Marshall's,'' Uncle Clifford (Nicco Annan), the club's gender fluid mama bear tells a dancer.

On the other, several of the ''P-Valley'' dancers have suffered abuse, which doesn't seem incidental. Others are struggling with addiction. Customers are jerks. Degradation is a given. In the show, as in the real world, if women have a decent exit strategy from exotic dance, many of them will take it. Which suggests the Pynk as a place of survival, not empowerment. And yet, onstage, under the pink LEDs, the dancers spellbind.

''P-Valley'' arrives when Hollywood has begun to rethink the stories it tells and who gets to tell them. The show's characters are mostly Black, mostly women, mostly sex workers and mostly ***working class***, a demographic typically underrepresented or misrepresented onscreen. Which makes the show both a course correction and a test case for how much audiences will identify with characters typically dismissed and dehumanized.

''We're uplifting these women and giving them power by telling their stories,'' Hall said. ''Because narrative is power, story is power in this world. And everyone -- I will say this, everyone -- deserves their story to be told.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/07/arts/television/p-valley-starz.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/07/arts/television/p-valley-starz.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top and above, Katori Hall, the creator of ''P-Valley,'' who said she ''just knew that this show needed a laying on of hands that only women can do.'' Center from left, Elarica Johnson, Shannon Thornton and Brandee Evans. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIDELIS MORALES ROSADO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JESSICA MIGLIO/STARZ

TINA ROWDEN/STARZ)

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[***Experts Feel Torn on Dangers of Different Protests***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B6-M6M1-JBG3-62PJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Michael Powell

**Body**

Public health experts decried the anti-lockdown protests as dangerous gatherings in a pandemic. Health experts seem less comfortable doing so now that the marches are against racism.

As the pandemic took hold, most epidemiologists have had clear proscriptions in fighting it: No students in classrooms, no in-person religious services, no visits to sick relatives in hospitals, no large public gatherings.

So when conservative anti-lockdown protesters gathered on state capitol steps in places like Columbus, Ohio, and Lansing, Mich., in April and May, epidemiologists scolded them and forecast surging infections. When Gov. Brian Kemp of Georgia relaxed restrictions on businesses in late April as testing lagged and infections rose, the talk in public health circles was of that state's embrace of human sacrifice.

And then the brutal killing of George Floyd by the police in Minneapolis on May 25 changed everything.

Soon the streets nationwide were full of tens of thousands of people in a mass protest movement that continues to this day, with demonstrations and the toppling of statues. And rather than decrying mass gatherings, more than 1,300 public health officials signed a May 30 letter of support, and many joined the protests.

That reaction, and the contrast with the epidemiologists' earlier fervent support for the lockdown, gave rise to an uncomfortable question: Was public health advice in a pandemic dependent on whether people approved of the mass gathering in question? To many, the answer seemed to be ''yes.''

''The way the public health narrative around coronavirus has reversed itself overnight seems an awful lot like ... politicizing science,'' the essayist and journalist Thomas Chatterton Williams wrote in The Guardian last month. ''What are we to make of such whiplash-inducing messaging?''

Of course, there are differences: A distinct majority of George Floyd protesters wore masks in many cities, even if they often crowded too close together. By contrast, many anti-lockdown protesters refused to wear masks -- and their rallying cry ran directly contrary to public health officials' instructions.

And in practical terms, no team of epidemiologists could have stopped the waves of impassioned protesters, any more than they could have blocked the anti-lockdown protests.

Still, the divergence in their own reactions left some of the country's prominent epidemiologists wrestling with deeper questions of morality, responsibility and risk.

Catherine Troisi, an infectious-disease epidemiologist at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, studies Covid-19. When, wearing a mask and standing at the edge of a great swell of people, she attended a recent protest in Houston supporting Mr. Floyd, a sense of contradiction tugged at her.

''I certainly condemned the anti-lockdown protests at the time, and I'm not condemning the protests now, and I struggle with that,'' Dr. Troisi said. ''I have a hard time articulating why that is OK.''

Mark Lurie, a professor of epidemiology at Brown University, described a similar struggle.

''Instinctively, many of us in public health feel a strong desire to act against accumulated generations of racial injustice,'' Dr. Lurie said. ''But we have to be honest: A few weeks before, we were criticizing protesters for arguing to open up the economy and saying that was dangerous behavior.

''I am still grappling with that.''

To which Ashish Jha, dean of Brown University's School of Public Health, added: ''Do I worry that mass protests will fuel more cases? Yes, I do. But a dam broke, and there's no stopping that.''

Some public health scientists publicly waved off the conflicted feelings of their colleagues, saying the country now confronts a stark moral choice. The letter signed by more than 1,300 epidemiologists and health workers urged Americans to adopt a ''consciously anti-racist'' stance and framed the difference between the anti-lockdown demonstrators and the protesters in moral, ideological and racial terms.

Those who protested stay-at-home orders were ''rooted in white nationalism and run contrary to respect for Black lives,'' the letter stated.

By contrast, it said, those protesting systemic racism ''must be supported.''

''As public health advocates,'' they stated, ''we do not condemn these gatherings as risky for Covid-19 transmission. We support them as vital to the national public health.''

There is as of yet no firm evidence that protests against police violence led to noticeable spikes in infection rates. A study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research found no overall rise in infections but could not rule out that infections might have risen in the age demographic of the protesters. Health officials in Houston and Los Angeles have suggested the demonstrations there led to increased infections, but they have not provided data. In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio has instructed contact tracers to ask infected people if they had been in big crowds but not if they attended any protests.

The 10 epidemiologists interviewed for this article said near-daily marches and rallies are nearly certain to result in some transmission. Police use of tear gas and pepper spray, and crowding protesters into police vans and buses, puts people further at risk.

''In all likelihood, some infections occurred at the protests; the question is how much,'' Dr. Lurie said. ''No major new evidence has emerged that suggests the protests were superspreader events.''

The coronavirus has infected 2.89 million Americans, and at least 129,800 have died.

The virus has hit Black and Latino Americans with a particular ferocity, hospitalizing those populations at more than four times the rate of white Americans. Many face underlying health issues, and are more likely than most Americans to live in densely populated housing and to work on the front lines of this epidemic. As a result, Latinos and Black people are dying at rates well in excess of white Americans.

Mary Travis Bassett, who is African-American, served as the New York City health commissioner and now directs the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University. She noted that even before Covid-19, Black Americans were sicker and died more than three and a half years earlier, on average, than white Americans.

And she noted that police violence has long cast a deep shadow over African-Americans. From the auction block to plantations to centuries of lynchings carried out with the complicity of local law enforcement, Black people have suffered the devastating effects of state power.

She acknowledged that the current protests are freighted with moral complications, not least the possibility that a young person marching for justice might come home and inadvertently infect a mother, aunt or grandparent. ''If there's an elder in the household, that person should be cocooned to the best extent that we can,'' Dr. Bassett said.

But she said the opportunity to achieve a breakthrough transcended such worries about the virus. ''Racism has been killing people a lot longer than Covid-19,'' she said. ''The willingness to say we all bear the burden of that is deeply moving to me.''

Others take a more cautious view of the moral stakes. Nicholas A. Christakis, professor of social and natural science at Yale, noted that public health is guided by twin imperatives: to comfort the afflicted and to speak truth about risks to public health, no matter how unpleasant.

These often-complementary values are now in conflict. To take to the street to protest injustice is to risk casting open doors and letting the virus endanger tens of thousands, he said. There is a danger, he said, in asserting that one moral imperative overshadows another.

''The left and the right want to wish the virus away,'' Dr. Christakis said. ''We can't wish away climate change, or the epidemic, or other inconvenient scientific truths.''

He said that framing the anti-lockdown protests as white supremacist and dangerous and the George Floyd protests as anti-racist and essential obscures a messier reality.

When he was a hospice doctor in Chicago and Boston, he said, he saw up close how isolation deepened the despair of the dying -- a fate now suffered by many in the pandemic, with hospital visits severely restricted. For epidemiologists to turn around and argue for loosening the ground rules for the George Floyd marches risks sounding hypocritical.

''We allowed thousands of people to die alone,'' he said. ''We buried people by Zoom. Now all of a sudden we are saying, never mind?''

There are other conflicting imperatives. Lockdowns, and the shuttering of businesses and schools and enforcing social isolation, take a toll on the ***working class*** and poor, and the emotionally fraught who live on the economic margins.

The lockdown is justified, most epidemiologists say, even as it requires acknowledging a moral truth: To save many hundreds of thousands of lives, we risk wrecking the lives of a smaller number of Americans, as businesses fail and people lose jobs and grow desolate and depressed.

The pandemic has also brought an increase in deaths from heart attacks and diabetes during this period.

''Have people died because of the closed economy? No doubt,'' said Dr. Lurie, the Brown University epidemiologist. ''And that pain is real, and should not be dismissed. But you won't have a healthy economy until you have healthy people.''

There's another epidemiological reality: No one quite understands the path of this idiosyncratic virus and how and when it strikes. The public health risks presented by the protests are not easily separated from the broader risks taken as governors, in fits and starts, move to reopen state economies. The protesters represent a small stream filled with 500,000 to perhaps 800,000 people, merging with a river of millions of Americans who have begun to re-enter businesses and restaurants.

''To separate out those causes, when we look, will be very difficult,'' Dr. Lurie noted.

Still, he admitted to some worries. He said he took his daughter to a protest early in June and felt a chaser of regret in its wake.

''We felt afterward that the risk we incurred probably exceeded the entire risk in the previous two months,'' he said. ''We undid some very hard work, and I don't see how actions like that can help in battling this epidemic, honestly.''

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A protest in Seattle last month. More than 1,300 public health advocates signed a letter supporting mass gatherings after the killing of George Floyd. That stance contrasted with earlier guidance. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2020

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[***Biden Confronts Trump on Chaos and Leadership***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60R9-N021-JBG3-60B9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Katie Glueck

**Body**

In a blistering speech, Joe Biden charged that crises ''have kept multiplying'' under President Trump's watch. It was an effort to refocus the spotlight on the incumbent after a week of Republican attacks.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Monday issued a forceful rebuttal to President Trump's claim that the former vice president would preside over a nation overwhelmed by disorder and lawlessness, asserting that it was Mr. Trump who had made the country unsafe through his erratic and incendiary governing style.

Mr. Biden condemned the violence that has occasionally erupted amid largely peaceful protests over racial injustice, and noted that the chaos was occurring on the president's watch. He said Mr. Trump had made things worse by stoking division amid a national outcry over racism and police brutality.

''Does anyone believe there will be less violence in America if Donald Trump is re-elected?'' he said. ''We need justice in America. We need safety in America. We're facing multiple crises -- crises that, under Donald Trump, have kept multiplying.''

Mr. Biden, the Democratic nominee for president, also pressed a broader argument that the president was endangering Americans with his response to the public health and economic challenges the country confronts.

The address was Mr. Biden's most prominent effort yet to deflect the criticism that Mr. Trump and Republicans leveled against him at their convention last week, when they distorted his record on crime and policing. And in a fusillade of tweets over the last 48 hours the president suggested Mr. Biden was tolerant of ''Anarchists, Thugs & Agitators.''

Speaking at the site of a converted steel mill in Pittsburgh with no audience, in a rare campaign appearance outside eastern Pennsylvania or his home state of Delaware, Mr. Biden rejected the suggestion that lawlessness would go unchecked under his leadership. ''Ask yourself: Do I look like a radical socialist with a soft spot for rioters?'' Mr. Biden, 77, said. ''Really? I want a safe America. Safe from Covid, safe from crime and looting, safe from racially motivated violence, safe from bad cops. Let me be crystal clear: safe from four more years of Donald Trump.''

The former vice president sought to refocus the spotlight on Mr. Trump and make the election a referendum on the president's character and his stewardship of the pandemic. He cast Mr. Trump as a destabilizing force who had exacerbated the most urgent problems facing the nation, from the public health crisis, international affairs and unemployment to issues around police brutality, white supremacy and racism.

He repeatedly instructed voters to ignore Mr. Trump's attempts to transfer responsibility to Democrats for the problems unfolding under his administration. ''He keeps telling us if he was president you'd feel safe,'' Mr. Biden said. ''Well, he is president, whether he knows it or not.''

The exchange between Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump over public safety, law enforcement and civil rights represents a significant, high-profile clash in an election that is now just nine weeks away. The issue is emerging as a test of whether Mr. Trump can shift voters' focus away from the coronavirus pandemic and persuade a small slice of undecided white voters to embrace him as a flawed but fierce defender of ''law and order,'' or whether Mr. Biden can counter that appeal by assailing the president as a provocateur of racial division and social disorder.

Mr. Biden took pains to differentiate between his support for peaceful protests and his opposition to acts of destruction. ''Rioting is not protesting,'' he said. ''Looting is not protesting. Setting fires is not protesting. None of this is protesting. It's lawlessness, plain and simple. And those who do it should be prosecuted.''

He promised he would seek to ''lower the temperature in this country,'' something he suggested Mr. Trump was unable to do. ''He can't stop the violence because for years he's fomented it,'' Mr. Biden said.

At a briefing late Monday, Mr. Trump declined to condemn his supporters' use of paintballs and pepper spray against protesters in Portland, Ore., over the weekend. He used the bulk of his time at the podium to criticize Democrats and Mr. Biden, saying, ''for months Joe Biden has repeated the monster lie that this is a peaceful protest,'' and falsely claiming that the former vice president blamed the police and law enforcement for the violence that was flaring.

Much of the Republican argument against Mr. Biden on ''law and order'' issues is rooted in false claims about his positions. But some Democrats worry that Mr. Biden has not been public enough in laying out his own views. Concerned allies have been on the phone with Mr. Biden's team in recent days, urging him to get out more.

''I'm worried because I think Donald Trump cannot win the election based on what he has done as president,'' Ed Rendell, the former Pennsylvania governor, said Sunday. ''So therefore he has to find some way to make his opposition the issue.''

Representative Tim Ryan, Democrat of Ohio, was one of those allies who had hoped to see Mr. Biden address the issue head-on, and he expressed enthusiasm for Mr. Biden's approach on Monday. The speech, Mr. Ryan said, may soothe voters who like Mr. Biden but have been uneasy with the scenes of violence.

''That's what a lot of ***working-class*** people from these swing states absolutely needed to hear very clearly,'' Mr. Ryan said, going on to add, ''Those of us who are down-ballot, those of us who represent areas like I do, we needed this speech to happen.''

Mr. Biden's visit to Pittsburgh, where he also delivered pizza to firefighters, was a departure from a schedule that has largely restricted him to campaigning from Delaware since the coronavirus shuttered the campaign trail in March. Advisers intensely debated whether he should visit Wisconsin on Monday, ultimately deciding against it, but discussions continue about a possible trip to the state. Last week a white Kenosha, Wis., police officer shot a Black man, Jacob Blake, multiple times, sparking outrage, protests and clashes that in some cases turned violent.

Mr. Trump is expected to visit Kenosha on Tuesday, though a growing chorus of Wisconsin officials have urged him to reconsider amid a tense environment on the ground.

A white teenager who has expressed support for Mr. Trump was charged with homicide after two demonstrators were shot to death in Kenosha last week. In Portland on Saturday, a man wearing a hat with the insignia of a right-wing group was shot and killed as a caravan of Trump supporters drove around the city and at times clashed with counterprotesters. The episode prompted tweets from Mr. Trump seeking to pin the blame on the Democrats, part of a barrage of online communication by the president that promoted fringe conspiracy theories.

''He may believe mouthing the words 'law and order' makes him strong, but his failure to call on his own supporters to stop acting as an armed militia in this country shows how weak he is,'' Mr. Biden said.

Some local officials have been urging Mr. Biden to visit their states and press his case against the president.

Mahlon Mitchell, the president of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, said he understood why Mr. Biden had not been traveling but said he would still like to see Mr. Biden meet with both first responders and the Blake family if the pandemic conditions allow. Mr. Biden and his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, a former prosecutor have spoken with the Blake family.

''Him coming to Kenosha just to see what's happening, talking to first responders -- my people -- talking to the family, I know people would like it,'' Mr. Mitchell said. ''I would like it.''

Other Democrats, including political activists, described a delicate balancing act Mr. Biden must manage as he condemns rioting but seeks to show support for peaceful protesters, who enjoy broad backing from the base of the Democratic Party.

''He's got to be measured because he can't look like he's falling into the same rhetoric of identifying the protesters as violent,'' said the Rev. Al Sharpton, the civil rights leader. ''And if he says a lot more, does he then alienate those of us that have been doing the nonviolent marching, that you're painting us all with a broad brush?''

There is some early evidence that the chaos has been problematic for Democrats among some voters who are most focused on protests.

Stephen Johnson, 44, a financial analyst from Kenosha who voted third-party in 2016, was leaning toward supporting Mr. Biden earlier in the campaign. But now he sees Democratic state and local leaders around the country as ''ineffectual'' in responding to the unrest that has sometimes veered into rioting, he said, and has decided he will reluctantly support Mr. Trump.

''I believe that Biden does not have the stomach to stand up to those that are openly advocating Marxism through terror,'' Mr. Johnson said. ''And I'm sorry, I need someone who can.''

In Michigan, the rioting that has rocked some cities across the nation has left Angela Daniels, 49, anxious and unsettled, too, though she is inclined toward the opposite political conclusion.

''We need stability and we don't have that right now,'' said Ms. Daniels, a psychotherapist from Southfield, a Detroit suburb. ''That's why I tend to lean toward Biden.''

As Mr. Trump increasingly uses the protests as a wedge issue, election analysts in both parties are taking a second look at a Marquette Law School poll of Wisconsin voters that came out in August. The share of Wisconsin voters expressing support for the protest movement that arose after George Floyd's death dropped to 48 percent, from 61 percent in June.

Still, most Wisconsin voters said they didn't like Mr. Trump's handling of the protests. Fifty-eight percent disapproved, while just 32 percent approved, the poll showed. And Mr. Trump saw no improvement in his favorability rating after the Republican National Convention, according to an ABC News/Ipsos poll released on Sunday.

Mr. Biden, who for years fashioned himself as a ''tough on crime'' Democrat, won the Democratic primary as an unapologetic moderate, defeating his democratic socialist chief opponent, Bernie Sanders. All summer and throughout their convention, Republicans sought to paint Mr. Biden as both soft on crime and overly punitive, a strategy that has yet to show it can define the Democrat to Mr. Trump's advantage.

''They've been throwing all kinds of stuff at Joe Biden from the beginning,'' said Representative Dina Titus, Democrat of Nevada. ''It's just a big, muddled message.''

Kathleen Gray, Maggie Haberman, Thomas Kaplan, Jonathan Martin, Adam Nagourney and Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/31/us/politics/biden-speech-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/31/us/politics/biden-speech-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''He keeps telling us if he was president you'd feel safe,'' Joseph R. Biden Jr. said. ''Well, he is president, whether he knows it or not.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Protests continued in Kenosha, Wis., on Saturday after the shooting of Jacob Blake. President Trump was expected to visit Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLOS JAVIER ORTIZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18)

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[***Michael Flynn Is Still at War***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64PD-D2F1-DXY4-X0H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 7459 words

**Byline:** Robert Draper

**Highlight:** The general tried to persuade Donald Trump to use the military to overturn the 2020 election. A year later, he and his followers are fighting the same battle by other means.

**Body**

To hear more audio stories from publications like The New York Times, [*download Audm for iPhone or Android*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=michael_flynn_war_draper).

On Nov. 25, 2020, President Donald J. Trump announced via Twitter that he was granting [*a full pardon to Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/25/us/politics/michael-flynn-pardon.html), his former national security adviser. Flynn pleaded guilty in 2017 to lying to federal investigators about his contacts with Russia’s ambassador to the United States during the presidential transition, though he had [*later tried*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/14/us/politics/michael-flynn-withdraws-guilty-plea.html) to withdraw the plea. A CNN report that evening reflected the conventional view in Washington that the pardon, arriving 18 days after the presidential election was called for Joe Biden, was a near-final chapter of the Trump presidency, “a sign Trump understands his time in office is coming to a close.”

At the time Trump announced the pardon, Flynn was encamped at the historic Tomotley estate in South Carolina, a more-than-700-acre former plantation dating back to the 17th century, where enslaved people harvested rice until much of the property was destroyed by federal troops at the close of the Civil War. Tomotley now belonged to L. Lin Wood, the Trump-supporting defamation lawyer who sued Georgia election officials over the state’s 2020 election results showing a Biden victory and predicted that the state’s Republican governor and secretary of state “will soon be going to jail.” (One of his suits was later dismissed; another is pending.) Though the next day would be Thanksgiving, Flynn had not brought his family with him. He had flown to South Carolina on the private jet of the former Overstock chief executive Patrick Byrne and set up camp at Tomotley, where he threw himself into the project of reversing the results of the election Trump had just lost.

The president and his loyalists, together and independently, had been working toward this end in various ways since Election Day. Byrne told me that he and Flynn’s attorney, Sidney Powell, met with Trump’s legal adviser Rudy Giuliani in Arlington, Va., shortly after the election to offer their assistance. Through Powell, Flynn soon became part of the group as well. Byrne said he had rented several rooms at the Trump Hotel for a few months — paying a full rack rate of about $800,000 — which he, Flynn, Powell and others would move in and out of. Byrne considered the hotel “the safest place in D.C. for a command bunker.” But Flynn suggested that they also establish a separate working area far from the Beltway. Powell contacted Wood, who agreed to host them at his secluded estate. As the group began to assemble in mid-November, Wood told me that he was surprised and “honored” to discover that Flynn, whom he had never met, was among his guests.

Powell had brought along two law associates. The other guests were there to gather and organize election information alongside her and Flynn. Among these was Seth Keshel, a 36-year-old former Army military intelligence captain who told me he got Flynn’s attention three weeks earlier by sending what he believed were suspicious election data to Flynn’s LinkedIn page. Another, Jim Penrose, was a cybersecurity specialist who had worked for the National Security Agency. A third, Doug Logan, was an associate of Byrne and the chief executive of a Florida-based software-security firm called Cyber Ninjas. (Powell, Penrose and Logan did not respond to requests for comment.) Wood and Byrne said the group had brought computers, printers and whiteboards. “It looked like Election Central,” Wood recalled.

Flynn and the other men slept and ate at an adjacent property, Cotton Hall, but otherwise toiled in the main residence at Tomotley. In a podcast interview, Keshel recalled that when he woke up in the mornings, usually around 5:45 a.m., Flynn typically had “been up for several hours,” juggling “a few different cellphones at any given time.” Keshel told me that while he spent his three weeks at Tomotley assembling data for Powell’s legal filings, Flynn came and went without notice and did not always volunteer what he was working on. “General Flynn is very adept at need-to-know,” he said.

Two days after Thanksgiving, Flynn spoke by phone with the Worldview Weekend Broadcast Network, a right-wing religious media outlet. Claiming that the 2020 election involved “probably the greatest fraud that our country has ever experienced in our history,” he asserted that China was “not going to allow 2020 to happen, and so now what we have is this theft with mail-in ballots.” A legitimate counting of the ballots would have resulted in a Trump landslide, he insisted. “I’m right in the middle of it right now,” Flynn said, “and I will tell you that, first of all, the president has clear paths to victory.”

While Powell was pursuing legal options for reversing the election results, Flynn was beginning to envision a military role. “It’s not unprecedented,” Flynn, describing the nascent plan, [*insisted to the Newsmax host Greg Kelly*](https://www.newsmax.com/politics/trump-election-flynn-martiallaw/2020/12/17/id/1002139/) on Dec. 17. “I mean, these people out there talking about martial law, like it’s something that we’ve never done. Martial law has been instituted 64 times, Greg,” he said, then added, “I’m not calling for that.”

But by that point, Flynn was in fact calling for sending in the military to the contested states. Byrne told me that by Dec. 16, he had lined up a series of options for the president to consider, including using uniformed officials to confiscate voting machines and ballots in six states. Flynn suggested to Byrne that the National Guard and U.S. marshals in combination would be the most suited to the job.

On the evening of Dec. 18, Flynn, Byrne, Powell and a legal associate took an S.U.V. limousine to the White House. The group found their way into the Oval Office with the help of several eager-to-please White House staff members, including Garrett Ziegler, an aide to the Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro. (Navarro had released his own extensive, and swiftly debunked, report on election fraud the day before and was in the midst of lobbying Republican members of Congress to overturn the 2020 results.) Byrne, Flynn and Powell then made their case directly to the president about the options he had at his disposal, including Flynn’s suggested use of the National Guard and U.S. marshals. According to Byrne, Powell handed Trump a packet that included previous executive orders issued by President Barack Obama and by Trump that the group believed established a precedent for a new executive order, one that would use supposed foreign interference in the election as a justification for deploying the military. In this operation, Byrne added, Flynn could serve as Trump’s “field marshal.”

White House lawyers present at the meeting vehemently denounced the plan. According to Byrne, Flynn calmly replied: “May I ask what it is you think happened on Nov. 3? Do you think there was anything strange about the election?” According to [*another account of the meeting published by Axios*](https://www.axios.com/trump-oval-office-meeting-sidney-powell-a8e1e466-2e42-42d0-9cf1-26eb267f8723.html), Flynn became livid. “You’re quitting!” he yelled at Eric Herschmann, a senior adviser to Trump. “You’re a quitter! You’re not fighting!” (Byrne denies that Flynn said this.)

[*Trump was amenable to the idea of civilian authorities’ seizing voting machines*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/31/us/politics/donald-trump-election-results-fraud-voting-machines.html); in November, he reportedly proposed the idea of the Justice Department’s doing so to his attorney general, William Barr, though Barr rejected it. But either by his own judgment or on the advice of others, he seemed to draw the line at using the military. Byrne told me that Giuliani recently explained to him that he had counseled the president to reject such a plan because “we would all end up in prison.” (A lawyer for Giuliani did not respond to a request for comment.) After Flynn and Powell’s proposal was rejected, [*Phil Waldron*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/21/us/politics/phil-waldron-jan-6.html), a retired Army colonel who served with Flynn and was now working with Powell’s legal team, later offered his own revised draft executive order, in which the Department of Homeland Security would be ordered to seize the machines. But Ken Cuccinelli, the department’s acting deputy secretary, resisted. (Waldron had presented his own martial-law plan to both Flynn and Trump’s legal team; it is unclear whether the plan that Flynn’s group presented originated with him or Waldron.)

Flynn, meanwhile, continued to agitate for military intervention. Through an intermediary, he contacted Ezra Cohen, the Defense Department acting under secretary for intelligence, who served under Flynn both at the Defense Intelligence Agency, where Flynn had been director, and on the National Security Council. Cohen (identified in other reports as Ezra Cohen-Watnick) was traveling in the Middle East at the time; the intermediary told him that Flynn wanted him to return to Washington right away.

The call, Cohen told me, was out of the blue. Although it has been reported that he and Flynn were close, he insisted that this was not true: They overlapped at the D.I.A., but Cohen said they met for the first time in the spring of 2016, well after Flynn left the agency, when Cohen wanted to solicit career advice from a veteran intelligence officer. Months later, Flynn recruited him to serve on the N.S.C., but Cohen said they had spoken only briefly a couple of times since Flynn’s departure from the White House.

Cohen said he demurred, but Flynn called him a second time, shortly before Christmas, catching Cohen on his cellphone as he was driving home from a Whole Foods in Maryland. He explained that he needed Cohen to direct the military to seize ballots and voting machines and rerun the election.

Cohen said he was too stupefied to ask his former boss how he thought Cohen had the authority to do such a thing. “Sir, the election is over,” he said, according to the ABC News reporter Jonathan Karl’s book “Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show.” “It’s time to move on.” Cohen told me that Flynn yelled so loudly that Cohen’s wife could clearly hear it from the passenger seat. “You’re a quitter!” Flynn berated him, as he had berated Herschmann. “This is not over! Don’t be a quitter!”

With Flynn’s fleeting window of direct access to the president closed, he and Powell urged Representative Devin Nunes, a Trump ally, to pursue a particularly hallucinatory rumor that the election results had been manipulated by an Italian defense contractor. But a Nunes staff member found the lead to be meritless, according to someone with knowledge of the discussions. Flynn’s attempts to reach the director of national intelligence, John Ratcliffe, were blocked by the White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows, according to a government official who was privy to these efforts.

It was a stunning near miss for American democracy. But after more than a month of furious machinations, Flynn seemed to have at last exhausted his options. He would later lament to a right-wing podcaster, a fellow retired general and conspiracy theorist named Paul Vallely, that “in the final days of the administration, there was a lot of decisions that could have been made.” Flynn had been boxed out, he claimed, by “a team that wanted to kind of, ‘Let’s get past this; let’s get rid of this guy Trump.’”

A day after the riot at the Capitol on Jan. 6, the conservative Washington Examiner published an article suggesting that the [*intelligence community had delayed the publication of a report outlining China’s attempts to influence the 2020 election*](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/intelligence-analysts-downplayed-election-interference-trump-inspector) (though the Office of the Director of National Intelligence categorically dismissed the claim that China played any role in altering the vote totals). Flynn texted a link to the article to an associate with a bitter accompanying note: “Ratcliffe should be ashamed of himself as well as Trump for not demanding this report be made public over a month ago.”

On a Friday evening this January, Flynn took the stage at Dream City Church in Phoenix, the latest stop of the ReAwaken America conference: a right-wing road show that combines elements of a tent revival, a trade fair and a sci-fi convention. Flynn, the featured speaker, was wearing a palm-tree-print blazer over a T-shirt and jeans. He began by leading a round of stretching exercises. “You’re the tough crowd, because you’re the ones who hung in there all day,” Flynn said to the audience of perhaps a thousand.

The crowd had thinned considerably from a peak of 3,500. Those who remained had listened for nine hours to a procession of speakers, including Eric Trump; Mike Lindell, the MyPillow chief executive; the young conservative activist Charlie Kirk from Turning Point USA; and, just before Flynn, a New Jersey gym owner who was[*banned from American Airlines*](https://nypost.com/2021/03/02/nj-gym-owner-who-defied-lockdown-banned-from-airline-after-mask-less-trip/) after refusing to wear a mask on a flight. After hours of apocalyptic pronouncements — coronavirus vaccines described by one speaker as “poison death shots,” the Biden administration by another as “worshipers of Satan” — his musings about the 2020 election seemed bland by comparison.

Flynn insisted that the election was rigged against Trump and that the failure to remedy it constituted “a moment of crisis” for America. He labeled the election system “totally broken,” Democrats “socialists” and establishment Republicans “RINOs” (Republicans in Name Only). But, Flynn said, “people at the county level have the ability to change this country.” Elected county commissioners could write more restrictive voting laws. Elected sheriffs could enforce those laws.

“Not everybody can be a Washington, D.C., superstar,” Flynn reminded the crowd. “Not everybody can be a Joan of Arc.”

Flynn did not explicitly compare himself to the canonized martyr of the Hundred Years’ War. He did not have to. At this gathering and across the right-wing ecosystem, the story of Flynn’s victimization by a diabolical “deep state” and the news media is practically a matter of scripture. “Look at what they did to the general,” Eric Trump told the crowd earlier that afternoon, with Flynn standing onstage beside him. Warning the audience that “they want to take you down criminally,” Trump then pointed to the human evidence standing to his left: “They did it to him.”

One year since Trump’s departure from office, his Make America Great Again movement has reconstituted itself as a kind of shape-shifting but increasingly robust parallel political universe, one that holds significant sway over the Republican Party but is also beyond its control. It includes MAGA-centric media outlets like One America News, Right Side Broadcasting and Real America’s Voice; well-attended events like the ReAwaken America Tour, which has also touched down in California, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Michigan and Florida; its own personalities and merchandise; and above all, its shared catechism — central to which is the false claim that Trump was the legitimate victor in 2020.

In this world, Flynn is probably the single greatest draw besides Trump himself. The ReAwaken America Tour organizer, Clay Clark, a 41-year-old Tulsa-based entrepreneur and anti-vaccine activist, has featured him in eight engagements across the United States over the past year. “I view it as an honor to pay him to speak at our events,” Clark told me, adding that a nondisclosure agreement prohibited him from revealing Flynn’s fee. At the Phoenix event, two nonprofit organizations Flynn helps lead, America’s Future and the America Project, had separate booths. America’s Future offered $99 annual memberships as well as T-shirts and other merchandise.

All of this is bewildering to some of those who knew Flynn in his former life, as a celebrated intelligence officer in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and watched his spectacular fall from grace with bafflement and regret. It is as if Flynn has managed to burrow his way from a Beltway graveyard into a subterranean afterlife, where he has been welcomed by a Trumpian demimonde that deified him at first sight.

Flynn possesses unique credibility among the ex-president’s followers, with his own compelling story line: that of a distinguished intelligence official who, he claims, experienced firsthand the nefariousness of the deep state. He is a MAGA martyr of such stature that the faithful have been willing to overlook some complicating elements of history. There is the fact that Trump fired Flynn from his post as national security adviser for the same lie that led to his [*indictment by the Justice Department*](https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1015126/download), and the fact that Flynn, after [*pleading guilty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/01/us/politics/michael-flynn-guilty-russia-investigation.html), spent 2018 [*cooperating with the Justice Department investigation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/04/us/politics/michael-flynn-special-counsel-sentencing-memo.html) of other Trumpworld figures. In the right’s transfigured portrayal of Flynn, “America’s general” was at most guilty of being a conservative who dared to accuse Obama of being soft on Islamic extremists, who dared to chant “lock her up” about the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton — and who dared to ally himself with Donald Trump at a moment when doing so, for a retired military figure of his stature, was still deeply taboo. That an American three-star general had faced such persecution — that, as Eric Trump said, “they did it to him” — meant, by extension, that no conservative patriot was safe.

In the year since Flynn sought to enlist the military in overturning the election, he has continued to fight the same battle by other means. He has been a key figure in spreading the gospel of the stolen election. Speaking at a rally in Washington on Jan. 5 of last year, the night before the Trump faithful stormed the Capitol, he declared that “everybody in this country knows who won” on Election Day and claimed without evidence that more dead people had voted in the election in some states than were buried on famous Civil War battlefields.

In November, the House of Representatives’ Jan. 6 committee [*issued a subpoena*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/jan-6-subpoenas-eastman-flynn-trump.html) to Flynn ordering him to testify, noting his reported presence at the Dec. 18 Oval Office meeting. In his speech the night before the Capitol riot, Flynn pledged: “Tomorrow, we the people are going to be here, and we want you to know that we will not stand for a lie.” The same day, Flynn was photographed with the longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone at the Willard Hotel, where several of the president’s loyalists had assembled. Flynn was also seen that evening down the street from the Willard at the Trump International Hotel, where other Trump advisers and family members had gathered and where Byrne had paid for Flynn’s lodging.

Flynn has sued to block the subpoena; his attorney, David Warrington, said in a statement, “General Flynn did not organize or speak at any of the events on Jan. 6, and like most Americans, he watched the events at the Capitol unfold on television.”

But the committee’s interest has both reflected and fueled a suspicion that Flynn is something more than a MAGA circuit rider. In addition to his role in the Dec. 18 meeting, Flynn is set apart by the 33 years he spent in the military establishment and the intelligence community, and by his persistent connections to that world. His brother Lt. Gen. Charles A. Flynn was an Army deputy chief of staff when rioters overtook the Capitol and took part in a phone call that day about whether to bring in the National Guard to assist the overwhelmed Capitol Police force. (Charles Flynn [*later denied to reporters*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/flynn-national-guard-call-riot/2021/01/21/943854be-5c36-11eb-aaad-93988621dd28_story.html) that his brother’s views influenced the military’s response to Jan. 6.) [*Flynn’s suggestion at a conference last May*](https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/31/politics/michael-flynn-qanon/index.html) that a Myanmar-style military coup “should happen” in the United States led Representative Elaine Luria, a moderate Democrat from Virginia and former Navy commander, to [*argue*](https://twitter.com/AC360/status/1399529103439581187) that Flynn should be tried for sedition under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Flynn has [*denied calling for a coup*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/us/politics/flynn-coup-gohmert-qanon.html). He did not respond to a detailed request for comment for this article. In Phoenix, he described his motive for his ongoing activities as the patriotic urge to “stand here and fight for this country” and alluded to the scandal and financial ruin that followed for his family. “What we experienced was unbelievable,” he said.

His war against the federal government is all the more dangerous because it’s personal. “If you think of the classic case studies in how radicalization occurs, it all happened with Mike Flynn,” a fellow military veteran who later did business with Flynn observed. “You’re vilified. Your family’s ostracized. You don’t see any hope economically. This is how to make an extremist.”

Long before his descent into election conspiracism, Flynn was known for his unorthodox information-gathering methods. Those who worked with him at the Joint Special Operations Command, where he arrived in 2004, and his later posting in Afghanistan, where he was the top intelligence officer for the coalition commander, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, recalled his approach as obsessive, omnivorous, high-velocity.

“He was incredibly rapid,” one of his colleagues in Afghanistan recalled. “He’d take in intelligence from unusual sources, from the grass roots” — coalition soldiers in far-flung units — “and from open-source, not relying on signals. And he ran things in a very horizontal fashion. When you sent in a report, his first instinct was, ‘Who needs to see this?’ And he’d put 30 people on the email chain. It was interesting to see someone function not according to the usual rules.”

Former colleagues recall Flynn reviewing reports at his desk late into the night, a half-eaten plate of tater tots beside him. His tenacity seemed to be exactly what the U.S. military effort needed. By 2004, it was clear to everyone on the ground in Iraq that one year after the invasion, U.S. troops remained at pains to understand who the enemy was, much less to defeat it. Flynn’s team closed the information gap in a hurry.

But Flynn’s intelligence-gathering operation was invariably chaotic, embodied by the general himself — who, the former Afghanistan colleague said, “would contradict himself three or four times over a 10-minute period.” His determination to get actionable intelligence into the right hands also led him to defy protocol on occasion, as when a colleague saw Flynn sharing classified information on his computer with a Dutch officer in 2009. Around the same time, according to a Washington Post account, [*Flynn also shared sensitive intelligence with Pakistani officials,*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trumps-national-security-adviser-shared-secrets-without-permission-files-show/2016/12/13/72669740-c146-11e6-9578-0054287507db_story.html) for which he was reprimanded by the Pentagon’s top intelligence official at the time, James Clapper.

Flynn’s discernment as an intelligence analyst also left something to be desired, recalled one former military intelligence officer who worked with him: “During the interrogations at Abu Ghraib, you just couldn’t explain to him that ‘Look, a lot of these guys that were taken off the battlefield just don’t know anything. And they’re all not interconnected.’ And he’d be like, ‘There’s got to be some connection that we’re not making.’ And we’d be like, ‘No, it’s just not there.’” Still, Flynn’s teams provided intelligence on the whereabouts and capabilities of Iraqi and Afghan militants of such value to America’s war-fighting efforts in both countries that his problematic tendencies were largely overlooked at the time.

In his book, “The Field of Fight,” Flynn describes how, after the Sept. 11 attacks, he came to believe that radical Islam was an organized global project to destroy the West, akin to the Soviet Union’s designs on the developing world during the Cold War (which Flynn experienced firsthand as a young Army lieutenant participating in the U.S. invasion of Communist-controlled Grenada in 1983). By family tradition, Flynn, the ***working-class*** son of an Army sergeant from Rhode Island, was a registered Democrat. But he also regarded the left as useful idiots in the radical Islamists’ plans, if not outright accomplices. While in Afghanistan, he disdainfully opined to a colleague that Obama wanted to “remake American society.”

His misgivings about the president became personal in June 2010, when Obama fired McChrystal, Flynn’s mentor, after a Rolling Stone article quoted [*McChrystal’s team mocking members of the Obama administration.*](https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/the-runaway-general-the-profile-that-brought-down-mcchrystal-192609/) Six years later, Flynn would say in “The Field of Fight” that McChrystal’s “maltreatment is still hard for me to digest.”

Still, Flynn’s service under McChrystal had garnered significant admiration in Washington, and Clapper, who by this point was serving as the director of national intelligence, brought Flynn to work at the O.D.N.I. in 2011. A year later, Flynn became the new director of the D.I.A. On paper, bringing in the top intelligence officer in Iraq and Afghanistan made perfect sense. On the other hand, Flynn’s experience as the supervisor of a small operation would not readily scale to an organization of 17,000 employees within a top-heavy and doctrinaire intelligence bureaucracy.

One former senior intelligence official recalled trying to warn Flynn that running a large agency required different management techniques from those to which he was accustomed. Flynn, undeterred, wasted little time upending the D.I.A. He shuffled the responsibilities of the agency’s senior executives and made significant structural changes to the Defense Clandestine Service in defiance of the instruction of his Pentagon superiors. He often ignored his civilian chain of command, according to one of his subordinates.

Woven into the mythology of Flynn’s martyrdom is that his dire warnings about the growing threat of Islamic extremism were what ultimately cost him his job at the D.I.A. In “The Field of Fight,” he claimed to have been given his walking papers in February 2014 “after telling a congressional committee that we were not as safe as we had been a few years back.” In fact, the only evidence I could find of Flynn saying anything along these lines was his [*remarks to an audience at the Aspen Institute*](https://www.aspeninstitute.org/videos/general-michael-flynn-on-global-threat-picture-defense-intelligence-agency-sees/) fully five months after being asked for his resignation by James Clapper and Michael Vickers, the under secretary of defense for intelligence, not Obama. “President Obama wouldn’t have known Flynn if he’d fallen over him,” Clapper told me. “We told Susan Rice” — Obama’s national security adviser — “what we’d done after the fact.” Their reasons for ending Flynn’s tenure, he added, included insubordination and erosion of morale at the agency. Clapper termed Flynn’s fired-for-telling-the-truth narrative “baloney.”

Flynn was permitted to retire with the full benefits accorded a three-star general. His retirement ceremony on Aug. 7, 2014 was well attended. He bought a three-bedroom house in the Old Town neighborhood of Alexandria, Va., and set up a consulting shop, Flynn Intel Group, in an office overlooking the Potomac River. And he began venturing into politics. Six months after his retirement, he went on “Fox News Sunday” to criticize the Obama administration’s terrorist-fighting “passivity.” A string of further appearances on the network followed. Flynn also began consulting with Republican presidential contenders, including Carly Fiorina and Scott Walker.

But in the private sector, too, Flynn was reckless. His admirers were horrified to see him form a [*partnership with Bijan Kian*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/us/politics/bijan-kian-michael-flynn.html), an Iranian American businessman who would later be indicted on charges of acting as an unregistered agent of the Turkish government (the case has not been resolved). Kian epitomized, in the words of a former colleague, “these guys in the D.C. swamp who prey on generals fresh out of the military with no understanding of how the business world works.”

Even more concerning was Flynn’s acceptance of more than $45,000 for a [*speaking appearance in Moscow*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/us/politics/michael-flynn-russia-paid-trip.html), at the 10th anniversary gala of Russia’s state-run RT channel in December 2015, where he was photographed sitting next to President Vladimir Putin. Friends and at least one intelligence official advised Flynn against attending the party to celebrate a Russian propaganda organization that was at the time openly spreading misinformation about and within the United States and other NATO countries. Flynn assured them that he knew what he was doing.

Trump did not find Flynn’s views on Russia disqualifying in the least. By the time the candidate had wrapped up the Republican nomination, Flynn was his senior foreign-policy adviser — and, briefly, the only nonpolitician under consideration to be [*Trump’s running mate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/20/magazine/how-donald-trump-picked-his-running-mate.html), according to a former Trump campaign adviser. Like most of those in Trump’s orbit, Flynn did not seem to be staking his career on a victory in November. Beginning in the final weeks of the campaign, Flynn’s consulting firm [*accepted over a half-million dollars*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/03/08/michael-flynn-received-530000-from-turkish-client-during-trump-campaign/98917184/) from a Dutch group with ties to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. On Election Day in 2016, The Hill published an op-ed by Flynn (in which he failed to disclose his consulting relationship) titled “Our Ally Turkey Is in Crisis and Needs Our Support.”

Even for those conservatives who reject the most garish Trump-centric conspiracy theories, there is a tendency to view Flynn as a pawn in a chess match between Trump and federal officials who had reason to wonder if the new president sought help from the Russian government during his campaign. This is true to an extent, but Flynn had placed himself on the chessboard. He lied about discussing the Obama administration’s sanctions on Russia with that country’s ambassador to the United States, Sergey Kislyak, during the presidential transition — first to incoming Vice President Mike Pence, then to White House officials, then to the media and finally to two F.B.I. agents. One former senior intelligence official who reviewed the transcript of Flynn’s conversation with Kislyak told me that he was struck by the “plain stupidity” of Flynn’s lies — knowing that Trump’s campaign was already drawing scrutiny for its contacts with Russia and knowing as well that any phone conversation with a Russian diplomat was likely to be recorded by U.S. intelligence agencies.

When Flynn resigned in February 2017, Trump did not pretend to be heartbroken by the loss. As one of Trump’s senior advisers told me, Flynn “had no chemistry with Trump and didn’t come across as a guy who had it together.” But according to another adviser, the firing of Flynn constituted an early show of weakness in the eyes of the president’s son-in-law and consigliere, Jared Kushner, who confided to this individual in 2020 that throwing Flynn to the wolves was “the biggest mistake we ever made.” (Kushner could not be reached for comment.)

The following December, Flynn struck a plea deal with the special counsel, Robert Mueller. Over the course of a year, Flynn sat for about 20 interviews and acknowledged, in private and later in court, that he had willfully not told the truth about the nature of his conversations with Kislyak. Though the summaries of these interviews suggest Flynn was far from expansive and at times evasive, Mueller’s team was clearly hopeful that Flynn’s experience would encourage others in Trump’s circle to come forward. The prosecutors indicated that they would not object to Flynn’s receiving no jail time.

Still, Flynn was racking up immense legal fees and could not find work. In the spring of 2019, he decided to fire his attorneys and replace them with the Dallas-based lawyer Sidney Powell, his future partner in the crusade to overturn the 2020 election. Powell withdrew Flynn’s guilty plea and claimed that the prosecutors were withholding what she called a crucial report that, as it turned out, did not exist. In May 2020, Attorney General William Barr intervened and moved that the case against Flynn be dismissed. A federal judge was still weighing whether to accept Barr’s recommendation when Trump rendered the matter moot by issuing his pardon on Nov. 25.

Less than a month after receiving his pardon, Flynn was face to face with the man who had given it to him, presenting what Byrne called the “beautiful operational plan” for deploying the military to six contested states. When both the White House and Ezra Cohen declined to enact this plan, Flynn continued to hype fraud conspiracy theories — and intended to do the same in a speech at Trump’s rally on the morning of Jan. 6, until he was informed at the last minute that his and Byrne’s slots had been canceled.

Byrne wrote that “Flynn and I sunk into our seats in despair” in the V.I.P. section throughout the program. They had hoped the president would make an evidentiary case for there having been an election-fraud conspiracy, but he had done nothing of the sort. According to Byrne’s account in his self-published book “The Deep Rig,” the two men repeatedly said to each other: “He does not get that it is not about him. He put on a [expletive] pep rally.” They returned to their hotel, hurriedly packed their bags and did not follow the throng to the Capitol, Byrne wrote.

Like several other Trump allies, Flynn refused to testify as scheduled before the Jan. 6 Committee in December and [*sued to block its subpoena*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/21/us/michael-flynn-lawsuit-january-6-committee.html) of his phone records. Flynn’s defiance of the committee fuels suspicions in some corners that Flynn has something to hide — though his reticence would also be in keeping with someone who insists an election was stolen by the same deep-state operatives who engineered his dismissal from the White House five years ago. “They did a masterful job of getting rid of me early on, because they knew exactly what I was going to do,” Flynn told Paul Vallely on a podcast in November.

In September, I was attending a rally near the Capitol in support of those facing charges in the Jan. 6 riot when a short, muscular man with a shaved head approached me. He wore a T-shirt with Flynn’s face on it. Noticing my press badge, he held his iPhone up to my face and demanded to know: “Why aren’t you guys reporting on the 12th Amendment that’s going to potentially be triggered after Arizona, Georgia and Wisconsin nullify their electors?”

I tried to explain that I was not writing about the election, but the man continued to talk. The next morning, I learned that a video of the encounter had been posted on the man’s Telegram account. His name was Ivan Raiklin, and he was a former Green Beret and lawyer.

Raiklin has often emphasized his dealings with Flynn. When he briefly tried to run for the U.S. Senate in Virginia in 2018, Raiklin was endorsed by Flynn’s son Michael Flynn Jr., and he sat in the federal courtroom next to Sidney Powell during the elder Flynn’s hearing that December; Flynn has been photographed with Raiklin elsewhere and once described him on Twitter as “a true American patriot.” Beyond that, Flynn has never confirmed their relationship, and Flynn’s brother Joe Flynn, in a brief statement on behalf of their family, said, “We do not have any association with Ivan Raiklin.”

Raiklin is one of a cohort of military-intelligence and law-enforcement veterans who have found or at least claimed places in Flynn’s general orbit since the 2020 election and are engaged in ongoing efforts to relitigate its results. Others include Seth Keshel and Jim Penrose from the group that gathered at Lin Wood’s estate that November; Phil Waldron; Thomas Speciale, the leader of the group Vets for Trump, who worked at the D.I.A. during Flynn’s directorship and has provided security for Flynn; and Robert Patrick Lewis and the former Michigan police officer Geoffrey Flohr of the First Amendment Praetorian, a [*right-wing paramilitary outfit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/03/us/politics/first-amendment-praetorian-trump-jan-6.html) that has provided security for Flynn and others more than once at Flynn’s behest.

Several of these men were present at the Capitol on Jan. 6, though in what capacity, and to what end, is still unclear. Flohr can be seen in video footage on the grounds near the west side of the Capitol talking on his cellphone just before the attack, though it is not known if he entered the building. Speciale was also on the west side of the building that afternoon, though he maintains that he never entered. Raiklin, too, was at the Capitol but insists he did not go inside the building.

What is less ambiguous is the role that some of these figures have played in the effort to reverse 2020’s outcome by other means. Since the election, Trump’s claims of thwarted victory have given rise to a wave of state-level organizing aimed at using legislatures and other levers of power to audit the 2020 election results, on the theory that they will void enough Electoral College votes to force a rerun of the election. Although the handful of state and local audits that activists and Republican lawmakers have managed to set in motion — most significantly in Arizona — have in no cases changed the election results, it remains an area of fervent activity, in which Flynn’s name is regularly invoked.

In November in New Hampshire, I attended an “election-security seminar,” presented by an organization called the New Hampshire Voter Integrity Group. The conference room was standing room only. The speakers included a state representative, a Republican candidate for Congress and Seth Keshel, who argued that their foremost mission should be “the remediation of the 2020 election.”

The final speaker was Ivan Raiklin. In his hypercaffeinated cadence, Raiklin devoted his talk to enumerating the supposed conspirators whose ongoing presence helped explain “why we haven’t remedied 2020 yet.” Those forces, he said, included the F.B.I., the Bushes, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., former Vice President Mike Pence and former Vice President Dick Cheney. This was the deep state that Trump was up against, Raiklin said.

And, he added, “who’s the first person of any stature whatsoever who has any credibility, other than within his family and the Trump Organization, that comes in and bats for him? This is important. This is the most important thing. Say it louder: General Flynn.” Flynn and Trump’s independence was a threat to the deep state, Raiklin insisted, which led to Flynn’s indictment and Trump’s defeat. “The reason why a million people showed up on Jan. 6,” he said, was that “they know bits and pieces of the story. And they knew that something had to be called out publicly. ”

The same month as the New Hampshire event, the Jan. 6 committee heard testimony from a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania named Everett Stern, who has said he was approached last April by two associates of Raiklin at a Republican gathering in Berks County. Stern, who owns a private intelligence firm, told me that the associates wanted to enlist his help in persuading high-ranking Republican officials in Pennsylvania to support an audit in that state. When Stern asked whom they were working with, one of them replied, “General Flynn.”

Later, Stern said, Raiklin communicated directly with him through text messages to find out more about his professional and personal life. After this vetting, Stern says that he was tasked with finding unflattering information about a particular Republican congressman so he could be “pushed” toward supporting an audit. Stern says he was also set up to meet personally with Flynn in Dallas in mid-June. By this time, however, Stern had reported his communications to the F.B.I. and was afraid of his legal exposure. He canceled at the last minute.

Joe Flynn told me: “We do not have anything to do with what Everett Stern is alleging,” adding, “He’s nuts.” Raiklin, too, denied to me that he helped recruit Stern to pressure elected officials into supporting a 2020 election audit. But I heard a similar story from J.D. Maddox, a former C.I.A. branch chief who ran unsuccessfully for the Virginia House of Delegates last year. Maddox, who has not previously spoken publicly about his experience, told me that he was at a candidate meet-and-greet in Arlington last May when he bumped into Raiklin. Raiklin again brought up the need for election audits — and suggested tactics far beyond lobbying legislators. “If the Democrats don’t give us that,” Maddox recalled him saying, “then violence is the next step.”

Raiklin proceeded into what Maddox described as “a wild, contortionist explanation of how they would reverse Biden’s election,” involving a succession of state audits. First Arizona, then Georgia, then Wisconsin and then other state legislatures would nullify the 2020 election results, he envisioned, until Biden’s victory margin would evaporate. Maddox told Raiklin he was skeptical. “But he said he was certain it was going to happen,” Maddox told me. “And he kept referring back to Mike Flynn as this linchpin and cog.”

“General Flynn is central to all this,” Raiklin had similarly claimed in New Hampshire when I spoke with him briefly after his talk. He refused to elaborate, so what that meant, exactly, was hard to say. In the feverish activity that now attends the 2020 election on the right, it can be difficult to distinguish conspiring from conspiracism — not least in Flynn’s own statements. In [*an interview in late January*](https://news.yahoo.com/michael-flynn-claims-covid-invented-193525554.html) with the right-wing conspiracy website Infowars, Flynn accused George Soros, Bill Gates and others of creating the coronavirus so they could “steal an election” and “rule the world.” In another interview, he floated the rumor that “they” may be “putting the vaccine in salad dressing.”

But the Capitol riot demonstrated how quickly such conspiracism could be converted into action. The belief that the 2020 election was stolen holds sway in the Republican Party as much now as it did then: According to a [*YouGov poll in December*](https://polsci.umass.edu/toplines-and-crosstabs-december-2021-national-poll-presidential-election-jan-6th-insurrection-us), 71 percent of all Republicans believe that Biden was not elected legitimately. The stolen-election myth has fused with a host of other right-wing preoccupations — the coronavirus vaccines, critical race theory, border security — into a single crisis narrative, of which Flynn is both purveyor and protagonist: The deep state intends to break America as it tried to break Flynn and the man he had the audacity to serve, Donald Trump.

At the ReAwaken America event in Phoenix, I visited a booth hawking art by a man named Michael Marrone. In addition to the usual hagiographic portraits of Trump in Revolutionary War garb, Marrone had several of Flynn and other hallowed figures in the original effort to overturn the election, like Lin Wood and Sidney Powell. One featured the general seated next to Powell, both in colonial attire, signing the Declaration of Independence. In another, Flynn stood jut-jawed and eagle-eyed, wielding a musket. A third, featuring him beside Trump on a battlefield, bore Flynn’s autograph, next to the QAnon slogan WWG1WGA (“where we go one, we go all”).

In real life, the bonds among this band had started to fray. Wood and Flynn endorsed different Republican candidates for governor of Georgia, a state that has become central to the right-wing efforts to overturn the 2020 results and assert partisan control over future elections. Their estrangement deepened and eventually became public when Wood posted text messages and snippets of a phone conversation on the social media app Telegram. In one of them, Flynn expressed his belief that Trump had “quit” on America.

When I spoke with Wood in December, he told me that he had begun to reappraise the general. For so long Flynn’s partner in conspiracism, he had lately begun to wonder if Flynn himself might not be what he seemed. He told me about attending a Bikers for Trump rally in South Carolina last May, where Flynn led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance, only to fall silent momentarily during the line “and to the Republic for which it stands.” At the time, “I tried to defend him,” Wood said. “Now I don’t know. Who forgets the Pledge of Allegiance? Draw your own conclusions. It’s troublesome.”

It occurred to me that this, one way or another, was probably Flynn’s life for the foreseeable future: The prospect of a normal retirement long gone, he now belonged to a MAGA storybook world of heroes and villains and nothing in between. That world “is filled with strong personalities, which is a complication in any movement,” said J.D. Rucker, a conservative podcaster who is acquainted with and admires Flynn. “When you’re fighting for a cause, you’re also fighting for a spotlight within that cause. The left is less susceptible to this — whether because they have a more collectivist view or because they’re not as capitalistic, I don’t know.”

“It’s a challenge to call out a grifter,” Rucker mused, “because usually they have a very passionate, cultlike following. And sometimes we get this situation where we have these multiple grifters going after each other. It’s entertaining, but it’s also dangerous for everybody involved.”

Robert Draper is a contributing writer for the magazine. He is the author of several books, most recently “To Start a War: How the Bush Administration Took America Into Iraq,” [*which was excerpted in the magazine.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/16/magazine/colin-powell-iraq-war.html)

PHOTOS: PHOTO (MM32-MM33); A merchandise booth at the ReAwaken America event in Phoenix in January. Opening pages: Michael Flynn speaking at the gathering. (MM35); Flynn onstage with Eric Trump in Phoenix. (MM36); The crowd at the ReAwaken America event in Phoenix. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK PETERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM39)

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2022

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[***Shining a Light on the Traps Women Face in Japan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YW1-9R31-DXY4-X3BF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Mieko Kawakami, whose novel ''Breasts and Eggs'' was just published in English, has become something of a feminist icon in her male-dominated country.

TOKYO -- To explain the pressure felt by women in Japanese society, the novelist Mieko Kawakami recalls a playground prank from elementary school.

The boys would run around and flip up the skirts of certain girls to catch a glimpse of their underwear. That was mortifying enough. Yet it was just as shameful for the girls whose skirts didn't get flipped.

''It meant you weren't popular,'' said Kawakami, 43, the author of ''Breasts and Eggs,'' a best-selling novel in Japan that was published in English in April. ''It's a humiliation among women not to be desired by men. That's a very strong code in Japanese society.''

It's a code she knows well, but one that she -- and her characters -- have gone about transcending. ''Breasts and Eggs,'' which won one of Japan's most coveted literary prizes in 2008, helped establish her as one of the country's brightest young stars.

Kawakami has since become something of a literary feminist icon in Japan. Although ''Breasts and Eggs'' riled some traditionalists with its frank portrayal of women's lives, those detractors are outnumbered by her fans, many of them younger women.

They relate to Kawakami's sharp identification of society's expectations for women and the efforts of her characters to upend them. In ''Breasts and Eggs,'' the narrator, Natsuko Natsume, muses about the tyranny of beauty as she tries to understand her elder sister's obsession with breast implants.

''When you're pretty, everybody wants to look at you, they want to touch you,'' Natsuko writes. But she no longer cares if she is attractive to men. Natsuko, also a novelist, is interested in procreation, but not sex. Her editor is a single woman who says not having children feels ''perfectly natural.''

Another writer, a divorced mother, skewers the oversize ego of a male peer at a literary reading and declares that ''no man will ever understand the things that really matter to a woman.'' A former colleague describes her mother -- and herself -- as little more than ''free labor'' for their husbands (and uses a vulgarity to describe female anatomy to boot).

Though Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, has promoted a platform of female empowerment, the country has lagged behind other developed nations in women's representation in politics, the executive suite and academia. At home, women are saddled with a disproportionate amount of housework and child care.

Still, there are signs that Japanese women are pursuing their own agendas. They are postponing or forgoing marriage in record numbers. When a woman called for employers to stop making female workers wear high heels, she gathered tens of thousands of signatures on a petition and submitted it to the labor ministry, prompting some businesses to relax their dress codes for women.

In the literary world, too, Japanese women are carving out an increasingly prominent role. ''Breasts and Eggs'' won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize, and Kawakami has joined a growing list of Japanese women whose work is being translated and gaining attention in the West. They include Yoko Ogawa, whose novel ''The Memory Police'' was a National Book Award finalist last year and is on the shortlist for the International Booker Prize; Sayaka Murata, another Akutagawa Prize winner, for ''Convenience Store Woman''; and Hiroko Oyamada, whose debut novel, ''The Factory,'' was published in English in December.

Kawakami gained even more renown as a feminist voice after a 2017 interview she conducted with Haruki Murakami, perhaps Japan's most celebrated modern novelist.

In that interview, which recently appeared in translation, Kawakami -- whose work Murakami has championed -- questioned the ''persistent tendency for women to be sacrificed for the sake of the male leads'' in his fiction, echoing the frustration of other critics. (Murakami responded to Kawakami's critique by noting that his focus was not on ''individualistic characters,'' but on how people interact with the world.)

To be described as a feminist writer in Japan ''still has to some extent a negative image,'' Kawakami said in an interview via Zoom.

When ''Breasts and Eggs'' won the Akutagawa Prize, Shintaro Ishihara, then Tokyo's right-wing governor and a member of the prize committee, described the novel's tone as ''selfish'' and ''unpleasant and hard to listen to.''

After Kawakami told The Asahi Shimbun, one of Japan's largest newspapers, that women should not have to use the word ''shujin'' -- ''master'' -- to refer to their husbands, critics took issue with her on social media.

But fans have made her works best sellers. ''Breasts and Eggs'' has sold more than 250,000 copies in Japan, and when Kawakami edited a special edition of a literary magazine, Waseda Bungaku, it sold out within days.

The English edition of ''Breasts and Eggs'' was published by Europa Editions in a translation by Sam Bett and David Boyd. The novel explores the extent to which women can get along without men, especially in the fundamental act of reproduction. Natsuko, who remains single throughout the novel, explores artificial insemination with a sperm donor, a rare path to motherhood for unmarried women in Japan.

''It's not accepted among women who are in their 40s who have secure jobs and a certain income to come to a situation where they want to have a family but don't have a partner,'' said Kawakami, who researched the culture of in vitro fertilization while writing. ''If they are looking for a sperm bank, they don't come forward. Japan is so conservative when it comes to women and sex.''

Many of her characters are single mothers or the children of single mothers, as is Kawakami herself.

She grew up in Osaka, Japan's third-largest city, as the middle child of a grocery store worker who still stocks shelves part-time. In ''Breasts and Eggs,'' she wanted to convey the city's distinct dialect and humor.

When she was 14, Kawakami said, she lied about her age to secure a part-time job at a factory that made parts for air-conditioners. To help with the family finances, she worked as a convenience store cashier, a restaurant dishwasher, a dental assistant and a bookstore clerk.

Growing up ***working class***, she learned that ''in most cases the rich stay rich and the poor remain poor,'' she said. ''Even with effort you cannot always change your life, and I had this severe lesson as a child.''

From its opening sentence, ''Breasts and Eggs'' is forthright about class: ''If you want to know how poor somebody was growing up, ask them how many windows they had.''

To help support her younger brother when he was in college, Kawakami worked as a bar hostess. She later moved to Tokyo to pursue a music career, but it quickly stalled.

Makiko, Natsuko's elder sister in ''Breasts and Eggs,'' works as a hostess at a down-at-the-heels bar. Kawakami depicts the economic insecurity of such work, and the shifting hierarchies among the hostesses, as younger women displace older ones for the favor of customers.

Their concerns are particularly salient in the time of the coronavirus.

With Japan under a state of emergency, several cities have requested the closure of nightclubs and bars associated with the sex industry, to contain the spread of the virus. Women who work in such places are particularly vulnerable, as many of them are estranged from their families and have nowhere to go if they cannot work.

An economic relief package initially excluded workers in the sex industry, but they were later added after an outcry among advocates.

The coronavirus ''is widening the gap in society, I must say,'' Kawakami said.

She worries about blind spots among the mostly male policymakers who are crafting Japan's response to the pandemic. The male lawmakers ''know nothing about how women are managing child care or housework'' with schools closed and office staff working from home, she said.

The English translation of ''Breasts and Eggs'' follows the publication of some of Kawakami's shorter works in literary magazines and English-language collections. A novella, ''Ms Ice Sandwich,'' was released in 2018 by Pushkin Press in a translation by Louise Heal Kawai.

In that work, narrated by a fourth-grade boy, Kawakami features a female character who may or may not have had cosmetic surgery and is cruelly judged for it.

''She's foregrounding the things women go through to kind of achieve what would be considered to be a socially acceptable appearance,'' said Kathryn Tanaka, an associate professor of cultural and historical studies at Otemae University in Nishinomiya.

''We talk a lot about single motherhood or cosmetic surgery or infertility, but we talk about them on the surface,'' she said. ''Her works force you to go underneath and think about how these become issues through relationships, and how they are affecting individuals.''

Kawakami said young female fans often approached her at readings, asking for autographs and crying.

Something about the loneliness of her characters, or their desire for something more than what is expected of them, resonates emotionally. Kawakami said she would be pleased if her novels provided solace that readers ultimately outgrow.

''Maybe I will be happy if they look back from the future and say, 'I used to read Mieko's books when I was young,''' Kawakami said, '''but now I don't have any reason to read them.'''

Hisako Ueno contributed reporting.

Correction: May 9, 2020An earlier version of this article misstated the title of one of Mieko Kawakami's novellas. It is ''Ms Ice Sandwich,'' not ''Ice Sandwich.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/09/world/asia/mieko-kawakami-breasts-and-eggs.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/09/world/asia/mieko-kawakami-breasts-and-eggs.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mieko Kawakami's books have made her something of a feminist icon, which in Japan is ''to some extent a negative image,'' she said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RYOHEI TSUKADA)

''Breasts and Eggs'' established Ms. Kawakami as a rising star. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EUROPA EDITIONS)

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2020

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[***Biden Confronts Trump on Safety: ‘He Can’t Stop the Violence’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60R5-FY91-JBG3-64H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** In a blistering speech, Joe Biden charged that crises “have kept multiplying” under President Trump’s watch. It was an effort to refocus the spotlight on the incumbent after a week of Republican attacks.

**Body**

In a blistering speech, Joe Biden charged that crises “have kept multiplying” under President Trump’s watch. It was an effort to refocus the spotlight on the incumbent after a week of Republican attacks.

Follow our latest coverage of the [*Biden vs. Trump 2020 election here*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden).

[*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) on Monday issued a forceful rebuttal to [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden)’s claim that the former vice president would preside over a nation overwhelmed by disorder and lawlessness, asserting that it was [*Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) who had made the country unsafe through his erratic and incendiary governing style.

[*Mr. Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) condemned the violence that has occasionally erupted amid largely peaceful protests over racial injustice, and noted that the chaos was occurring on the president’s watch. He said Mr. Trump had made things worse by stoking division amid a national outcry over racism and police brutality.

“Does anyone believe there will be less violence in America if Donald Trump is re-elected?” he said. “We need justice in America. We need safety in America. We’re facing multiple crises — crises that, under Donald Trump, have kept multiplying.”

Mr. Biden, the Democratic nominee for president, also pressed a broader argument that the president was endangering Americans with his response to the public health and economic challenges the country confronts.

The address was Mr. Biden’s most prominent effort yet to deflect the criticism that Mr. Trump and Republicans leveled against him at their convention last week, when they distorted his record on crime and policing. And in a fusillade of tweets over the last 48 hours the president suggested Mr. Biden was tolerant of [*“Anarchists, Thugs &amp; Agitators.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden)

Speaking at the site of a converted steel mill in Pittsburgh with no audience, in a rare campaign appearance outside eastern Pennsylvania or his home state of Delaware, Mr. Biden rejected the suggestion that lawlessness would go unchecked under his leadership. “Ask yourself: Do I look like a radical socialist with a soft spot for rioters?” Mr. Biden, 77, said. “Really? I want a safe America. Safe from Covid, safe from crime and looting, safe from racially motivated violence, safe from bad cops. Let me be crystal clear: safe from four more years of Donald Trump.”

The former vice president sought to refocus the spotlight on Mr. Trump and make the election a referendum on the president’s character and his stewardship of the pandemic. He cast Mr. Trump as a destabilizing force who had exacerbated the most urgent problems facing the nation, from the public health crisis, international affairs and unemployment to issues around police brutality, white supremacy and racism.

He repeatedly instructed voters to ignore Mr. Trump’s attempts to transfer responsibility to Democrats for the problems unfolding under his administration. “He keeps telling us if he was president you’d feel safe,” Mr. Biden said. “Well, he is president, whether he knows it or not.”

The exchange between Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump over public safety, law enforcement and civil rights represents a significant, high-profile clash in an election that is now just nine weeks away. The issue is emerging as a test of whether Mr. Trump can shift voters’ focus away from the coronavirus pandemic and persuade a small slice of undecided white voters to embrace him as a flawed but fierce defender of “law and order,” or whether Mr. Biden can counter that appeal by assailing the president as a provocateur of racial division and social disorder.

Mr. Biden took pains to differentiate between his support for peaceful protests and his opposition to acts of destruction. “Rioting is not protesting,” he said. “Looting is not protesting. Setting fires is not protesting. None of this is protesting. It’s lawlessness, plain and simple. And those who do it should be prosecuted.”

He promised he would seek to “lower the temperature in this country,” something he suggested Mr. Trump was unable to do. “He can’t stop the violence because for years he’s fomented it,” Mr. Biden said.

At a briefing late Monday, Mr. Trump declined to condemn his supporters’ use of paintballs and pepper spray against protesters in Portland, Ore., over the weekend. He used the bulk of his time at the podium to criticize Democrats and Mr. Biden, saying, “for months Joe Biden has repeated the monster lie that this is a peaceful protest,” and falsely claiming that the former vice president blamed the police and law enforcement for the violence that was flaring.

Much of the Republican argument against Mr. Biden on “law and order” issues is rooted in false claims about [*his positions*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden). But some Democrats worry that Mr. Biden has not been public enough in laying out his own views. Concerned allies have been on the phone with Mr. Biden’s team in recent days, urging him to get out more.

“I’m worried because I think Donald Trump cannot win the election based on what he has done as president,” Ed Rendell, the former Pennsylvania governor, said Sunday. “So therefore he has to find some way to make his opposition the issue.”

Representative Tim Ryan, Democrat of Ohio, was one of those allies who had hoped to see Mr. Biden address the issue head-on, and he expressed enthusiasm for Mr. Biden’s approach on Monday. The speech, Mr. Ryan said, may soothe voters who like Mr. Biden but have been uneasy with the scenes of violence.

“That’s what a lot of ***working-class*** people from these swing states absolutely needed to hear very clearly,” Mr. Ryan said, going on to add, “Those of us who are down-ballot, those of us who represent areas like I do, we needed this speech to happen.”

Mr. Biden’s visit to Pittsburgh, where he also delivered pizza to firefighters, was a departure from a schedule that has largely restricted him to campaigning from Delaware since the coronavirus shuttered the campaign trail in March. Advisers intensely debated whether he should visit Wisconsin on Monday, ultimately deciding against it, but discussions continue about a possible trip to the state. Last week a white Kenosha, Wis., police officer shot a Black man, Jacob Blake, multiple times, sparking outrage, protests and clashes that in some cases turned violent.

Mr. Trump [*is expected*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) to visit Kenosha on Tuesday, though a growing chorus of Wisconsin officials have urged him to reconsider amid a tense environment on the ground.

A white teenager who has expressed support for Mr. Trump [*was charged with homicide*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) after two demonstrators were shot to death in Kenosha last week. In Portland on Saturday, a man wearing a hat with the insignia of a right-wing group [*was shot and killed*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) as a caravan of Trump supporters drove around the city and at times clashed with counterprotesters. The episode prompted tweets from Mr. Trump seeking to pin the blame on the Democrats, part of a barrage of online communication by the president that [*promoted fringe conspiracy theories*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden).

“He may believe mouthing the words ‘law and order’ makes him strong, but his failure to call on his own supporters to stop acting as an armed militia in this country shows how weak he is,” Mr. Biden said.

Some local officials have been urging Mr. Biden to visit their states and press his case against the president.

Mahlon Mitchell, the president of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, said he understood why Mr. Biden had not been traveling but said he would still like to see Mr. Biden meet with both first responders and the Blake family if the pandemic conditions allow. Mr. Biden and his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, a former prosecutor have [*spoken with*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) the Blake family.

“Him coming to Kenosha just to see what’s happening, talking to first responders — my people — talking to the family, I know people would like it,” Mr. Mitchell said. “I would like it.”

Other Democrats, including political activists, described a delicate balancing act Mr. Biden must manage as he condemns rioting but seeks to show support for peaceful protesters, who enjoy broad backing from the base of the Democratic Party.

“He’s got to be measured because he can’t look like he’s falling into the same rhetoric of identifying the protesters as violent,” said the Rev. Al Sharpton, the civil rights leader. “And if he says a lot more, does he then alienate those of us that have been doing the nonviolent marching, that you’re painting us all with a broad brush?”

There is some [*early evidence*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) that the chaos has been problematic for Democrats among some voters who are most focused on protests.

Stephen Johnson, 44, a financial analyst from Kenosha who voted third-party in 2016, was leaning toward supporting Mr. Biden earlier in the campaign. But now he sees Democratic state and local leaders around the country as “ineffectual” in responding to the unrest that has sometimes veered into rioting, he said, and has decided he will reluctantly support Mr. Trump.

“I believe that Biden does not have the stomach to stand up to those that are openly advocating Marxism through terror,” Mr. Johnson said. “And I’m sorry, I need someone who can.”

In Michigan, the rioting that has rocked some cities across the nation has left Angela Daniels, 49, anxious and unsettled, too, though she is inclined toward the opposite political conclusion.

“We need stability and we don’t have that right now,” said Ms. Daniels, a psychotherapist from Southfield, a Detroit suburb. “That’s why I tend to lean toward Biden.”

As Mr. Trump increasingly uses the protests as a wedge issue, election analysts in both parties are taking a second look at a [*Marquette Law School poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) of Wisconsin voters that came out in August. The share of Wisconsin voters expressing support for the protest movement that arose after George Floyd’s death dropped to 48 percent, from 61 percent in June.

Still, most Wisconsin voters said they didn’t like Mr. Trump’s handling of the protests. Fifty-eight percent disapproved, while just 32 percent approved, the poll showed. And Mr. Trump saw no improvement in his favorability rating after the Republican National Convention, according to an [*ABC News/Ipsos poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/15/us/trump-vs-biden) released on Sunday.

Mr. Biden, who for years fashioned himself as a “tough on crime” Democrat, won the Democratic primary as an unapologetic moderate, defeating his democratic socialist chief opponent, Bernie Sanders. All summer and throughout their convention, Republicans sought to paint Mr. Biden as both soft on crime and overly punitive, a strategy that has yet to show it can define the Democrat to Mr. Trump’s advantage.

“They’ve been throwing all kinds of stuff at Joe Biden from the beginning,” said Representative Dina Titus, Democrat of Nevada. “It’s just a big, muddled message.”

Kathleen Gray, Maggie Haberman, Thomas Kaplan, Jonathan Martin, Adam Nagourney and Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: “He keeps telling us if he was president you’d feel safe,” Joseph R. Biden Jr. said. “Well, he is president, whether he knows it or not.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Protests continued in Kenosha, Wis., on Saturday after the shooting of Jacob Blake. President Trump was expected to visit Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLOS JAVIER ORTIZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18)

**Load-Date:** September 15, 2020

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[***Virus Threatens to Wrest Turkish Economy From Erdogan's Grip***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YVC-3D61-DXY4-X0RN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Some are hoping that the coronavirus achieves what some of the president's advisers have failed to do: persuade Mr. Erdogan to reverse his authoritarian grip over fiscal policy in Turkey.

ISTANBUL -- An economic crisis was looming even before the coronavirus gripped Turkey with unexpected ferocity. But the contagion has quickly and ruthlessly laid bare the ways President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has left the economy vulnerable, presenting him with the greatest challenge of his 18 years in power.

The outbreak has exacerbated already high unemployment and inflation, and unified his political opposition. It has raised fresh concerns about Mr. Erdogan's heavy investment in giant infrastructure projects that analysts have long warned were too costly to sustain.

''This is the biggest crisis that he is managing of his political career,'' said Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, Ankara director of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. ''He knows there will be a price to pay for the economic downturn.''

That challenge is not limited to Mr. Erdogan. After providing an initial boost to many leaders, the virus has now started to chip away at the support and standing of some. In the economic fallout of the contagion, those like Mr. Erdogan, or President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, or President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, may prove especially susceptible, having made themselves the embodiment of the state.

Eventually, Turkey may emerge well placed to take advantage of changes in the global economy, like supply chains closer to home, that some analysts expect as a result of the pandemic. But for now, with the collapse of tourism, a mainstay of the economy, and desperately short of cash, Mr. Erdogan has few friends to turn to, having ruled out a loan from the International Monetary Fund.

Some are hoping that the coronavirus achieves what financial markets and some of the president's advisers have failed to do: persuade Mr. Erdogan to make structural reforms and reverse his authoritarian grip over fiscal policy.

In a sign of the pressures hanging over the country, the lira has sunk to a new low -- breaking the barrier of 7 to the dollar. The Central Bank has spent $20 billion of its reserves since the pandemic erupted, according to economists.

Mr. Erdogan's response, perhaps unique among world leaders, has been to try to balance Turkey precariously between opening and closing throughout the outbreak. The president has imposed only a partial lockdown and insisted on keeping the wheels of industry turning as he tries to save the economy, and himself.

Restaurants, bars and small businesses have been shuttered, but production plants, textile factories and construction sites -- among them development projects promoted by Mr. Erdogan -- have kept working.

That hybrid approach, together with an efficient health care system, has won Mr. Erdogan the confidence of much of the population, with opinion polls in April showing he has 60 percent support. But it has also left Mr. Erdogan open to charges that he has prioritized the economy over lives.

The results, his critics say, have spread the virus in ***working-class*** districts and rendered workers vulnerable on construction sites, leading to at least one death.

Confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the country of 83 million have reached 127,000, and the official death toll is 3,461, although the real figure is thought to be higher since Turkey is only reporting deaths of people who tested positive for the disease.

While officials point to encouraging numbers that indicate a slowing in the overall rate of infections and declining deaths, there is no doubt that the president has kept a tight grip on the media and government messaging.

Mr. Erdogan has adopted an avuncular, reassuring tone in his speeches throughout, and made a show of leading by example by self-isolating and running his cabinet by videoconference. On Monday, he told the nation that the restrictions were working, and announced that some of them would be lifted.

''We have reached an important turning point,'' he said in a televised address. Turkey had achieved its main targets of curbing the spread of the disease, ''preventing a break in production and maintaining public order.''

But his critics, including the leaders of some of the country's largest labor unions, have had a different message.

''Our union has been demanding that construction sites be shut down and workers put on paid leave since the first day of the outbreak, in order to save their lives,'' Ozgur Karabulut, the President of the Progressive Union of Construction Workers, said in a telephone interview. ''But they didn't allow the wheels of the economy to stop turning, and forced construction workers to keep building on sites where they have to be in proximity to each other.''

''The government tells the media that life is slowly going back to normal, however we're seeing the opposite at our workplaces,'' he added. ''From what our members tell us, the infection keeps spreading.''

The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions, DISK, found that its members were more than three times more likely to be infected by the coronavirus than the general population, according to a report released by the union last week.

Last month, a union leader collapsed from a heart attack at the Galataport construction site, one of the most expensive development projects on Istanbul's waterfront. The man, Hasan Oguz, tested positive for Covid-19 and later died in hospital, Mr. Karabulut said.

Four other workers had tested positive at the site, but construction was only suspended on April 14, two days after Mr. Oguz died.

''If work was stopped on April 3, as we had demanded, he would perhaps not have been infected and we wouldn't have lost him to the virus,'' Mr. Karabulut said.

''This problem is not limited to construction sites,'' he added. ''In factories, shipyards, and textile mills where work has not been stopped, workers are getting infected one by one.''

For those workers sent home or forced to close their businesses, surviving the financial fallout is another cause of anxiety.

The economic packages announced by Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, the president's son-in-law, fall short of what is needed, workers and business leaders say. Casual laborers, some of the most vulnerable members of the work force, are not covered, and cash handouts are paltry.

Even some workers in the many parts of the formal sector, like factory workers, have been sent home on annual leave, but wonder what will happen when their leave is up.

After five weeks with no income, Fatos, 36, a single mother and owner of a beauty salon in Istanbul, said she could not survive more than two or three months of being closed. (She asked to be identified by her first name to avoid any difficulties with the authorities.)

''My expenses keep piling up,'' she said in a telephone interview. ''The rent for the beauty salon is 4,500 lira, then there's taxes, the salary I pay my hairdresser, my daughter's school fees, and on top of all that I'm paying a mortgage.''

Her landlord had refused any discount on the rent, she said, and the government had only helped with partial payment of her employee's salary.

''For the first time in my life, I'm not able to fall asleep until 6 or 7 in the morning because I'm so worried about my work situation. It has started to cause me physical pain,'' she said.

Mr. Erdogan, whom analysts say is always looking to the next election -- the next one is three years away -- is acutely aware of the political fallout he may face. His popularity, and that of his party, has been faltering in local elections last year in the face of a united opposition.

Turkey is well placed to benefit from new trends in trade and business that are emerging post-coronavirus, in particular in the health industry, said Bahadir Kaleagasi, president of the Institut du Bosphore, a French association that encourages Turkish relations with France and Europe.

But right now, Mr. Erdogan needs cash.

With available reserves at only $35 billion, Mr. Erdogan is looking to the United States for help. He has ruled out seeking a loan from the I.M.F., but during a videoconference meeting with Group of 20 members at the end of March, raised the possibility of a foreign currency swap agreement.

Turkey might not meet the necessary conditions, including an independent central bank and low inflation, to secure a swap with the United States, but there are signs it is making overtures.

The Turkish government has postponed the activation of its newly purchased Russian S400 missile defense system, presidential national security adviser Ibrahim Kalin said recently. That could be a step toward easing the greatest dispute between Turkey and the United States.

Mr. Erdogan sent two planeloads of donated medical supplies to the United States last week, with a letter to President Trump declaring Turkey a ''reliable and strong partner.''

He also called for ''close coordination and partnership'' in measures to be taken for the recovery of the global economy.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/06/world/europe/coronavirus-erdogan-tukey-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/06/world/europe/coronavirus-erdogan-tukey-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Working on a water line in Istanbul this week. Construction work, including development projects promoted by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has continued as other businesses have shut down. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BULENT KILIC/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

Coffins outside an Istanbul morgue last month. Turkey's official coronavirus death toll is 3,461, but the real figure is thought to be higher. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BULENT KILIC/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

Shoppers in Istanbul this week. Idled workers and owners of small businesses worry about financial fallout. (PHOTOGRAPH BY UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS)

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2020

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[***He Went to 'Mayor School,' and He Wants the Job***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62MC-V4R1-JBG3-616V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Eric Adams Says He Has Something to Prove. Becoming Mayor Might Help.

The New York City mayoral race is one of the most consequential political contests in a generation, with immense challenges awaiting the winner. This is the third in a series of profiles of the major candidates.

Nearly three decades ago, when Eric Adams decided he wanted to someday be mayor of New York City, he started a journal of observations about local governance, making periodic entries before bed.

He has now filled 26 notebooks.

The long arc of Mr. Adams's career -- from the son of a Queens house cleaner to a reform-driven New York City police officer, from state senator to Brooklyn borough president and now a leading mayoral candidate -- is an ode to personal discipline. By his telling, his life has been carefully structured to land him on the precipice of the only job he has ever wanted, in the only city where he has ever really lived.

During an Easter Sunday visit to the Church of God of East Flatbush, Mr. Adams cited a biblical passage that describes a test of courage under duress.

''I believe in all my heart that this is an Esther 4:14 moment,'' Mr. Adams, 60, told the parishioners. ''God made me for such a time as this.''

To Mr. Adams, his broad life experience is what sets him apart in the vast and fractured field of mayoral candidates.

He speaks of growing up poor and Black in Queens, being beaten by the police at age 15, starting as a police officer during the height of the 1980s crack epidemic, and then, in later years, becoming a voice for police reform. In 2013, he was the first Black person elected Brooklyn borough president.

Yet there is a perception among some Democratic leaders, strategists and mayoral rivals that Mr. Adams's career has been driven by self-interest rather than civic-mindedness, and that he is unprepared to lead the city as it tries to emerge from the pandemic.

That perception rankles Mr. Adams, who equates efforts to dismiss him to reductive treatment of Black elected officials.

His campaign, he believes, will surprise those he said have underestimated him and his ability to connect with the New Yorkers who make up his base: ***working class*** and older minority voters outside Manhattan, who prioritize authenticity in their politicians and issues like public safety.

This confidence gives Mr. Adams's campaign stops -- and his political strategy -- a sense of assured purpose. He is not only trying to appeal to voters; he is seemingly running for personal validation, to prove that he is equally worthy to the rivals whom the city's political class has deemed more polished, serious or qualified.

''For years, I've had people -- for years -- calling me an 'Uncle Tom' or calling me a sellout,'' Mr. Adams said in an interview, adding that he was ''immune'' to such attacks.

''They don't believe in me, but I believe in me,'' he said. ''Because I know me, and I'm a beast.''

He will nonetheless be tested by a changing city and Democratic Party. New Yorkers have embraced big personalities in politicians before, particularly in mayoral races, but brashness and Blackness can project differently when packaged together.

It may not help that Mr. Adams has had a history of embracing divisive figures, aligning himself with Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader, and the ex-boxer Mike Tyson after his 1992 rape conviction. Mr. Adams has also faced several ethics probes during his career, including one that questioned his role in allowing a politically connected company to gain a casino franchise at Aqueduct Racetrack.

He first rose to prominence in New York by challenging Police Department policies during news conferences, earning scorn from police officials that persists decades later. And bombastic statements, like a pledge to carry a gun while in City Hall and forgo a security detail, have fueled detractors.

Mr. Adams, as he darts around Queens and Brooklyn with less than seven weeks to go before the June 22 primary, thinks that unconventionality is a political superpower. He gives out his personal cellphone number to people on the street and often refers to himself in the third person. He shuns the popular language of progressive academics in favor of a relatable grit.

He is, at once, a candidate who desires to be taken seriously as a liberal policymaker, and one who mocks the idea that elite-educated activists get to determine what is or is not serious.

''I'm in these forums, and they're talking about legal crack, legal fentanyl, legal heroin! Are you kidding me?'' Mr. Adams said to a resident during a recent stop in the Laurelton section of Queens. ''Do they remember what crack did to your communities?''

A son of two boroughs

Three omnipresent dangers loomed for a young Black man growing up in South Jamaica, Queens, in the late 1970s and 1980s: the crime, the drugs, and the police.

At age 15, Mr. Adams and his brother were arrested on criminal trespassing charges. Mr. Adams said he was beaten by officers while in custody and suffered post-traumatic stress from the episode. Yet it fueled his desire to become a police officer six years later, he said, after a local pastor suggested that he could ''infiltrate'' the department and help change police culture.

Beginning as a transit officer and rising to the rank of police captain, he made his largest impact not on the police beat but through his involvement in two Black police fraternal organizations: the Grand Council of Guardians, and 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, a group that he founded.

''Eric was always the guy who not just complained about the issues, but then pushed the group to organize to do something about it,'' said David C. Banks, president and chief executive of the Eagle Academy Foundation in Brooklyn, which operates a network of schools for boys.

''He was a pain in the neck and a thorn in the side of the central command at the police headquarters,'' said Mr. Banks, who has known Mr. Adams for 30 years. ''A lot of other officers would be afraid to raise these kind of issues.''

Mr. Adams helped amplify cases of police brutality or errors, raising public awareness of uncomfortable policing issues, even if it did not sway top police brass, who tended to view him as an attention-seeking gadfly.

His reputation also suffered from a series of unorthodox stances or appearances while on the force: He traveled to Indiana in 1995 to escort Mr. Tyson after his release from prison; he repeatedly defended Mr. Farrakhan in the 1990s; and he was registered as a Republican during that same time period, when New York, a predominantly Democratic city, was led by Republican mayors.

Paul Browne, a former chief spokesman for the Police Department under Raymond W. Kelly, said it was ''laughable'' that Mr. Adams was drawing on his law enforcement career to run for mayor on a public safety platform.

''I don't remember him distinguishing himself in any way, except promoting himself through 100 Black Officers in Law Enforcement Who Care,'' Mr. Browne said.

Mr. Adams ''would try to have it both ways -- that he was a cop but that we were all racist. He would say Blacks that weren't as radical were an Uncle Tom,'' said Mr. Browne, who is white. ''He'd be a disaster as mayor.''

Yet on the other side of the political spectrum, Mr. Adams's law enforcement background is often viewed as a drawback, and as evidence that he is not the right candidate to bring significant changes to policing at a time when activists are demanding a paradigm shift.

Mr. Adams rejected that notion, arguing that he helped lay the groundwork for more recent social justice movements. He cited a 2013 federal trial over the constitutionality of the stop-and-frisk program, when he testified that the police commissioner at the time had told him that it existed to ''instill fear'' in Black and Latino men. The judge cited his words in her ruling that the program violated the constitutional rights of those who were stopped.

''They're marching now saying Black Lives Matter, they're doing Chapter 2 -- I was Chapter 1,'' Mr. Adams said. ''When no one else was doing this, Eric Adams was doing this.''

Rising up in politics

As early as 1994, Mr. Adams had decided that he wanted to be mayor -- a desire he expressed to Bill Lynch, a deputy mayor under David N. Dinkins, the first Black mayor of New York City.

Mr. Lynch gave him four pieces of advice, Mr. Adams recalled: get a bachelor's degree, gain managerial experience in the Police Department, work in Albany, and become a borough president -- a path that somewhat resembled the one Mr. Dinkins followed to his historic victory.

Mr. Adams followed the advice, but largely kept his mayoral ambitions quiet. It was better to be known as an earnest doer than an ambitious climber, he said, particularly as a Black man.

''I am the poster child of missteps, but I am also the poster child of endurance,'' Mr. Adams said. ''I had a plan.''

The first step was to leave the police force and enter politics. There was a failed congressional run in 1994, when Mr. Adams's relationship with the Nation of Islam proved divisive. His switch to the Republican Party in the following years, while Rudolph W. Giuliani was mayor and the party controlled the State Senate, seemed opportunistic; he explained then that ''if you take a look at some of the concepts of the Republican Party, you'll see that many of them are our values.''

By 2006, however, he was a Democrat again, in time for a successful run for State Senate. In the political career that has followed, Mr. Adams has often been ideologically fungible, displaying an independent streak as well as attention-grabbing skills.

He was an early supporter of marriage equality and continued to rail against policing practices, like stop-and-frisk, that were shown to disproportionately affect Black and Latino communities. He turned his focus to issues many other politicians would avoid, such as a ''Stop the Sag'' campaign that called on Black men to pull up their pants and emphasized personal responsibility as a response to racism. He also pushed for higher pay for elected officials -- including himself.

''I don't know how some of you are living on $79,000,'' Mr. Adams said at the time. ''Show me the money!''

The comments hurt Mr. Adams's reputation among the city's political class in the same way the police news conferences had in the years before. In 2010, a scathing state inspector general report said that Mr. Adams, then the chairman of the Senate Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee, had given the ''appearance of impropriety'' by getting too close to a group that was seeking a casino contract at Aqueduct Racetrack.

The inspector general said Mr. Adams had attended a party thrown by the lobbyist, earned campaign donations from the group's shareholders and affiliates, and conducted a process that amounted to a ''political free-for-all.''

By 2013, Mr. Adams had left Albany for a successful bid for Brooklyn borough president, succeeding Marty Markowitz, and becoming the first Black person to head New York's most populous borough.

As borough president, a job with limited formal duties but a sizable bully pulpit, Mr. Adams expanded the role that Mr. Markowitz pioneered as a garrulous cheerleader for Brooklyn.

He put himself through what he sometimes calls ''mayor school,'' reaching out to donors, community activists and business leaders to check their pulses on which direction they felt the city should go in.

''I knew I had to prove I was serious,'' Mr. Adams said. ''People had to see Eric had serious plans. They had to see Eric could raise the money and that I could articulate issues of impact.''

But he also drew more criticism over potential conflicts of interest. In his first year as borough president, the city's Department of Investigation found that his office appeared to have violated conflict of interest rules in raising money for a nonprofit Mr. Adams was starting. No enforcement action was taken.

The final task

In the early stages of the mayoral race, Mr. Adams was viewed as one of three leading candidates, along with Scott M. Stringer, the city comptroller, and Corey Johnson, the City Council speaker. Only Mr. Adams was thought to appeal to large swaths of Black and Latino voters, especially outside Manhattan.

He also had longstanding relationships with union leaders and other elected officials, and a network of donors cultivated over the past decade.

But the dynamics have changed. Mr. Johnson is running for comptroller, not mayor. Mr. Stringer is now facing an allegation of sexual assault.

The Black Lives Matter movement has pushed younger voters and some white liberals to the left of Mr. Adams on racial justice and policing. And other top Black candidates -- Maya Wiley, the former lawyer to Mayor Bill de Blasio and MSNBC analyst; Raymond J. McGuire, a former Wall Street leader; and Dianne Morales, a nonprofit executive -- are in the running.

And then there is Andrew Yang, the former presidential candidate who appears to be the front-runner, according to the limited polling that exists, and who has drawn donors and media coverage to match.

''Before Yang, I was the Chinese candidate,'' Mr. Adams said. ''I was the Bangladeshi candidate -- which I still am. I'm going to get overwhelmingly the Muslim vote.''

Mr. Adams has sought to portray Mr. Yang as unprepared to be mayor.

''When I look over the lives of everyone else, I see moments of commitment. And I'm asking like, 'Who is Andrew?''' Mr. Adams said. ''Maya Wiley, I see a civil rights activist. Ray? Successful businessman. Dianne Morales, I see her commitment to fighting against injustice.''

He added: ''They didn't just discover that we have injustice in this city.''

In a statement, the Yang campaign pushed back against the idea that Mr. Yang had not demonstrated a commitment to service. ''Andrew is known by the most New Yorkers in the race for starting a national movement on universal basic income,'' said Alyssa Cass, Mr. Yang's communications director. ''While some candidates were handing out patronage jobs or getting investigated for corruption, Andrew was fighting poverty.''

Mr. Adams and Mr. Yang tend to have more moderate positions than some of their left-leaning rivals, like Mr. Stringer, Ms. Wiley and Ms. Morales.

But Mr. Adams argues that his platform, which includes an expanded local tax credit for low-income families, investment in underperforming schools, and improvements to public housing, amounts to the systemic change progressives want.

His ''100 Steps for New York City,'' a plan he partly drew from his journal of observations that began decades earlier, includes a special focus on public safety initiatives like releasing the names of officers being internally investigated for bad behavior.

Mr. Adams has proposed diverting $500 million from the New York police budget to fund crisis managers and crime prevention programs, and has pledged to further diversify the police force.

He has also proposed restoring a maligned plainclothes anti-crime unit that was disbanded by the Police Department last year, and refashioning it to focus on getting guns off the streets. Mr. Adams says proposals like these showed a responsiveness to the city's most needy residents, including some Black neighborhoods suffering the brunt of violent crime. Critics point out that the disbanded unit has been behind several police shootings.

''Those other candidates, their names don't ring out over here,'' said Takbir Blake, a community activist who shepherded Mr. Adams during a business tour in Laurelton. ''It's that you know he's been on the front lines. But you also know he's from the streets.''

As the primary approaches, Mr. Adams has begun to demonstrate the benefits of his long-honed political relationships. He has won major labor endorsements, including from 32BJ SEIU, which represents private-sector building service workers. He has raised more money than his rivals participating in the city's matching-funds program, yet has spent less than several of them -- maintaining his war chest for the stretch run.

And he believes that he will eventually win over the party's progressive wing, especially if it becomes clearer that Democratic voters still favor Mr. Yang as their top choice.

''The polls are not everything, or always honest, but it's going to send a message,'' Mr. Adams said. ''They not only need a person that they agree with, but I'm the person that could win the race.''

Mr. Adams says he can form a coalition of the marginalized, who want a mayor who has not had an aspirational New York experience, but who has experienced the common struggle.

It is the path of Mr. Dinkins, laid out by Mr. Lynch, and executed over decades by the most disciplined loose cannon in New York City politics.

''Say what you want, but there's very little misunderstanding about me,'' Mr. Adams said. ''When you pull that lever, you know who you're voting for.''

''An actual, real blue-collar New Yorker.''

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, made public safety a focus of his mayoral campaign. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Eric Adams on the Q train in Manhattan in October to encourage New Yorkers to get back on the subways after pandemic lockdowns. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Adams, right, joined the Rev. Al Sharpton, center, in 1993 to denounce a gunman who killed six people in a shooting on the Long Island Rail Road. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BEBETO MATTHEWS/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Addressing the police shooting of a Black man in 2000, Mr. Adams was flanked by members of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, a group he founded. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE BENGIVENO/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

ERIC ADAMS (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19)

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2021

**End of Document**



[***The Macho Appeal of Donald Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:612G-7041-JBG3-61KT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Highlight:** Though a majority of Latino voters favor Democrats, Hispanic men are a small but enduring part of Trump’s base. Those supporters see him as forceful, unapologetic and a symbol of economic success.

**Body**

Though a majority of Latino voters favor Democrats, Hispanic men are a small but enduring part of Trump’s base. Those supporters see him as forceful, unapologetic and a symbol of economic success.

PHOENIX — They packed into the room to cheer their heroes.

The crowd of more than 100 hollered enthusiastically at Henry Cejudo, a local [*hero and Olympic gold medalist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/sports/olympics/20cejudo.html?searchResultPosition=1), the son of undocumented immigrants from Mexico who had gone on to become a mixed martial arts superstar.

But they were really there to celebrate President Trump.

Wearing red Make America Great Again hats, several men held giant American flags and stood in front of several campaign signs: “Latinos for Trump,” “Cops for Trump” and another imploring them to text “WOKE” to get the latest information on the campaign.

In the words of Eric Trump, the president’s son and the headliner of the event, the battle is simple. It’s right versus wrong, he said, to a loud round of cheers.

“They are trying to cancel our voice, guys.”

Men are the core of President Trump’s base. In polling, gender gaps exist in nearly every demographic: among white voters, among senior citizens, among voters without a college degree, men are far more likely than women to support his re-election. And little of that support has shifted in the days since Mr. Trump announced he had tested positive for the coronavirus. [*Polls suggest*](https://cawp.rutgers.edu/presidential-poll-tracking-2020) that this presidential election could result in the largest gender gap since the passage of the 19th Amendment a century ago.

Then there is one of the most enduring questions of the Trump appeal: Who are the nearly 30 percent of Hispanic voters who say they support him, despite his anti-immigration rhetoric and policies?

There is no one simple answer. Mr. Trump has strong backing from Cuban and Venezuelan exiles in South Florida, who like his stance against communism. And his campaign has heavily courted evangelical Latinos throughout the country. But no other group worries Democrats more than American-born Hispanic men, particularly those under the age 45, who polls show are highly skeptical of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Yet what has alienated so many older, female and suburban voters is a key part of Mr. Trump’s appeal to these men, interviews with dozens of Mexican-American men supporting Mr. Trump shows: To them, the macho allure of Mr. Trump is undeniable. He is forceful, wealthy and, most important, unapologetic. In a world where at any moment someone might be attacked for saying the wrong thing, he says the wrong thing all the time and does not bother with self-flagellation.

“I feel so powerful,” the president declared at a rally in Florida on Monday, standing in front of Air Force One. Lest anyone miss the message, the rally ended with “Macho Man” by the Village People blasting on the speakers.

Paul Ollarsaba Jr., a 41-year-old Marine veteran, voted for a Republican for the first time in 2016, won over by what he saw as Mr. Trump’s commitment to the military.

“I am Mexican,” Mr. Ollarsaba said, adding that for years he thought that meant he had to vote for Democrats. When he began supporting Mr. Trump in 2016, his family ostracized him. “My parents say: ‘Why are you supporting a racist? You’re Mexican, you have to vote this way,’” he said. “No, it’s my country. It’s fear, people are afraid of saying they support the president.”

Mr. Cejudo clearly had no such fear. When President Trump hosted large rallies in Nevada last month, Mr. Cejudo joined several other M.M.A. fighters who backed his campaign.

“I’ve been the biggest fan of him,” said Mr. Cejudo, 33, recalling watching “The Apprentice” in a high school class. “We need a businessman, we need somebody like this to run our country.”

Other attendees at the event with Mr. Cejudo and Eric Trump spoke of watching Mr. Trump on “The Apprentice,” saying they liked his strong style, his apparent confidence in his own opinions. In interviews, they said they viewed his actions as president much in the same way: Even those they do not wholeheartedly agree with, they see as further evidence of his strength.

They said they saw his defiance of widely accepted medical guidance in the face of his own illness not as a sign of poor leadership, but one of a man who does his own research to reach his own conclusion. They see his disdain for masks as an example of his toughness, his incessant interruptions during the debate with Mr. Biden as an effective use of his power.

“We saw him being a boss,” said Edwin Gonzales, 31, who held a large American flag outside the Trump campaign office. “And for him to go down the escalator is basically the same thing — it’s like, ‘Dang, the boss has stepped down and he’s putting himself out there to be the president.’ That’s what’s exciting.”

Mr. Gonzales added that for him, and many other Trump supporters, the president represented the best of capitalism, adding, “He’s a boss and they wanted to be him, they idolize him.”

At the event, voters said they admired President Trump and also criticized Mr. Biden, whom many of these supporters described as weak and deserving of the derogatory label coined by the Trump campaign: “Basement Biden.”

Indeed, many of these men dismiss the need for masks themselves. After being screened with temperature checks at the event with Eric Trump and Mr. Cejudo, almost none of the audience members wore a mask, nor did any of the speakers.

Mr. Biden has mocked President Trump’s reluctance over masks. “What is this macho thing, ‘I’m not going to wear a mask’?” he [*said during one town hall event*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/us/elections/trump-flouts-health-guidelines-as-biden-questions-his-macho-refusal-to-wear-masks.html) this month. The comment prompted a commentator on Fox to retort that Mr. Biden “might as well carry a purse with that mask.”

“We’re at a turning point in this country where we can either be afraid or move forward,” said Ricco Rossi, 40. “I think what they have done in the last few months, they have damaged their party more. They try to scare us.”

Though Hispanic women overwhelmingly support Mr. Biden, Hispanic men appear to have a persistent discomfort, with polls showing him struggling to maintain more than 60 percent of the group, far below his average among nonwhite voters. (Polls show him still well ahead of Mr. Trump’s roughly 30 percent support from Hispanic voters.) Mr. Biden has not done enough to directly reach out to these young Latino men, Republican and Democratic strategists say.

“You have these U.S.-born Hispanic males under 40 who are pretty Trumpy, the question is why?” said Mike Madrid, a Republican consultant involved with the Lincoln Project, which is working to get Mr. Trump out of the White House.

Both parties have often focused their outreach efforts on white, ***working-class*** voters, though many Hispanic men share the same basic priorities. “They’re English dominant, they are facing very similar economic situations, listening to the same media,” Mr. Madrid said.

After facing months of persistent criticism that it was not doing enough to reach out to Latino voters, the Biden campaign has released several Spanish language advertisements in the last few weeks, including one featuring Bad Bunny, a pop star known for his gender-fluid style. Other advertisements focus heavily on the way Trump administration has targeted Latinos, a message that simply does not resonate among men who do not want to see themselves pitied.

Some Democrats argue that the support for Mr. Trump is an example of [*machismo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/18/world/americas/colombia-machismo-hotline-masculinity.html) culture, venerating traditional gender roles and a kind of hyper-masculinity. But the enthusiasm hints at some of the underlying trends among U.S.-born Latinos. More Hispanic women than men attend and graduate from college, while Hispanic men tend to be [*overrepresented*](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1065912920933674) in law enforcement institutions, including the military, the Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Yet the admiration of Mr. Trump reveals something deeper as well. Democratic pollsters who have closely tracked Hispanic men say they are more likely to prioritize jobs and the economy and less likely to be concerned about immigration and racism. Many Hispanic men are singularly focused on earning a living, gaining an economic edge that they can pass on to their children. There is a deep belief in an up-by-your-bootstraps mentality — and that Mr. Trump did no such thing seems utterly beside the point.

Joshua Tapia, a 35-year-old cashier, said that before the pandemic, he believed he was much better off economically, because he started investing in the stock market. And now?

“A lot of jobs are suffering right now, and I don’t blame Trump, I just blame circumstances, unfortunately,” he said. “Nobody could have seen how this played out.”

Even devoted Democrats have criticized Mr. Biden for offering a somewhat fuzzy economic message, at a time when the pandemic has left more than 10 percent of Latinos unemployed and many more with a reduction in wages.

“In the Latino community, you are defined by your ability to provide,” said Tomás Robles Jr., an executive director of Lucha, a progressive group that is campaigning for Mr. Biden and other Democrats in Arizona. “Folks who live in a perpetual state of economic insecurity want to look around and at least believe that you can do great in this economy. Biden needs to have a message that they matter, that he is going to create an economic reality they have the ability to make it.”

In interviews with scores of Hispanic Trump supporters at events in Florida, New Mexico, Nevada and Arizona over the last year, nearly everyone said their politics angered some friends and family, and rejected any suggestion that their support was based on anti-immigrant attitudes.

And it is not quite assimilation either: These men are proud to be Latino, children and grandchildren of Mexican immigrants specifically, and many have made an effort to continue speaking Spanish.

Many say there is some appeal in being a political curiosity and voting differently than the vast majority of Latinos.

Even Mr. Cejudo, the M.M.A. star, told the enthusiastic crowd in South Phoenix that he had been shunned for his views, which had made him only more outspoken.

“Getting backlash as a Latino, you know what that tells me,” he said. “That there’s a lot of ignorance in this game.”

He told the group — supporters of a president whose first campaign was largely built on opposing illegal immigration — that his own mother came from Mexico “in a politically incorrect way.” He said his father was later deported, while his mother helped him nurture his dreams of becoming an Olympian.

Then he posed for pictures with a flashy bicep flex.

PHOTOS: Supporters surrounded Eric Trump, the president’s son, for selfies at an event organized by Latinos for Trump in Arizona last month. About 30 percent of Hispanic voters say they support the president.; Eric Trump told the crowd in Phoenix, “They are trying to cancel our voice.” Some of the people who attended the rally said they had long been fans of President Trump and that their support of him caused tension at home. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2021

**End of Document**



[***'Everything Is Sensitive': China Forces Hong Kong to Readjust***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6095-FP71-JBG3-60PY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 6, 2020 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1650 words

**Byline:** By Vivian Wang, Elaine Yu and Tiffany May

**Body**

In a city where China has made some ideas suddenly dangerous, people are trying to figure out where the boundaries lie, and how their lives have changed.

HONG KONG -- A barge draped with enormous red banners celebrating China's new security law was sailing across Hong Kong's famed Victoria Harbor only hours after the legislation passed. The police now hoist a purple sign warning protesters that their chants could be criminal. Along major roads throughout the city, neon-colored flags hailing a new era of stability and prosperity stand erect as soldiers.

In recent days, as China took a victory lap over the law it imposed on the city Tuesday, the defiant masses who once filled Hong Kong's streets in protest have largely gone quiet. Sticky notes that had plastered the walls of pro-democracy businesses vanished, taken down by owners suddenly fearful of the words scribbled on them. Parents whispered about whether to stop their children from singing a popular protest song, while activists devised coded ways to express now-dangerous ideas.

Seemingly overnight, Hong Kong was visibly and viscerally different, its more than seven million people left to navigate what the law would mean to their lives. The territory's distinct culture of political activism and free speech, at times brazenly directed at China's ruling Communist Party, appeared to be in peril.

For some who had been alarmed by the ferocity of last year's unrest, which at times transformed shopping districts, neighborhoods and university campuses into smoke-filled battlefields, the law brought relief and optimism. For others, who had hoped the desperate protest campaign would help secure long-cherished freedoms, it signaled a new era of fear and uncertainty.

''This is home,'' said Ming Tse, sitting in the cafe he manages, which once loudly supported the protesters. ''But I don't think this place loves us anymore.''

For months, Mr. Tse's love for his home was advertised at his shop in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of North Point. The oat milk carton at the cash register sat behind postcards of protest art. A poster condemned the police shootings of two student demonstrators. Even after opponents of the movement threatened to vandalize the shop last fall, the decorations stayed.

But on Thursday, Mr. Tse, 34, took everything down. News reports said police officers had interrogated owners of restaurants with similar protest paraphernalia. The security law criminalizes ''subversion'' of the government, a crime that the police say encompasses speech such as political slogans.

All that remained was a small plastic dinosaur on the counter, wearing a yellow hard hat. That inexpensive yet tough headgear, worn by protesters who fought with the police, had become a symbol of their scrappy fortitude.

''I don't know if they are so sensitive,'' Mr. Tse said. ''It's just a helmet on a dinosaur.''

He paused, then reconsidered: ''Actually, everything is sensitive.''

That the lines of criminality had been redrawn became clear on Friday, when the authorities charged a 24-year-old man with terrorism and inciting separatism -- the first person to be indicted under the new law. With a ''Liberate Hong Kong'' flag mounted on the back of his motorcycle, the man careened into a group of police officers on Wednesday, the anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China from British rule.

Most years, that holiday draws large pro-democracy rallies. But this time, they were banned. Protests were scattered, and the police swept in and arrested hundreds. Ten people, including a 15-year-old girl, were accused of ''inciting subversion,'' a vaguely defined crime under the new law; some had merely waved flags, bearing slogans that had never been explicitly outlawed.

A few dozen relatives and social workers waited on Thursday outside a police station in North Point where more than 100 of those arrested were being held. Such vigils had become a rite for protesters' loved ones.

But this one felt more perilous, with crimes under the security law punishable by life imprisonment in the most serious cases. A Chinese official said Wednesday that the law was meant to hang over would-be troublemakers like the sword of Damocles.

The police collected DNA samples and searched the homes of the 10 people arrested on suspicion of inciting subversion -- measures that seemed excessive when applied to people accused only of possessing pamphlets, said Janet Pang, a lawyer who is helping some of them.

''You're supposed to only use power that is necessary, and that's how the law should be,'' she said.

Shortly after noon on Thursday, a pro-democracy activist, Tam Tak-chi, emerged from the station, where he had spent the night after being detained. Mr. Tam met a young man inside who said he had been arrested after the police found a banner in his bag reading ''Hong Kong Independence, the Only Way Out.'' The man wept on his shoulder, Mr. Tam said.

The Hong Kong government has insisted that free speech is not under threat. But on Saturday, the city's public library system said that books by some prominent activists had been removed from circulation while officials reviewed whether they violated the new law.

The censorship has crept even into private homes.

In June of last year, Katie Lam took her two young sons to a large rally. Her older son wore a cap that read ''Hong Konger'' and raised a handmade sign saying, ''Don't shoot us.''

Now Ms. Lam, a data analyst, is anxious about what her sons say at home. One of them is having a birthday party in two weeks, and Ms. Lam wondered if she should hide a print displayed on the piano that reads ''Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Times,'' a slogan that the government says could be considered subversive.

The boys loved singing ''Glory to Hong Kong,'' the unofficial anthem of the protest movement. She worries that the neighbors will hear it.

''Even though we all knew it would happen one day,'' she said of China's intervention, ''it's still painful.''

But in some corners of the city, China's move has been welcome.

The successive blows of the unrest, followed by the coronavirus pandemic, emptied malls and grounded flights, eviscerating Hong Kong's economy. The security law, however unpopular, seemed poised to end the monthslong impasse over the protests.

It was Hong Kong's prosperity and worldliness that drew Harry He, 33, to the city from mainland China 10 years ago. He earned master's degrees in finance and engineering and fell in love with his new home: its efficient public transportation, its high food-safety standards. He got married, found work as an insurance agent, bought a home, had a daughter.

Last year shattered that serenity. Once, while he was eating at a restaurant with friends, masked protesters smashed a nearby sushi restaurant owned by a company seen as pro-Beijing, he said. His mainland clients began avoiding Hong Kong.

Mr. He said he had supported the protesters at first. But he soon grew convinced that the authorities needed to restore stability, and that the security law would do so.

''I just don't want to see violence again,'' he said in an interview in his office tower in Tsim Sha Tsui, a luxury shopping district that was battered by street fighting. ''I just want Hong Kong to be as developed and prosperous as before.''

Still, even some who embraced stability wondered about its price.

Just as core to Hong Kong's identity as its freewheeling capitalism has been its proud, even gleeful, outspokenness. Street booths often lined the city's busiest shopping districts, blasting dueling political messages. Tiny bookstores crammed into overpriced commercial spaces hawked volumes that were banned in the mainland.

Xu Zhe, a 22-year-old recent college graduate, said the law was needed to address the ''terrorism'' committed by some protesters. He had been horrified by a clash in November, when some demonstrators poured gasoline on a man who had scolded them, then set him ablaze.

But Mr. Xu also worried that the law could be used to clamp down on dissent, including speech. Mr. Xu, who grew up on the mainland before attending university in Hong Kong, had never had a chance to protest at home. Last year, he attended his first demonstration, a small gathering against violence.

If Hong Kongers lost the right to protest, he said, ''I would feel deeply, deeply regretful.''

Few people in the city know the price of protest better than Rowena He, a historian at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. For more than two decades, Professor He has studied the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, when Chinese troops gunned down protesters in Beijing.

Her office is an informal museum of the massacre, with a miniature replica on her bookshelf of the ''Goddess of Democracy'' statue that the Tiananmen protesters erected shortly before the killings.

On Wednesday, the day after the security law was enacted, one of Professor He's students decided to walk around Hong Kong, documenting a city on the cusp of change. He sent her a photo of a row of Chinese flags, flapping in the wind. On a sidewalk railing nearby, a banner supporting a pastor imprisoned on the mainland had been ripped in half.

''You are a real historian,'' Professor He responded.

Even as old markers of resistance have come down, subtler ones have surfaced. Some protesters have turned to puns and created new meaning from well-worn phrases, a tactic long adopted by mainland internet users to skirt government censorship.

On Wednesday, in one of the city's commercial hubs, someone had spray-painted ''Arise, ye who refuse to be slaves'' -- the opening line of China's national anthem.

And one shop, in place of protest slogans, hung up nearly two dozen posters of propaganda from Mao-era China, including one that proclaimed: ''Revolution is not a crime, rebellion is reasonable.''

Bella Huang contributed research.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A float in Victoria Harbor celebrated new legislation on Wednesday, the anniversary of Hong Kong's independence from British rule.

Protesters in Hong Kong held blank pages on Friday to avoid running afoul of the new security law. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** July 7, 2020

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[***Scouting Without Boy Scouts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8K-R1K1-DXY4-X1FX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 23, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1343 words

**Byline:** By Clay Risen

**Body**

Scouting as an idea is valuable, even vital. And we don't need a toxic organization to do it.

Thirty years ago this summer, I spent two weeks backpacking across Philmont, a 140,000-acre expanse of northeastern New Mexico owned by the Boy Scouts of America. Most people who trek Philmont say it changed their life; it certainly changed mine. A few years later, I became an Eagle Scout -- still one of my proudest achievements.

On Tuesday, the Boy Scouts of America filed for bankruptcy, seeking, in part, protection from mounting costs involving several hundred sexual abuse lawsuits. The filing is a defensive move, and the organization may yet survive. But enrollment is plummeting and sponsors are dropping out; the future doesn't look good.

For a long time, I've wrestled with some complicated feelings about the Boy Scouts. My personal experiences, and the ideas of scouting -- blending self-reliance with community, practical skills with a republican civic philosophy -- made me who I am. But ''scouting,'' a global, century-old movement, is different from the Boy Scouts of America, the organization based in Irving, Tex., that for decades has apparently covered up the risk of sexual abuse at the expense of thousands of young boys.

Scouting is a valuable, even vital idea; the Boy Scouts, though, is quite toxic. For scouting to survive, the Boy Scouts of America may have to go.

The Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910, and almost from the beginning it has had a sexual abuse problem. Since at least the 1940s, it kept a list of red flag cases -- known, grotesquely, as the ''perversion files'' -- which were supposed to block abusers from further participation in Scouts. But the list didn't do its job, nor did it save the organization from a steady drip of lawsuits.

Until recently, most of those cases were settled quietly out of court, so it's hard to say how many there were, or how much the Boy Scouts paid the plaintiffs. But in 2010, a court in Portland, Ore., ordered the Boy Scouts to pay $1.4 million to a man who was abused by a scout leader, Timur Dykes, in the 1980s. During that trial about 1,000 red-flag files were introduced as evidence, though only the jury and lawyers were allowed to see them. The Boy Scouts at the time denied allegations of negligence but in 2012, it was forced to make public thousands of pages of documents from those files.

In an echo of the scandals in the Roman Catholic Church, the files show that the national organization often allowed scout leaders accused of abuse, including Mr. Dykes, to continue working with boys. The files also indicate that complaints about abusive adults were shot down by officials more interested in protecting the organization's image than rooting out injustice.

The Portland case unleashed hell on the Boy Scouts. Along with a cascade of lawsuits over individual abuse claims, several former scouts are suing the organization for access to all the perversion files, which they say contain the names of 7,819 men who abused boys under their charge, along with 12,254 victims. Last year, to raise money, the Boy Scouts mortgaged Philmont, the crown jewel of the scouting kingdom.

It's hard to square all this with the scouting I remember. My troop, in Nashville, was sponsored by a local congregation of the Disciples of Christ, a liberal, mainline denomination with just a bit more Jesus than the Unitarian Universalists. Our adult leaders were good men -- funny, kind, wise, gruff -- and the boys came from all around: white, black, brown, well off, ***working class***. We hiked, we goofed off, we got away from our parents and we became like brothers.

For a long time, I've leaned on this particular experience to justify the general -- whatever bad apples might be found in other troops, mine was proof that the organization was good at heart. The Boy Scouts have done the same, in reverse. After the Dykes trial, a Boy Scouts spokesman said, ''The actions of the man who committed these crimes do not represent the values and ideals of the Boy Scouts of America.''

That may be true. But in 2020, it's beside the point. Too many bad apples raise unavoidable questions about the orchard they came from. And while the Boy Scouts has done an admirable job of reform -- owning up to its failures, admitting openly gay scouts and leaders, planning a compensation fund for victims -- it still doesn't feel like enough. Even if the Boy Scouts manages to get through this crisis financially, what possible reform could win back the public trust?

Is it possible to have scouting without the Boy Scouts? Of course it is, just as we don't need the N.F.L. to play football.

Scouting began in Britain, under the leadership of Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, a career army officer. In 1908 he founded the Boy Scouts; two years later he and his sister created the Girl Guides.

The movement spread quickly, with national organizations sprouting from North America, where the Boy Scouts of America opened in 1910, to Southeast Asia -- today, Indonesia has by far the largest, with some 17 million members. Each national organization had to follow some basic parameters set by Baden-Powell, but otherwise was free to set its own rules. Some, like the Boy Scouts of America, exclude atheists; many don't. Others have always been coed; the Boy Scouts didn't admit girls until 2018.

The Boy Scouts is by far the largest scouting organization in America, but historically, it hasn't been the only one. The same year it was founded, a rival organization, the American Boy Scouts, began under the leadership of William Randolph Hearst (it folded in the 1920s). More recently, the Baden-Powell Service Association has emerged as a coed, nonreligious alternative to the Boy Scouts. And of course there's the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., founded in 1912 as the American branch of the Girl Guides.

At its height in the early 1970s, the Boy Scouts claimed more than four million youth; now it's down to about 2.2 million. That's a significant decline, but it's still about twice as many boys as play high school football. The Girl Scouts has 1.7 million youth members.

Clearly, there's a demand for something like Boy Scouts. There's also a need.

Scouting is inclusive, in a way that belies the stereotypes and makes it an antidote to the racial and economic siloing so common today. Scouts wear uniforms not to play soldier, but to step outside their social roles -- to become equals.

At its core, scouting offers a dual education in civics and self-reliance. Scouting is where I learned the importance of voting, conservation and civil rights. I also learned to pitch a tent, tie knots, purify water, climb a cliff and perform CPR. It's this combo of values and skills, and the overarching idea that they go hand in hand, that makes scouting so valuable.

I'm grateful to the Boy Scouts. But while my adult leaders were teaching me how to tie a bowline hitch, adult leaders in other troops were preying on boys like me. Maybe it's not about a few bad apples; maybe I was just lucky.

I won't take the same risk with my children. Fortunately, I don't have to. My wife and I recently enrolled them in the Baden-Powell Service Association. We love it. They get outdoors, go camping, learn about their community.

It's progressive -- coed, secular -- and maybe not for everyone. Still, as a vision for what scouting could look like after the Boy Scouts, it's heartening. With its bankruptcy, the Boy Scouts of America may have entered its final chapter. But as my children will tell you, the joy of scouting continues.

Clay Risen is the deputy daily Opinion editor and the author of ''The Crowded Hour: Theodore Roosevelt, the Rough Riders, and the Dawn of the American Century.''

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, center right, with a group of the original Boy Scouts in Britain. Above, Girl Scouts in Paramount Calif., last year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICK BOWMER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

BRITTANY MURRAY/LONG BEACH PRESS-TELEGRAM -- MEDIANEWS GROUP, VIA GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2020

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[***Erdogan Faces His Biggest Test of the Pandemic: The Economy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B5-H3T1-JBG3-61T5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Some are hoping that the coronavirus achieves what some of the president’s advisers have failed to do: persuade Mr. Erdogan to reverse his authoritarian grip over fiscal policy in Turkey.

**Body**

Some are hoping that the coronavirus achieves what some of the president’s advisers have failed to do: persuade Mr. Erdogan to reverse his authoritarian grip over fiscal policy in Turkey.

ISTANBUL — An economic crisis was looming even before the coronavirus [*gripped Turkey with unexpected ferocity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-turkey-deaths.html?searchResultPosition=1). But the contagion has quickly and ruthlessly laid bare the ways President Recep Tayyip [*Erdogan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-turkey-deaths.html?searchResultPosition=1) has left the economy vulnerable, presenting him with the greatest challenge of his 18 years in power.

The outbreak has exacerbated already high unemployment and inflation, and unified his political opposition. It has raised fresh concerns about Mr. Erdogan’s heavy investment in giant infrastructure projects that analysts have long warned were too costly to sustain.

“This is the biggest crisis that he is managing of his political career,” said Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, Ankara director of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. “He knows there will be a price to pay for the economic downturn.’’

That challenge is not limited to Mr. Erdogan. After providing [*an initial boost to many leaders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-turkey-deaths.html?searchResultPosition=1), the virus has now started to chip away at the support and standing of some. In the economic fallout of the contagion, those like Mr. Erdogan, or [*President Vladimir V. Putin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-turkey-deaths.html?searchResultPosition=1) of Russia, or [*President Jair Bolsonaro*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-turkey-deaths.html?searchResultPosition=1) of Brazil, may prove especially susceptible, having made themselves the embodiment of the state.

Eventually, Turkey may emerge well placed to take advantage of changes in the global economy, like supply chains closer to home, that some analysts expect as a result of the pandemic. But for now, with the collapse of tourism, a mainstay of the economy, and desperately short of cash, Mr. Erdogan has few friends to turn to, having ruled out a loan from the International Monetary Fund.

Some are hoping that the coronavirus achieves what financial markets and some of the president’s advisers have failed to do: persuade Mr. Erdogan to make structural reforms and reverse his authoritarian grip over fiscal policy.

In a sign of the pressures hanging over the country, the lira has sunk to a new low — breaking the barrier of 7 to the dollar. The Central Bank has spent $20 billion of its reserves since the pandemic erupted, according to economists.

Mr. Erdogan’s response, perhaps unique among world leaders, has been to try to balance Turkey precariously between opening and closing throughout the outbreak. The president has imposed only a partial lockdown and insisted on keeping the wheels of industry turning as he tries to save the economy, and himself.

Restaurants, bars and small businesses have been shuttered, but production plants, textile factories and construction sites — among them development projects promoted by Mr. Erdogan — have kept working.

That hybrid approach, together with an efficient health care system, has won Mr. Erdogan the confidence of much of the population, with opinion polls in April showing he has 60 percent support. But it has also left Mr. Erdogan open to charges that he has prioritized the economy over lives.

The results, his critics say, have spread the virus in ***working-class*** districts and rendered workers vulnerable on construction sites, leading to at least one death.

Confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the country of 83 million have reached 127,000, and the official death toll is 3,461, although the [*real figure is thought to be higher*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/world/middleeast/coronavirus-turkey-deaths.html?searchResultPosition=1) since Turkey is only reporting deaths of people who tested positive for the disease.

While officials point to encouraging numbers that indicate a slowing in the overall rate of infections and declining deaths, there is no doubt that the president has kept a tight grip on the media and government messaging.

Mr. Erdogan has adopted an avuncular, reassuring tone in his speeches throughout, and made a show of leading by example by self-isolating and running his cabinet by videoconference. On Monday, he told the nation that the restrictions were working, and announced that some of them would be lifted.

“We have reached an important turning point,” he said in a televised address. Turkey had achieved its main targets of curbing the spread of the disease, “preventing a break in production and maintaining public order.”

But his critics, including the leaders of some of the country’s largest labor unions, have had a different message.

“Our union has been demanding that construction sites be shut down and workers put on paid leave since the first day of the outbreak, in order to save their lives,” Ozgur Karabulut, the President of the Progressive Union of Construction Workers, said in a telephone interview. “But they didn’t allow the wheels of the economy to stop turning, and forced construction workers to keep building on sites where they have to be in proximity to each other.”

“The government tells the media that life is slowly going back to normal, however we’re seeing the opposite at our workplaces,” he added. “From what our members tell us, the infection keeps spreading.”

The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions, DISK, found that its members were more than three times more likely to be infected by the coronavirus than the general population, according to a report released by the union last week.

Last month, a union leader collapsed from a heart attack at the Galataport construction site, one of the most expensive development projects on Istanbul’s waterfront. The man, Hasan Oguz, tested positive for Covid-19 and later died in hospital, Mr. Karabulut said.

Four other workers had tested positive at the site, but construction was only suspended on April 14, two days after Mr. Oguz died.

“If work was stopped on April 3, as we had demanded, he would perhaps not have been infected and we wouldn’t have lost him to the virus,” Mr. Karabulut said.

“This problem is not limited to construction sites,” he added. “In factories, shipyards, and textile mills where work has not been stopped, workers are getting infected one by one.”

For those workers sent home or forced to close their businesses, surviving the financial fallout is another cause of anxiety.

The economic packages announced by Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, the president’s son-in-law, fall short of what is needed, workers and business leaders say. Casual laborers, some of the most vulnerable members of the work force, are not covered, and cash handouts are paltry.

Even some workers in the many parts of the formal sector, like factory workers, have been sent home on annual leave, but wonder what will happen when their leave is up.

After five weeks with no income, Fatos, 36, a single mother and owner of a beauty salon in Istanbul, said she could not survive more than two or three months of being closed. (She asked to be identified by her first name to avoid any difficulties with the authorities.)

“My expenses keep piling up,” she said in a telephone interview. “The rent for the beauty salon is 4,500 lira, then there’s taxes, the salary I pay my hairdresser, my daughter’s school fees, and on top of all that I’m paying a mortgage.”

Her landlord had refused any discount on the rent, she said, and the government had only helped with partial payment of her employee’s salary.

“For the first time in my life, I’m not able to fall asleep until 6 or 7 in the morning because I’m so worried about my work situation. It has started to cause me physical pain,” she said.

Mr. Erdogan, whom analysts say is always looking to the next election — the next one is three years away — is acutely aware of the political fallout he may face. His popularity, and that of his party, has been faltering in local elections last year in the face of a united opposition.

Turkey is well placed to benefit from new trends in trade and business that are emerging post-coronavirus, in particular in the health industry, said Bahadir Kaleagasi, president of the Institut du Bosphore, a French association that encourages Turkish relations with France and Europe.

But right now, Mr. Erdogan needs cash.

With available reserves at only $35 billion, Mr. Erdogan is looking to the United States for help. He has ruled out seeking a loan from the I.M.F., but during a videoconference meeting with Group of 20 members at the end of March, raised the possibility of a foreign currency swap agreement.

Turkey might not meet the necessary conditions, including an independent central bank and low inflation, to secure a swap with the United States, but there are signs it is making overtures.

The Turkish government has postponed the activation of its newly purchased Russian S400 missile defense system, presidential national security adviser Ibrahim Kalin said recently. That could be a step toward easing the greatest dispute between Turkey and the United States.

Mr. Erdogan sent two planeloads of donated medical supplies to the United States last week, with a letter to President Trump declaring Turkey a “reliable and strong partner.”

He also called for “close coordination and partnership” in measures to be taken for the recovery of the global economy.

PHOTOS: Working on a water line in Istanbul this week. Construction work, including development projects promoted by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has continued as other businesses have shut down. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BULENT KILIC/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES); Coffins outside an Istanbul morgue last month. Turkey’s official coronavirus death toll is 3,461, but the real figure is thought to be higher. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BULENT KILIC/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES); Shoppers in Istanbul this week. Idled workers and owners of small businesses worry about financial fallout. (PHOTOGRAPH BY UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS)

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2021

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[***Eric Adams Says He Has Something to Prove. Becoming Mayor Might Help.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62M7-S311-DXY4-X3W8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 2940 words

**Byline:** Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** Mr. Adams is a top fund-raiser in the New York City mayoral race, with key endorsements and strong polling, but he still faces questions about his preparedness for the job.

**Body**

Eric Adams Says He Has Something to Prove. Becoming Mayor Might Help.

The New York City [*mayoral race*](https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/nyc-mayor-race) is one of the most consequential political contests in a generation, with immense challenges awaiting the winner. This is the third in a series of profiles of [*the major candidates*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/nyregion/nyc-mayor-candidates.html).

Nearly three decades ago, when [*Eric Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/eric-adams-mayor-nyc) decided he wanted to someday be [*mayor of New York City*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/24/nyregion/new-york-city-mayors-race-intensifies.html), he started a journal of observations about local governance, making periodic entries before bed.

He has now filled 26 notebooks.

The long arc of Mr. [*Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/23/nyregion/eric-adams-mayor-nyc.html)’s career — from the son of a Queens house cleaner to a reform-driven New York City police officer, from state senator to Brooklyn borough president and now a leading mayoral candidate — is an ode to personal discipline. By his telling, his life has been carefully structured to land him on the precipice of the only job he has ever wanted, in the only city where he has ever really lived.

During an Easter Sunday visit to the Church of God of East Flatbush, [*Mr. Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-primary-results.html?searchResultPosition=11)cited a biblical passage that describes a test of courage under duress.

“I believe in all my heart that this is an Esther 4:14 moment,” Mr. Adams, 60, told the parishioners. “God made me for such a time as this.”

To [*Mr. Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/26/nyregion/eric-adams-mayor.html?searchResultPosition=6), his broad life experience is what sets him apart in the vast and fractured field of mayoral candidates.

He speaks of growing up poor and Black in Queens, being beaten by the police at age 15, starting as a police officer during the height of the 1980s crack epidemic, and then, in later years, becoming a voice for police reform. In 2013, he was the first Black person elected Brooklyn borough president.

Yet there is a perception among some Democratic leaders, strategists and mayoral rivals that Mr. Adams’s career has been driven by self-interest rather than civic-mindedness, and that he is unprepared to lead the city as it tries to emerge from the pandemic.

That perception rankles Mr. [*Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/09/nyregion/eric-adams-maya-wiley-endorsement-jumaane.html), who equates efforts to dismiss him to reductive treatment of Black elected officials.

His campaign, he believes, will surprise those he said have underestimated him and his ability to connect with the New Yorkers who make up his base: ***working class*** and older minority voters outside Manhattan, who prioritize authenticity in their politicians and issues like public safety.

This confidence gives Mr. Adams’s campaign stops — and his political strategy — a sense of assured purpose. He is not only trying to appeal to voters; he is seemingly running for personal validation, to prove that he is equally worthy to the rivals whom the city’s political class has deemed more polished, serious or qualified.

“For years, I’ve had people — for years — calling me an ‘Uncle Tom’ or calling me a sellout,” Mr. Adams said in an interview, adding that he was “immune” to such attacks.

“They don’t believe in me, but I believe in me,” he said. “Because I know me, and I’m a beast.”

He will nonetheless be tested by a changing city and Democratic Party. New Yorkers have embraced big personalities in politicians before, particularly in mayoral races, but brashness and Blackness can project differently when packaged together.

It may not help that Mr. Adams has had a history of embracing divisive figures, aligning himself with Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader, and the ex-boxer Mike Tyson after his 1992 rape conviction. Mr. Adams has also faced several ethics probes during his career, including one that questioned his role in allowing a politically connected company to gain a casino franchise at Aqueduct Racetrack.

He first rose to prominence in New York by challenging Police Department policies during news conferences, earning scorn from police officials that persists decades later. And bombastic statements, like a pledge to carry a gun while in City Hall [*and forgo a security detail*](https://www.ny1.com/nyc/brooklyn/news/2020/01/31/eric-adams-says-he-would-carry-a-gun-if-elected-mayor-), have fueled detractors.

Mr. Adams, as he darts around Queens and Brooklyn with less than seven weeks to go before the June 22 primary, thinks that unconventionality is a political superpower. He gives out his personal cellphone number to people on the street and often refers to himself in the third person. He shuns the popular language of progressive academics in favor of a relatable grit.

He is, at once, a candidate who desires to be taken seriously as a liberal policymaker, and one who mocks the idea that elite-educated activists get to determine what is or is not serious.

“I’m in these forums, and they’re talking about legal crack, legal fentanyl, legal heroin! Are you kidding me?” Mr. Adams said to a resident during a recent stop in the Laurelton section of Queens. “Do they remember what crack did to your communities?”

A son of two boroughs

Three omnipresent dangers loomed for a young Black man growing up in South Jamaica, Queens, in the late 1970s and 1980s: the crime, the drugs, and the police.

At age 15, Mr. Adams and his brother were arrested on criminal trespassing charges. Mr. Adams said he was beaten by officers while in custody and suffered post-traumatic stress from the episode. Yet it fueled his desire to become a police officer six years later, he said, after a local pastor suggested that he could “infiltrate” the department and help change police culture.

Beginning as a transit officer and rising to the rank of police captain, he made his largest impact not on the police beat but through his involvement in two Black police fraternal organizations: the Grand Council of Guardians, and 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, a group that he founded.

“Eric was always the guy who not just complained about the issues, but then pushed the group to organize to do something about it,” said David C. Banks, president and chief executive of the Eagle Academy Foundation in Brooklyn, which operates a network of schools for boys.

“He was a pain in the neck and a thorn in the side of the central command at the police headquarters,” said Mr. Banks, who has known Mr. Adams for 30 years. “A lot of other officers would be afraid to raise these kind of issues.”

Mr. Adams [*helped amplify cases of police brutality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/05/opinion/we-must-stop-police-abuse-of-black-men.html) or errors, raising public awareness of uncomfortable policing issues, even if it did not sway top police brass, who tended to view him as an attention-seeking gadfly.

His reputation also suffered from a series of unorthodox stances or appearances while on the force: He traveled to Indiana in 1995 to escort Mr. Tyson after his release from prison; he repeatedly defended Mr. Farrakhan in the 1990s; and he was registered as a Republican during that same time period, when New York, a predominantly Democratic city, was led by Republican mayors.

Paul Browne, a former chief spokesman for the Police Department under Raymond W. Kelly, said it was “laughable” that Mr. Adams was drawing on his law enforcement career to run for mayor on a public safety platform.

“I don’t remember him distinguishing himself in any way, except promoting himself through 100 Black Officers in Law Enforcement Who Care,” Mr. Browne said.

Mr. Adams “would try to have it both ways — that he was a cop but that we were all racist. He would say Blacks that weren’t as radical were an Uncle Tom,” said Mr. Browne, who is white. “He’d be a disaster as mayor.”

Yet on the other side of the political spectrum, Mr. Adams’s law enforcement background is often viewed as a drawback, and as evidence that he is not the right candidate to bring significant changes to policing at a time when activists are demanding a paradigm shift.

Mr. Adams rejected that notion, arguing that he helped lay the groundwork for more recent social justice movements. He cited a 2013 federal trial over the constitutionality of the stop-and-frisk program, when he testified that the police commissioner at the time had told him that it existed to “instill fear” in Black and Latino men. The judge [*cited his words*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/17/nyregion/longtime-critic-of-police-policies-basks-in-a-de-blasio-moment.html) in her ruling that the program violated the constitutional rights of those who were stopped.

“They’re marching now saying Black Lives Matter, they’re doing Chapter 2 — I was Chapter 1,” Mr. Adams said. “When no one else was doing this, Eric Adams was doing this.”

Rising up in politics

As early as 1994, Mr. Adams had decided that he wanted to be mayor — a desire he expressed to Bill Lynch, [*a deputy mayor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/10/nyregion/bill-lynch-72-democratic-strategist-in-new-york-dies.html) under David N. Dinkins, the first Black mayor of New York City.

Mr. Lynch gave him four pieces of advice, Mr. Adams recalled: get a bachelor’s degree, gain managerial experience in the Police Department, work in Albany, and become a borough president — a path that somewhat resembled the one Mr. Dinkins followed to his historic victory.

Mr. Adams followed the advice, but largely kept his mayoral ambitions quiet. It was better to be known as an earnest doer than an ambitious climber, he said, particularly as a Black man.

“I am the poster child of missteps, but I am also the poster child of endurance,” Mr. Adams said. “I had a plan.”

The first step was to leave the police force and enter politics. There was a failed congressional run in 1994, when Mr. Adams’s relationship with the Nation of Islam proved divisive. His switch to the Republican Party in the following years, while Rudolph W. Giuliani was mayor and the party controlled the State Senate, seemed opportunistic; he explained then that “if you take a look at some of the concepts of the Republican Party, you’ll see that many of them are our values.”

By 2006, however, he was a Democrat again, in time for a successful run for State Senate. In the political career that has followed, Mr. Adams has often been ideologically fungible, displaying an independent streak as well as attention-grabbing skills.

He was an early supporter of marriage equality and continued to rail against policing practices, like stop-and-frisk, that were shown to disproportionately affect Black and Latino communities. He turned his focus to issues many other politicians would avoid, such as a “Stop the Sag” campaign that called on Black men to [*pull up their pants*](https://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/03/low-rider-report-stop-the-sag) and emphasized personal responsibility as a response to racism. He also pushed for higher pay for elected officials — including himself.

“I don’t know how some of you are living on $79,000,” Mr. Adams [*said at the time*](https://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/show-money-blog-entry-1.1669448). “Show me the money!”

The comments hurt Mr. Adams’s reputation among the city’s political class in the same way the police news conferences had in the years before. In 2010, a scathing state inspector general report said that Mr. Adams, then the chairman of the Senate Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee, had given the “appearance of impropriety” by getting too close to a group that was seeking a casino contract at Aqueduct Racetrack.

The inspector general said Mr. Adams had attended a party thrown by the lobbyist, earned campaign donations from the group’s shareholders and affiliates, and conducted a process that amounted to a “political free-for-all.”

By 2013, Mr. Adams had left Albany for a successful bid for Brooklyn borough president, succeeding Marty Markowitz, and becoming the first Black person to head New York’s most populous borough.

As borough president, a job with limited formal duties but a sizable bully pulpit, Mr. Adams expanded the role that Mr. Markowitz pioneered as a garrulous cheerleader for Brooklyn.

He put himself through what he sometimes calls “mayor school,” reaching out to donors, community activists and business leaders to check their pulses on which direction they felt the city should go in.

“I knew I had to prove I was serious,” Mr. Adams said. “People had to see Eric had serious plans. They had to see Eric could raise the money and that I could articulate issues of impact.”

But he also drew more criticism over potential conflicts of interest. In his first year as borough president, the city’s Department of Investigation found that his office appeared to have violated conflict of interest rules in raising money for a nonprofit Mr. Adams was starting. No enforcement action was taken.

The final task

In the early stages of the mayoral race, Mr. Adams was viewed as one of three leading candidates, along with Scott M. Stringer, the city comptroller, and Corey Johnson, the City Council speaker. Only Mr. Adams was thought to appeal to large swaths of Black and Latino voters, especially outside Manhattan.

He also had longstanding relationships with union leaders and other elected officials, and a network of donors cultivated over the past decade.

But the dynamics have changed. Mr. Johnson is running for comptroller, not mayor. Mr. Stringer is now facing an [*allegation of sexual assault*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/06/nyregion/scott-stringer-jean-kim-sexual-assault.html).

The Black Lives Matter movement has pushed younger voters and some white liberals to the left of Mr. Adams on racial justice and policing. And other top Black candidates — Maya Wiley, the former lawyer to Mayor Bill de Blasio and MSNBC analyst; Raymond J. McGuire, a former Wall Street leader; and Dianne Morales, a nonprofit executive — are in the running.

And then there is [*Andrew Yang*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/01/nyregion/andrew-yang-venture-for-america-jobs.html), the former presidential candidate who appears to be the front-runner, according to the limited polling that exists, and who has drawn donors and [*media coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/02/business/media/andrew-yang-new-york-mayor.html) to match.

“Before Yang, I was the Chinese candidate,” Mr. Adams said. “I was the Bangladeshi candidate — which I still am. I’m going to get overwhelmingly the Muslim vote.”

Mr. Adams has sought to portray Mr. Yang as unprepared to be mayor.

“When I look over the lives of everyone else, I see moments of commitment. And I’m asking like, ‘Who is Andrew?’” Mr. Adams said. “Maya Wiley, I see a civil rights activist. Ray? Successful businessman. Dianne Morales, I see her commitment to fighting against injustice.”

He added: “They didn’t just discover that we have injustice in this city.”

In a statement, the Yang campaign pushed back against the idea that Mr. Yang had not demonstrated a commitment to service. “Andrew is known by the most New Yorkers in the race for starting a national movement on universal basic income,” said Alyssa Cass, Mr. Yang’s communications director. “While some candidates were handing out patronage jobs or getting investigated for corruption, Andrew was fighting poverty.”

Mr. Adams and Mr. Yang tend to have more moderate positions than some of their left-leaning rivals, like Mr. Stringer, Ms. Wiley and Ms. Morales.

But Mr. Adams argues that his platform, which includes an expanded local tax credit for low-income families, investment in underperforming schools, and improvements to public housing, amounts to the systemic change progressives want.

His “100 Steps for New York City,” a plan he partly drew from his journal of observations that began decades earlier, includes a special focus on public safety initiatives like releasing the names of officers being internally investigated for bad behavior.

Mr. Adams has proposed diverting $500 million from the New York police budget to fund crisis managers and crime prevention programs, and has pledged to further diversify the police force.

He has also proposed restoring a maligned plainclothes anti-crime unit that was [*disbanded by the Police Department last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/nyregion/nypd-plainclothes-cops.html), and refashioning it to focus on getting guns off the streets. Mr. Adams says proposals like these showed a responsiveness to the city’s most needy residents, including some Black neighborhoods suffering the brunt of violent crime. [*Critics point out*](https://gothamist.com/news/eric-adams-wants-to-bring-back-the-nypds-most-controversial-unit) that the disbanded unit has been behind several police shootings.

“Those other candidates, their names don’t ring out over here,” said Takbir Blake, a community activist who shepherded Mr. Adams during a business tour in Laurelton. “It’s that you know he’s been on the front lines. But you also know he’s from the streets.”

As the primary approaches, Mr. Adams has begun to demonstrate the benefits of his long-honed political relationships. He has won major labor endorsements, including from 32BJ SEIU, which represents private-sector building service workers. He has [*raised more money*](https://www.nyccfb.info/VSApps/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2021) than his rivals participating in the city’s matching-funds program, yet has spent less than several of them — maintaining his war chest for the stretch run.

And he believes that he will eventually win over the party’s progressive wing, especially if it becomes clearer that Democratic voters still favor Mr. Yang as their top choice.

“The polls are not everything, or always honest, but it’s going to send a message,” Mr. Adams said. “They not only need a person that they agree with, but I’m the person that could win the race.”

Mr. Adams says he can form a coalition of the marginalized, who want a mayor who has not had an aspirational New York experience, but who has experienced the common struggle.

It is the path of Mr. Dinkins, laid out by Mr. Lynch, and executed over decades by the most disciplined loose cannon in New York City politics.

“Say what you want, but there’s very little misunderstanding about me,” Mr. Adams said. “When you pull that lever, you know who you’re voting for.”

“An actual, real blue-collar New Yorker.”

PHOTOS: Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, made public safety a focus of his mayoral campaign. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Eric Adams on the Q train in Manhattan in October to encourage New Yorkers to get back on the subways after pandemic lockdowns. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Adams, right, joined the Rev. Al Sharpton, center, in 1993 to denounce a gunman who killed six people in a shooting on the Long Island Rail Road. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BEBETO MATTHEWS/ASSOCIATED PRESS); Addressing the police shooting of a Black man in 2000, Mr. Adams was flanked by members of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, a group he founded. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE BENGIVENO/THE NEW YORK TIMES); ERIC ADAMS (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19)

**Load-Date:** October 23, 2021

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[***Are Protests Dangerous? What Experts Say May Depend on Who’s Protesting What***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6095-38G1-DXY4-X4HJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Michael Powell

**Highlight:** Public health experts decried the anti-lockdown protests as dangerous gatherings in a pandemic. Health experts seem less comfortable doing so now that the marches are against racism.

**Body**

Public health experts decried the anti-lockdown protests as dangerous gatherings in a pandemic. Health experts seem less comfortable doing so now that the marches are against racism.

As the pandemic took hold, most epidemiologists have had clear proscriptions in fighting it: No students in classrooms, no in-person religious services, no visits to sick relatives in hospitals, no large public gatherings.

So when conservative anti-lockdown protesters gathered on state capitol steps in places like Columbus, Ohio, and Lansing, Mich., in April and May, epidemiologists scolded them and forecast surging infections. When Gov. Brian Kemp of Georgia relaxed restrictions on businesses in late April as testing lagged [*and infections rose*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/24/opinion/coronavirus-covid-19-georgia-reopen.html), the talk in public health circles was of that state’s embrace of human sacrifice.

And then the brutal killing of [*George Floyd*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/24/opinion/coronavirus-covid-19-georgia-reopen.html) by the police in Minneapolis on May 25 changed everything.

Soon the streets nationwide were full of tens of thousands of people in a mass protest movement that continues to this day, with demonstrations and the toppling of statues. And rather than decrying mass gatherings, more than 1,300 public health officials signed a May 30 letter of support, and many joined the protests.

That reaction, and the contrast with the epidemiologists’ earlier fervent support for the lockdown, gave rise to an uncomfortable question: Was public health advice in a pandemic dependent on whether people approved of the mass gathering in question? To many, the answer seemed to be “yes.”

“The way the public health narrative around coronavirus has reversed itself overnight seems an awful lot like … politicizing science,” the essayist and journalist Thomas Chatterton Williams [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/24/opinion/coronavirus-covid-19-georgia-reopen.html) in The Guardian last month. “What are we to make of such [*whiplash-inducing messaging*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/24/opinion/coronavirus-covid-19-georgia-reopen.html)?”

Of course, there are differences: A distinct majority of George Floyd protesters wore masks in many cities, even if they often crowded too close together. By contrast, many anti-lockdown protesters refused to wear masks — and their rallying cry ran directly contrary to public health officials’ instructions.

And in practical terms, no team of epidemiologists could have stopped the waves of impassioned protesters, any more than they could have blocked the anti-lockdown protests.

Still, the divergence in their own reactions left some of the country’s prominent epidemiologists wrestling with deeper questions of morality, responsibility and risk.

Catherine Troisi, an infectious-disease epidemiologist at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, studies Covid-19. When, wearing a mask and standing at the edge of a great swell of people, she attended a recent protest in Houston supporting Mr. Floyd, a sense of contradiction tugged at her.

“I certainly condemned the anti-lockdown protests at the time, and I’m not condemning the protests now, and I struggle with that,” Dr. Troisi said. “I have a hard time articulating why that is OK.”

Mark Lurie, a professor of epidemiology at Brown University, described a similar struggle.

“Instinctively, many of us in public health feel a strong desire to act against accumulated generations of racial injustice,” Dr. Lurie said. “But we have to be honest: A few weeks before, we were criticizing protesters for arguing to open up the economy and saying that was dangerous behavior.

“I am still grappling with that.”

To which Ashish Jha, dean of Brown University’s School of Public Health, added: “Do I worry that mass protests will fuel more cases? Yes, I do. But a dam broke, and there’s no stopping that.”

Some public health scientists publicly waved off the conflicted feelings of their colleagues, saying the country now confronts a stark moral choice. The letter signed by more than 1,300 epidemiologists and health workers urged Americans to adopt a “consciously anti-racist” stance and framed the difference between the anti-lockdown demonstrators and the protesters in moral, ideological and racial terms.

Those who protested stay-at-home orders were “rooted in white nationalism and run contrary to respect for Black lives,” the letter stated.

By contrast, it said, those protesting systemic racism “must be supported.”

“As public health advocates,” they stated, “we do not condemn these gatherings as risky for Covid-19 transmission. We support them as vital to the national public health.”

There is as of yet no firm evidence that [*protests*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/24/opinion/coronavirus-covid-19-georgia-reopen.html) against police violence led to noticeable spikes in infection rates. A study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research found no overall rise in infections but could not rule out that infections might have risen in the age demographic of the protesters. Health officials in Houston and Los Angeles have suggested the demonstrations there led to increased infections, but they have not provided data. In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio has instructed contact tracers to ask infected people if they had been in big crowds but not if they attended any protests.

The 10 epidemiologists interviewed for this article said near-daily marches and rallies are nearly certain to result in some transmission. Police use of tear gas and pepper spray, and crowding protesters into police vans and buses, puts people further at risk.

“In all likelihood, some infections occurred at the protests; the question is how much,” Dr. Lurie said. “No major new evidence has emerged that suggests the protests were superspreader events.”

The coronavirus has infected 2.89 million Americans, and at least 129,800 have died.

The virus has hit Black and Latino Americans with a particular ferocity, hospitalizing those populations at more than four times the rate of white Americans. Many face underlying health issues, and are more likely than most Americans to live in densely populated housing and to work on the front lines of this epidemic. As a result, Latinos and Black people are dying at rates well in excess of white Americans.

Mary Travis Bassett, who is African-American, served as the New York City health commissioner and now directs the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University. She noted that even before Covid-19, Black Americans were sicker and died more than three and a half years earlier, on average, than white Americans.

And she noted that police violence has long cast a deep shadow over African-Americans. From the auction block to plantations to centuries of lynchings carried out with the complicity of local law enforcement, Black people have suffered the devastating effects of state power.

She acknowledged that the current protests are freighted with moral complications, not least the possibility that a young person marching for justice might come home and inadvertently infect a mother, aunt or grandparent. “If there’s an elder in the household, that person should be cocooned to the best extent that we can,” Dr. Bassett said.

But she said the opportunity to achieve a breakthrough transcended such worries about the virus. “Racism has been killing people a lot longer than Covid-19,” she said. “The willingness to say we all bear the burden of that is deeply moving to me.”

Others take a more cautious view of the moral stakes. Nicholas A. Christakis, professor of social and natural science at Yale, noted that public health is guided by twin imperatives: to comfort the afflicted and to speak truth about risks to public health, no matter how unpleasant.

These often-complementary values are now in conflict. To take to the street to protest injustice is to risk casting open doors and letting the virus endanger tens of thousands, he said. There is a danger, he said, in asserting that one moral imperative overshadows another.

“The left and the right want to wish the virus away,” Dr. Christakis said. “We can’t wish away climate change, or the epidemic, or other inconvenient scientific truths.”

He said that framing the anti-lockdown protests as white supremacist and dangerous and the George Floyd protests as anti-racist and essential obscures a messier reality.

When he was a hospice doctor in Chicago and Boston, he said, he saw up close how isolation deepened the despair of the dying — a fate now suffered by many in the pandemic, with hospital visits severely restricted. For epidemiologists to turn around and argue for loosening the ground rules for the George Floyd marches risks sounding hypocritical.

“We allowed thousands of people to die alone,” he said. “We buried people by Zoom. Now all of a sudden we are saying, never mind?”

There are other conflicting imperatives. Lockdowns, and the shuttering of businesses and schools and enforcing social isolation, take a toll on the ***working class*** and poor, and the emotionally fraught who live on the economic margins.

The lockdown is justified, most epidemiologists say, even as it requires acknowledging a moral truth: To save many hundreds of thousands of lives, we risk wrecking the lives of a smaller number of Americans, as businesses fail and people lose jobs and grow desolate and depressed.

The pandemic has also brought [*an increase in deaths*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/24/opinion/coronavirus-covid-19-georgia-reopen.html) from heart attacks and diabetes during this period.

“Have people died because of the closed economy? No doubt,” said Dr. Lurie, the Brown University epidemiologist. “And that pain is real, and should not be dismissed. But you won’t have a healthy economy until you have healthy people.”

There’s another epidemiological reality: No one quite understands the path of this idiosyncratic virus and how and when it strikes. The public health risks presented by the protests are not easily separated from the broader risks taken as governors, in fits and starts, move to reopen state economies. The protesters represent a small stream filled with 500,000 to perhaps 800,000 people, merging with a river of millions of Americans who have begun to re-enter businesses and restaurants.

“To separate out those causes, when we look, will be very difficult,” Dr. Lurie noted.

Still, he admitted to some worries. He said he took his daughter to a protest early in June and felt a chaser of regret in its wake.

“We felt afterward that the risk we incurred probably exceeded the entire risk in the previous two months,” he said. “We undid some very hard work, and I don’t see how actions like that can help in battling this epidemic, honestly.”

PHOTO: A protest in Seattle last month. More than 1,300 public health advocates signed a letter supporting mass gatherings after the killing of George Floyd. That stance contrasted with earlier guidance. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 11, 2020

**End of Document**



[***A Racist Attack on Children Was Taped in 1975. We Found Them.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6061-GM81-DXY4-X53S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 5, 2020 Sunday 12:18 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1579 words

**Byline:** Sarah Maslin Nir

**Highlight:** A snippet of the documentary “Rosedale: The Way It Is” has ricocheted across the internet, upending for another generation New York City’s narrative as a bastion of tolerance.

**Body**

A snippet of the documentary “Rosedale: The Way It Is” has ricocheted across the internet, upending for another generation New York City’s narrative as a bastion of tolerance.

The video rolls on a sunny suburban street, and a group of black children bike toward what looks to them like a parade — there’s a small crowd, and an American flag. Suddenly, they’re swarmed by a group of white children, who hurl racial epithets and rocks. Adults gathered nearby do nothing.

The black children had bicycled straight into a white supremacist rally.

The scene captured in 1975 by [*“Bill Moyers Journal,”*](https://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/index.html) a PBS documentary series, has echoes of the racist clashes more than a decade earlier in places like Selma, Ala., Birmingham, Ala., and Little Rock, Ark. But it unfolded in New York City, in the bedroom community of Rosedale in Queens, nearly a dozen years after the Civil Rights Act was made law.

Forty-five years later, that virulent two-minute, 20-second snippet of the documentary, “Rosedale: The Way It Is,” [*resurfaced online*](https://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/index.html), shared last year by a graduate student, and boomeranged across the internet. Its quietly forgotten subject, [*a rash of firebombings of black families’ homes in Queens*](https://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/index.html), upended for a new generation the city’s narrative as a bastion of tolerance and exposed its core falsehood: that racism is a scourge of elsewhere.

And it shocked the children even then: “I never even knew people were like that,” one of the black girls says after the attack in 1975 as the documentarian films, her pigtailed friend looking on. “I’ve never experienced anything like that in my life.”

In recent weeks, the city’s story line of a utopian melting pot has been further punctured as New York heaves with unrest over the systemic racism black people face, and the video has again gone viral.

As it ricocheted around the internet, racking up millions of views, provoking anguished discussion about the city’s past, one line of questioning coalesced:

Who were those children? How did it shape them? Where are they now?

“I’m still here,” Samantha Brown-Carter said. She was the girl in pigtails; now she is 55 years old. She sat for an interview in the home she grew up in, a neighborhood just north of where the episode unfolded nearly half a century ago.

“Was it traumatic? Will I always remember it? Yes,” Ms. Brown-Carter said. “But I never felt an urge to leave, never for any reason at all.”

She is one of five of the about a dozen black children in the PBS documentary that The New York Times was able to locate as part of an exhaustive, monthslong search that encompassed property records, elementary school yearbooks and local memory.

But while over 90 people linked to Rosedale were contacted, just one person identified any of the numerous unnamed white children or adults in the film — a teenager who would later become her brother-in-law, the person said, and who has since died. The person asked that her name not be published, for fear of reprisals from her community.

The Rosedale of the 1970s was a predominantly white ***working-class*** neighborhood of about 25,000, home to civil service workers, police officers and firefighters of mainly Italian, Irish and Jewish descent. But like much of New York City at that time, demographics were shifting as black and immigrant families moved in and, in response, some white families headed out.

In 1974, Ormistan and Glenda Spencer, Trinidadian immigrants from London, moved their family into a Cape Cod house at 243-11 136th Avenue — and unwittingly into a cresting battle of real estate and race. On New Year’s Eve the next year, while the family was asleep at home, a [*pipe bomb was thrown*](https://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/index.html) through the home’s window.

“In England, you hear about this happening in the South,” Mr. Spencer told The Times shortly after the attack. “But you just don’t think it happens in New York City.”

Then [*it happened again*](https://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/index.html): Arsonists set fire to another black family’s home. Then [*again*](https://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/index.html): A Molotov cocktail was chucked through the window of a home recently purchased by a black person. And there were still more attacks.

But the black children on that sunny afternoon in 1975, out for what they called a “bike hike,” had only a vague understanding of the social forces fomenting in Rosedale, the neighborhood beside their own of Cambria Heights.

They did not know that it had become a launchpad of “white flight,” the phenomenon of mass migration of white people from urban areas to the suburbs as nonwhite immigrants and black people moved in.

Or that some white residents of Rosedale instead entrenched, and used violence to do so.

The young friends had other things on their mind that day — juicy burgers. They got on their bikes and pedaled toward the McDonald’s on the other side of Rosedale. Partway there, the children spotted a crowd. Above the gathering flew an American flag.

“The last thing that I remember was someone saying, ‘Oh, a parade!’ And so we went down to go see the parade,” said Mark Blagrove, who is now 57 and works in information technology sales and consulting. “And I laugh about it until this day, because it was a parade,” he said, “to get the black people out of Rosedale.”

At the march and rally was ROAR: Return Our American Rights, a racist neighborhood group whose mission was to [*prevent black people*](https://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/index.html) from buying area homes. As police officers stood guard in front of the Spencers’ home, white residents massed, chanting racist epithets. (Among their complaints was that the family had been given a police guard.)

“The American flag is the image when I think about that incident,” said Renée Lipscomb-McDonald, now 58 years old and a social worker. “That’s the symbol that pulled us into that situation, because of the idea that we live in America, the American flag means good things.”

She began to cry. “They took that beautiful image and turned it into something ugly for me,” she said.

She straightened. “I want the flag back.”

Mr. Moyers, who served as press secretary to President Lyndon B. Johnson, said he was drawn to Rosedale as a journalist because he was interested in the societal ramifications of the Johnson administration’s efforts to put an end to segregation. Mr. Moyers and his camera crew set out to understand its impact and stumbled upon its real-world consequence on a street corner: the attack on their peers by children steeped in hate.

What he discovered in Queens, he said, was racism enmeshed with economic anxiety — a belief that the newcomers would bring waves of crime and slash property values. Plus, there was a toxic fear held by white residents of losing their dominance, he said, something he sees echoed in the politics of today.

“We are in the last battle of white supremacy at the moment, and that was incipient in what was happening in Rosedale in the early 1970s,” Mr. Moyers said. “The past is very much alive today. Rosedale is being played out in a hundred different ways.”

Today Rosedale is 80 percent black and 5 percent white, and still a cozy commuter community of civil service workers and tidy, mowed lawns. It has seen little of the types of protests and marches that have engulfed much of the city in recent weeks, demanding the end of systemic racism and police brutality against black people.

But as the video has plastered Ms. Brown-Carter’s Facebook feed, questions being raised across the city plague her: “What I wonder about is those white children — they grew up,” she said. “Did they become police officers? Or did their children become police officers?”

The incident still fills Ms. Lipscomb-McDonald with rage, both for the little girl she was, and in light of this era’s similar struggles, how intractable racism seems. In recent days, she said, she has marched in Black Lives Matter protests near her home in Bel Air, Md., with her children. “Which is beautiful,” she said, “and very sad that another generation has to take up the cause.”

But that cruel moment of rocks, bikes and brutal words has also impelled her forward, even informing her choice to become a social worker. “My role is to provide hope,” she said of her profession.

“Maybe that’s the most significant lesson I got out of that day,” Ms. Lipscomb-McDonald added. “That no little girl will ride down the block and ever believe for a second that she’s not worthy of respect.”

\_\_\_\_\_

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Sarah Maslin Nir

Cinematographer

Jonah M. Kessel

Editor

Jeff Bernier

Additional Reporting

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Executive Producer

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Thanks

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Additional reporting by Susan C. Beachy. To watch the full video go to: nytimes.com/video

PHOTOS: Mark as a child in the film. Mark and his friends rode their bikes into Rosedale, Queens, where white children shouted racist slurs at them.; Mark, 45 years later. “That was like really the first where I was, like, wow, people do not like black people.”; Samantha as a child in the film. “This little boy, he threw the rock. He tried to hit my sister, but he almost hit me.” (A18); Samantha, 45 years later. “I did not understand, I was, like, who do you think you are? To say we can’t come here. Like, how dare you?”; Renée as a child in the film. “They will always do that. They always spit on us like we some kind of dogs. Ain’t nothin’ gonna change.”; Renée, 45 years later. “I did not know what to do with those feelings.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONAH M. KESSEL/THE NEW YORK TIMES; WNET) (A18; A19)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***The Elephant in the Room: Electability***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y84-WGV1-JBG3-60DP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 21, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Giovanni Russonello

**Body**

The Democratic candidates are all debating a singular issue. New polls offer insights, not answers.

Hi. Welcome to On Politics, your guide to the day in national politics. I'm Giovanni Russonello, your morning newsletter writer taking over your afternoon edition.

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At Wednesday night's Democratic presidential debate, the candidates bickered and battled over health care policy; over Michael Bloomberg's record and his right to represent a party that he only recently rejoined; over the possible dangers of nominating a democratic socialist.

But in a way, it all seemed like just window dressing around one big question: Who has the best chance in November? Every policy critique seemed to lead inexorably back to this issue of electability.

In his very first comments at the debate, Mr. Bloomberg didn't just criticize Senator Bernie Sanders's plan to create a single-payer health care system -- he said it would cause Democrats to lose the general election.

''I don't think there's any chance of the senator beating President Trump,'' Mr. Bloomberg said. ''You don't start out by saying I've got 160 million people, I'm going to take away the insurance plan that they love.''

Mr. Sanders shot back, arguing that Mr. Bloomberg, the former New York mayor, was ''a billionaire saying that we should not raise the minimum wage or that we should cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.''

''If that's a way to beat Donald Trump, wow, I would be very surprised,'' Mr. Sanders said.

A wide majority of Democratic primary voters have said in poll after poll that they care about finding someone who can win the general election more than finding a candidate who agrees with them on the issues.

But who is that candidate? It's far from clear.

Until recently, Democratic voters tended to see former Vice President Joe Biden as the strongest option. But after he failed to place in the top three in either Iowa or New Hampshire, he lost any veneer of invincibility. An ABC News/Washington Post poll released Wednesday showed that for the first time in the race, Democrats are most likely to name Mr. Sanders as the candidate with the best chance to beat Mr. Trump.

Meanwhile, Mr. Trump's approval rating has risen, most likely lifted by the strength of the economy and his acquittal in the Senate's impeachment trial. His Gallup approval rating hit 49 percent this month -- the highest number of his presidency. So while a majority of Americans still disapprove of him, he has the potential to win at least as much support as he did in 2016, when he lost the popular vote but pulled off a decisive win in the Electoral College.

The ABC/Washington Post poll showed that in head-to-head matchups with all six of the candidates onstage at the debate, Mr. Trump would earn between 45 and 47 percent of the vote nationwide. The Democrats' shares varied from 49 to 52 percent. The differences between each Democrat were all within the poll's margin of error.

This suggests that, despite Mr. Sanders's claim that a ''political revolution'' would be needed to drive turnout, and in spite of his more moderate rivals' argument that his left-wing proposals would alienate a huge swath of voters, any Democratic nominee would probably have a good chance of winning the popular vote.

But Republicans have won the Electoral College three times this century, even though they have won the popular vote only once. So what really matters is who can beat Mr. Trump in a handful of key swing states.

That's why Quinnipiac University asked voters in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin -- three states that Mr. Trump narrowly flipped in 2016, giving him an Electoral College win -- to choose between the president and each of the six leading Democratic candidates.

The data from those polls suggests that Mr. Trump is in a very strong position to win Wisconsin, a heavily white state that was once solidly blue but has trended conservative over the past 10 years. None of the six leading Democratic candidates finished ahead of Mr. Trump there.

Conversely, in Michigan and Pennsylvania, he didn't have a lead against any of them. Mr. Biden beat Mr. Trump by eight percentage points in Pennsylvania -- where he was born -- and by four points in Michigan. Mr. Sanders was up by five points against the president in Michigan, and by four points in Pennsylvania. Mr. Bloomberg led Mr. Trump by six points in Pennsylvania, and by five points in Michigan.

The other three candidates included in the poll -- Senator Amy Klobuchar, Pete Buttigieg and Senator Elizabeth Warren -- generally fared a little less strongly, though Ms. Klobuchar had a strong, seven-point lead over Mr. Trump in Pennsylvania, and none of them were behind him there or in Michigan.

A University of North Florida poll released this week found meaningful differences between the candidates' chances in that state. Mr. Bloomberg beat Mr. Trump by six points among registered Florida voters, thanks in part to the strength of his support among voters with college degrees, according to the poll. Mr. Buttigieg and Ms. Klobuchar, both hobbled by relatively weak support from black and Latino voters, each finished four points behind the president.

Mr. Sanders and Mr. Biden both ran neck-and-neck with Mr. Trump.

Like all surveys, head-to-head polls are not actually able to predict the future. They simply show what might happen if the election were held today. A lot will change over the course of the campaign.

Still, what happens in these bellwether states will determine the election -- so you can expect these kinds of head-to-head polls to be more common as the primary season rambles on, and as Democrats continue to fret over their chances to take down Mr. Trump.

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From Opinion: The trickiness of electability

In this new weekly feature, our colleagues from The New York Times's Opinion section will share expert analysis and perspectives from across the political spectrum. In today's installment, there's more to read about why electability is so unpredictable.

There is a home base that all the conversation about the Democratic presidential primary comes back to in the end: Primary voters prioritize, above all, someone who can defeat President Trump.

In any election that features an incumbent president, the main goal of the out-of-power party is to nominate a candidate well-suited to defeating the incumbent. That's why both Republican Party elites and less enthusiastic conservative voters got behind Mitt Romney after a series of polls in 2011 showed he was the only Republican beating President Barack Obama in head-to-head matchups.

This year, Democrats' desire to replace the incumbent has reached a fever pitch, arguably higher than it's ever been for either party. But paradigm-shifting presidents have complicated the idea of electability, as Adam Jentleson, a former deputy chief of staff for Senator Harry Reid, pointed out this week in an Op-Ed.

Mr. Obama won his first election despite being a ''black man who had admitted to using cocaine, who was caught on tape calling ***working-class*** whites 'bitter' people who 'cling to guns and religion,' and who sat in the pews with a pastor who declared, 'God damn America','' Mr. Jentleson said.

Mr. Romney, the Republicans' supposed safe bet, lost despite running against the sluggish economy under Mr. Obama.

And Hillary Clinton, another supposed safe bet, lost to Donald J. Trump.

So does anyone know what electability even means anymore? Our columnist Bret Stephens believes that ''of course Bernie can win,'' but also thinks that the current front-runner's democratic socialist vision may be disqualifying for many voters: ''For some of us, none-of-the-above is a viable option. For far too many others,'' he writes, Trump will ''be the devil they know.''

-- Talmon Joseph Smith

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/us/politics/democrats-ask-who-can-beat-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/us/politics/democrats-ask-who-can-beat-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The Democrats at Wednesday's debate fought over policy, but voters say they care about who can beat the president. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Who Can Beat Trump? Who Knows?; On Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y83-RJD1-JBG3-603H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 20, 2020 Thursday 01:10 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1415 words

**Byline:** Giovanni Russonello

**Highlight:** The Democratic candidates are all debating a singular issue. New polls offer insights, not answers.

**Body**

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That’s why [*Quinnipiac University asked voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — three states that Mr. Trump narrowly flipped in 2016, giving him an Electoral College win — to choose between the president and each of the six leading Democratic candidates.

The data from those polls suggests that Mr. Trump is in a very strong position to win Wisconsin, a heavily white state that was once solidly blue but has trended conservative over the past 10 years. None of the six leading Democratic candidates finished ahead of Mr. Trump there.

Conversely, in Michigan and Pennsylvania, he didn’t have a lead against any of them. Mr. Biden beat Mr. Trump by eight percentage points in Pennsylvania — where he was born — and by four points in Michigan. Mr. Sanders was up by five points against the president in Michigan, and by four points in Pennsylvania. Mr. Bloomberg led Mr. Trump by six points in Pennsylvania, and by five points in Michigan.

The other three candidates included in the poll — Senator Amy Klobuchar, Pete Buttigieg and Senator Elizabeth Warren — generally fared a little less strongly, though Ms. Klobuchar had a strong, seven-point lead over Mr. Trump in Pennsylvania, and none of them were behind him there or in Michigan.

A [*University of North Florida poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) released this week found meaningful differences between the candidates’ chances in that state. Mr. Bloomberg beat Mr. Trump by six points among registered Florida voters, thanks in part to the strength of his support among voters with college degrees, according to the poll. Mr. Buttigieg and Ms. Klobuchar, both hobbled by relatively weak support from black and Latino voters, each finished four points behind the president.

Mr. Sanders and Mr. Biden both ran neck-and-neck with Mr. Trump.

Like all surveys, head-to-head polls are not actually able to predict the future. They simply show what might happen if the election were held today. A lot will change over the course of the campaign.

Still, what happens in these bellwether states will determine the election — so you can expect these kinds of head-to-head polls to be more common as the primary season rambles on, and as Democrats continue to fret over their chances to take down Mr. Trump.

Drop us a line!

We want to hear from our readers. Have a question? We’ll try to answer it. Have a comment? We’re all ears. Email us at [*onpolitics@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).

From Opinion: The trickiness of electability

In this new weekly feature, our colleagues from The New York Times’s [*Opinion section*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) will share expert analysis and perspectives from across the political spectrum. In today’s installment, there’s more to read about why electability is so unpredictable.

There is a home base that all the conversation about the Democratic presidential primary comes back to in the end: Primary voters prioritize, above all, someone who can defeat President Trump.

In any election that features an incumbent president, the main goal of the out-of-power party is to nominate a candidate well-suited to defeating the incumbent. That’s why both Republican Party elites and less enthusiastic conservative voters got behind Mitt Romney after a series of [*polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) in 2011 showed he was the only Republican beating President Barack Obama in head-to-head matchups.

This year, Democrats’ desire to replace the incumbent has reached a fever pitch, arguably higher than it’s ever been for either party. But paradigm-shifting presidents have complicated the idea of electability, as Adam Jentleson, a former deputy chief of staff for Senator Harry Reid, [*pointed out this week in an Op-Ed*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).

Mr. Obama won his first election despite being a “black man who had admitted to using cocaine, who was caught on tape calling ***working-class*** whites ‘bitter’ people who ‘cling to guns and religion,’ and who sat in the pews with a pastor who declared, ‘God damn America’,” Mr. Jentleson said.

Mr. Romney, the Republicans’ supposed safe bet, lost despite running against the sluggish economy under Mr. Obama.

And Hillary Clinton, another supposed safe bet, lost to Donald J. Trump.

So does anyone know what electability even means anymore? Our columnist Bret Stephens believes that “[*of course Bernie can win*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics),” but also thinks that the current front-runner’s democratic socialist vision   [*may be disqualifying*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) for many voters: “For some of us, none-of-the-above is a viable option. For far too many others,” he writes, Trump will “be the devil they know.”

— Talmon Joseph Smith

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PHOTO: The Democrats at Wednesday’s debate fought over policy, but voters say they care about who can beat the president. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2020

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[***What the C.E.O. of Pfizer and Other Covid-19 Fighters Learned From Their Parents***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62WN-5TB1-JBG3-63MG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Debra Weiner

**Highlight:** Various people working to stop the pandemic reflected on the life skills their parents taught them: determination, teamwork, resilience and more.

**Body**

Various people working to stop the pandemic reflected on the life skills their parents taught them: determination, teamwork, resilience and more.

Debra Weiner interviewed people who are working to beat the coronavirus about the most valuable things their parents taught them. Following are excerpts from a few of those stories, edited and condensed.

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Anything Is Possible

Albert Bourla Chairman and chief executive officer of Pfizer

I was born in Thessaloniki, Greece. Before the Holocaust, there were 50,000 Jews there. [*About 95 percent*](https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/holocaust-in-greece/thessaloniki) were exterminated. A lot of survivors don’t discuss what happened to them. My family did. On Sundays, we would gather in the living room with the relatives. My sister and cousins and I would be sitting on the floor and we’d say: “Tell us a story about that time. Tell us a story.” And my mother would.

My mother was the youngest of seven children. She lived in hiding with her oldest sister for a year, starting in 1943. Like Anne Frank, my mom wasn’t supposed to go out of the house. But she was a teenager, didn’t follow all the rules, and one day when she was out, she was spotted and arrested and put in prison.

This was toward the end of the war and the Germans were no longer sending the Jews in Greece to Auschwitz. But as a prisoner, she was beaten and abused. And every day at noon, some of the prisoners would be taken to the other side of town and the next day executed. Her sister’s husband, who was quite wealthy, had paid a ransom to the commander of the Nazi occupation in Thessaloniki. So her sister thought my mother was secure. Still, each day she would go to the prison to see who was going out. And one day she saw my mom loaded into the truck. Her sister ran to tell her husband, who contacted the commander. “I gave you all this money. What’s this?”

He said, “I have no idea what you’re talking about. Let me see.”

My mother didn’t sleep at all that night. Someone told her to be brave but she just kept crying. At dawn, she and the others were lined up against a wall in front of a firing squad when at the last moment, a BMW motorbike with two German soldiers drove up. They handed some documents to the officer in charge and my mother and another woman were removed from the line. As they left to go back to the prison, she could hear the machine guns slaughtering the others.

My mother told us about everything in detail with the same easiness that I share childhood memories with my kids. She never said, “Look what the Germans did to me.” That was irrelevant. And she never said, “Oh, when I suffered.” She put a humorous spin on things so we didn’t feel the horror. And most important, the stories were filled with messages of optimism: “I was in worst position once, and now I have you and your sister. Life is miraculous. Nothing is impossible.”

That was the spirit of her. And she inspired me to be the same. In my first year of middle school, they told us there were going to be elections for class president, vice president and secretary. I asked my mom, “Do you think I should raise my hand?”

She said yes.

“But I’m the only Jew in the school.”

“Just do it. Go make your speech.”

And I was elected president.

My mother believed you can do anything in life. That there’s always a way. The way may not be clear in the beginning, but there is always a way. I owe her a lot because of that. She is my role model.

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Listen to the Other Side

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan Chief scientist at the World Health Organization, known for her research on tuberculosis and H.I.V.

My father, MS Swaminathan, shot into prominence when he was very young. He collaborated with the Nobel Prize winner Norman Borlaug and developed new, high-yielding varieties of seeds for wheat and rice, and convinced farmers around Delhi and Punjab to grow them. Wheat production went up three or four times. From being a nation that had to import food grains from the United States, by the early 1970s, we were basically food secure. My father became known as the Father of the Green Revolution.

But at the peak of his career, there was an attack on his work by some of his closest colleagues about the unintended side-effects of improving the yields of plants. My father had himself recognized that because of the use of pesticides and fertilizers there would be some environmental damage and contamination of the water, and he had spoken about it. But there was a euphoria at the time that India had become food self-sufficient. It was immediate benefits versus long-term risks.

The criticism was in all the newspapers. Kids at school would ask, “Is what they said true? Did your father do these bad things?” And the atmosphere at home was somber. I remember asking my father, “Don’t you hate these people who write all these nasty things about you?”

“No, no, no. I don’t hate them,” he said. “There’s no point in being angry. It’s their right to question and write what they want. If you believe in something and think you are doing the right thing, then even if people criticize you, you carry on. It can seem unfair, but there could also be some something you can take from it, some element you didn’t do right or didn’t communicate in the right way that you can try to improve on.”

My father was a problem solver and he did it by listening to the people who were most affected by the problem. On weekends or holidays, my sisters and I, and sometimes our family’s gardener’s kids, would often go with him to the farming villages. While we were running around in the sugar cane and wheat fields playing hide and seek, he would sit with the farmers and hear how they were doing with the new seeds and if they were having any problems, and be open to changing course if needed. He would always say to the farmers, “This will only be a success story if it works for you.”

As a young tuberculosis researcher, I went into a remote tribal community in south India to explain why it’s very important to identify and treat people with TB early. People in the tribe said to me: “Maybe once in two years somebody in our village gets diagnosed with TB. Our people die of other infectious diseases. Children die from diarrhea. Somebody falls in the forest, fractures their leg and we have to carry that person 15 kilometers to a health center where most often there’s no surgeon so nothing can be done. These are our day-to-day problems, so it doesn’t seem appropriate that you’re discussing TB but aren’t trying to solve our other issues.” I thought then of my childhood and what I saw my father do. He knew that you needed to look holistically at people’s physical, social and economic environment and see through their eyes.

When I am in a situation where I’m in disagreement or have a completely different view, I may feel at the moment quite upset. But when I reflect further or have a discussion and try to understand where the other person is coming from, I start to say, “OK, this is why they are so negative or angry.” And that is when you start getting solutions.

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Fierce Determination

Michelle Gaskill-Hames Senior vice president for hospital and health plan operations for Kaiser Permanente’s Northern California region

My parents were born and raised in the same ***working-class*** neighborhood in Detroit. They played together as kids, dated in high school, then both went to Wayne State University. My mother majored in special education. My father had a math and computer science degree and was selected for a management training program at Michigan Bell, which was unusual for a young African-American in the early 1960s. Then, within less than a year of getting married, he was driving home from work and a car went through a red light and slammed into his.

His car was literally wrapped around a tree. They saved his life, but he was left paralyzed from the waist down with limited upper body movement. He was classified as a quadriplegic. He was 23. My mother was 22.

Back in that day, many quadriplegics gave up. That was never my father’s story. He wasn’t going to let the accident determine his life. He was ambitious. He had goals. And with my mother right there with him, nothing was going to deter him from returning to work, getting a house and adopting me. It’s funny. Some people might think having a father who was a quadriplegic is not a blessing. But to have parents who lived with such determination was the best blessing I could have ever had.

As a child, I thought it was cool that he had an electric wheelchair. I’d ride on his lap through the neighborhood to go get ice cream. When I got bigger, I’d ride my bike and he’d zoom along with me. I didn’t realize that people with disabilities could be discriminated against until we were at a restaurant once when the waiter came to the table, looked at my mother and said, “What would he like to order?”

My father didn’t raise his voice. He didn’t bat an eye. He just said, “Well, I will have the prime rib, medium-rare, horseradish on the side,” and made it very clear that his disability was not in any way connected to his mind.

That was my first recognition that people might feel sorry for my father or look down on him in some way. But I never did. And my dad never showed any sign of self-pity. He believed there was nothing you couldn’t do if you were focused and determined.

It’s not that there weren’t obstacles, but he believed that obstacles were meant to be overcome.

When I was in sixth grade, there was an oratory contest. Everyone had to recite a poem or speech. I thought I’d do the “I Have a Dream” speech. But my father said, “No, everybody is going to do that,” and he suggested the poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling.

It’s been my mantra ever since. I have a framed copy of it at work, right behind my desk. Whenever I’m dealing with a stressful situation, I turn around and read it. Even if I just get through the first lines: If you can keep your head when all about you / Are losing theirs and blaming it on you / If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you / But make allowance for their doubting too; I’m like, “OK. Got it. I can do this.” Not just because the words of the poem instill confidence, but because my father taught it to me. He was my hero. In my mind, he was 7 feet tall.

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Resilience

Ilona Bartnik Critical care nurse, University of Chicago Medical Center

I came to Chicago from Poland in 2002. My first day in school someone gave me a list of my classes and room numbers, but I didn’t know which way to go. I didn’t know who to ask or how to ask, because I spoke then a very broken English. I was afraid people wouldn’t understand me or that I wouldn’t understand them, and then they’d make fun of me.

Especially in the beginning, I’d come home from school crying. Not because anyone had been mean, but because I was overwhelmed. My parents helped as much as they could. They’d say the typical things you tell a 17-year-old girl: “Oh, it’ll get better. You’ll make new friends.” Then they would make me my favorite meal — pierogies with strawberries or blueberries.

But I would say: “I miss my old friends. I wish we could go back to Poland. I don’t know what we’re even doing here.”

There, my mom owned a small grocery store. Everyone in our town knew us. Here, my mom was a cleaning lady. It was embarrassing. Later my mom studied to become a dialysis technician. She would work long hours then go to school. On one hand, OK, now I don’t have to say she cleans houses. But then I never got to see her much because she was so busy.

But if it was hard for me to basically learn everything again, for my parents it was much harder. Learning a new language, getting a house in a good area, applying for a loan, even going to a grocery store, all of that was complicated. I’d hear them talking to their Polish friends who’d been here longer about which neighborhoods had good schools. Then they’d do the math to see what they could afford and get an extra job on the side just to make sure.

So they did whatever they needed to do to support us. But culture-wise, they were not as adaptable. They’d introduce me to the kids of their Polish friends, but my closest friends were other nationalities: Russian, Hispanic, Bulgarian, German. My parents were nice to them in their presence, but given Polish history there is a bit of tension between Polish and Germans, and Polish and Russians. And later it was always like, “Why don’t you just hang out with your own people” kind of thing. They didn’t understand that you can be a different color and still share the same things.

Maybe my parents preferred their own culture because it reminded them of home. Or because it felt like the one piece in their lives that they could control. But because my parents moved us here, I went from “I don’t want to change” to “I don’t want to stay the same.” I like trying new things.

This last year has been rough. Rules at the hospital changed so fast and so much. One week it was this; the next week it was that. Everyone was stressed out. But because of what I had to go through in experiencing a totally different culture, I knew I could adapt. I knew I was resilient. I knew I’d be able to cope.

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Personal Connection

Dr. Anne Schuchat Principal deputy director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [*retiring this month*](https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/holocaust-in-greece/thessaloniki)

A lot of people are upset when they see bad things happening in the world. But my parents said, “What can we do about it?” When the Russians invaded Hungary in 1956, my parents, who’d only been married three years, had two kids and were expecting a third, opened their home for several months to a Hungarian refugee family that had escaped. Later, with others from her synagogue, my mom helped set up the Anne Frank House, a residence for homeless women in Washington.

I wouldn’t say they were activists, but life was about connecting with people and our home was a gathering place. After having five kids in seven years, my mom went back to school to get her Ph.D. in anthropology, and she would host the department parties. This was in the ’60s, so you can imagine what her classmates were like. Later my mom became interested in China and got involved with the [*U.S. China Peoples Friendship Association*](https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/holocaust-in-greece/thessaloniki), and all these folks who had lived there in the 1930s or ’40s, would come to our house for meetings. And Passover Seders were an event. We’d have almost 40 people both nights, and not just extended family. There’d be Jews and non-Jews, friends from school who’d never been to a Seder, my mom’s professors, people visiting from other countries.

Bringing people together was part of my mom’s route to happiness, and that’s maybe why I try to turn whatever community I’m with into a welcoming environment. At the C.D.C., we have these two-year trainings for epidemic intelligence service officers. When I was branch chief, I remembered how in my mom’s office there was this fake certificate from a behavioral services organization she worked for that read, “This officially honors Molly Schuchat,” then said all these silly things. So I started making these personal little collages for the officers when they graduated. For the person who did nose swabs on 4,000 people, the border was lots of little noses. The one who’d negotiated lots of complicated relationships between institutions got the World Peace award.

In 2014, I was asked to lead this trial of an experimental Ebola vaccine in Sierra Leone. It was in the middle of an epidemic, working with counterparts who had lost friends to this virus. At times it seemed totally hopeless and unsolvable. Everybody was exhausted, hitting walls and a little bit scared. Somebody earlier had given me pompoms, so I pulled them out and went, “OK, we can get through this; this is what we’re going to do next,” and tried to help our team see that what they were doing was really brave, and that they were making a difference.

Public health can’t just be about the results because for every problem you solve, there are 10 more you have to tackle. It’s Sisyphean work. I’ve been lucky to be part of many things that have had a positive impact on the world. But as I moved into more senior positions, it was the warmth and connection I felt with the people I worked with that has given me joy. As my mom once said, “It doesn’t count if you don’t share it.”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Lucy Jones FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 11, 2021

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[***Save Scouting. End the Boy Scouts.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y7J-SNC1-DXY4-X4FY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Clay Risen

**Highlight:** Scouting as an idea is valuable, even vital. And we don’t need a toxic organization to do it.

**Body**

Scouting as an idea is valuable, even vital. And we don’t need a toxic organization to do it.

Thirty years ago this summer, I spent two weeks backpacking across Philmont, a 140,000-acre expanse of northeastern New Mexico owned by the Boy Scouts of America. Most people who trek Philmont say it changed their life; it certainly changed mine. A few years later, I became an Eagle Scout — still one of my proudest achievements.

On Tuesday, the Boy Scouts of America [*filed for bankruptcy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage), seeking, in part, protection from mounting costs involving several hundred sexual abuse lawsuits. The filing is a defensive move, and the organization may yet survive. But enrollment is plummeting and sponsors are dropping out; the future doesn’t look good.

For a long time, I’ve wrestled with some complicated feelings about the Boy Scouts. My personal experiences, and the ideas of scouting — blending self-reliance with community, practical skills with a republican civic philosophy — made me who I am. But “scouting,” a global, [*century-old movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage), is different from the Boy Scouts of America, the organization based in Irving, Tex., that for decades has apparently covered up the risk of sexual abuse at the expense of thousands of young boys.

Scouting is a valuable, even vital idea; the Boy Scouts, though, is quite toxic. For scouting to survive, the Boy Scouts of America may have to go.

The Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910, and almost from the beginning it has had a sexual abuse problem. Since at least the 1940s, it kept [*a list of red flag cases*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) — known, grotesquely, as the “perversion files” — which were supposed to block abusers from further participation in Scouts. But the list didn’t do its job, nor did it save the organization from a steady drip of lawsuits.

Until recently, most of those cases were settled quietly out of court, so it’s hard to say how many there were, or how much the Boy Scouts paid the plaintiffs. But in 2010, a court in Portland, Ore., ordered the Boy Scouts [*to pay $1.4 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) to a man who was abused by a scout leader, Timur Dykes, in the 1980s. During that trial   [*about 1,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) red-flag files were introduced as evidence, though only the jury and lawyers   [*were allowed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) to see them. The Boy Scouts at the time denied allegations of negligence but in 2012, it was forced to   [*make public*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) thousands of pages of documents from those files.

In an echo of the scandals in the Roman Catholic Church, the files show that the national organization often allowed scout leaders accused of abuse, including Mr. Dykes, to continue working with boys. The files also indicate that [*complaints*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) about abusive adults were shot down by officials more interested in protecting the organization’s image than rooting out injustice.

The Portland case unleashed hell on the Boy Scouts. Along with a cascade of lawsuits over individual abuse claims, several former scouts are suing the organization for access to all the perversion files, which they say [*contain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) the names of 7,819 men who abused boys under their charge, along with 12,254 victims. Last year, to raise money, the Boy Scouts   [*mortgaged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) Philmont, the crown jewel of the scouting kingdom.

It’s hard to square all this with the scouting I remember. My troop, in Nashville, was sponsored by a local congregation of the Disciples of Christ, a liberal, mainline denomination with just a bit more Jesus than the Unitarian Universalists. Our adult leaders were good men — funny, kind, wise, gruff — and the boys came from all around: white, black, brown, well off, ***working class***. We hiked, we goofed off, we got away from our parents and we became like brothers.

For a long time, I’ve leaned on this particular experience to justify the general — whatever bad apples might be found in other troops, mine was proof that the organization was good at heart. The Boy Scouts have done the same, in reverse. After the Dykes trial, a Boy Scouts spokesman [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage), “The actions of the man who committed these crimes do not represent the values and ideals of the Boy Scouts of America.”

That may be true. But in 2020, it’s beside the point. Too many bad apples raise unavoidable questions about the orchard they came from. And while the Boy Scouts has done an admirable job of reform — owning up to its failures, admitting openly gay scouts and leaders, planning a compensation fund for victims — it still doesn’t feel like enough. Even if the Boy Scouts manages to get through this crisis financially, what possible reform could win back the public trust?

Is it possible to have scouting without the Boy Scouts? Of course it is, just as we don’t need the N.F.L. to play football.

Scouting began in Britain, under the leadership of Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, a career army officer. In 1908 he founded the Boy Scouts; two years later he and his sister created the Girl Guides.

The movement spread quickly, with national organizations sprouting from North America, where the Boy Scouts of America opened in 1910, to Southeast Asia — today, Indonesia has by far the largest, with some 17 million members. Each national organization had to follow some basic parameters set by Baden-Powell, but otherwise was free to set its own rules. Some, like the Boy Scouts of America, exclude atheists; many don’t. Others have always been coed; the Boy Scouts didn’t admit girls until 2018.

The Boy Scouts is by far the largest scouting organization in America, but historically, it hasn’t been the only one. The same year it was founded, a rival organization, the American Boy Scouts, began under the leadership of William Randolph Hearst (it folded in the 1920s). More recently, the [*Baden-Powell Service Association*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) has emerged as a coed, nonreligious alternative to the Boy Scouts. And of course there’s the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., founded in 1912 as   [*the American branch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) of the Girl Guides.

At its height in the early 1970s, the Boy Scouts claimed more than four million youth; now it’s down to about 2.2 million. That’s a significant decline, but it’s still about twice as many boys as play high school football. The Girl Scouts has 1.7 million youth members.

Clearly, there’s a demand for something like Boy Scouts. There’s also a need.

Scouting is inclusive, in a way that belies the stereotypes and makes it an antidote to the racial and economic siloing so common today. Scouts wear uniforms not to play soldier, but to step outside their social roles — to become equals.

At its core, scouting offers a dual education in civics and self-reliance. Scouting is where I learned the importance of voting, conservation and civil rights. I also learned to pitch a tent, tie knots, purify water, climb a cliff and perform CPR. It’s this combo of values and skills, and the overarching idea that they go hand in hand, that makes scouting so valuable.

I’m grateful to the Boy Scouts. But while my adult leaders were teaching me how to tie a bowline hitch, adult leaders in other troops were preying on boys like me. Maybe it’s not about a few bad apples; maybe I was just lucky.

I won’t take the same risk with my children. Fortunately, I don’t have to. My wife and I recently enrolled them in the Baden-Powell Service Association. We love it. They get outdoors, go camping, learn about their community.

It’s progressive — coed, secular — and maybe not for everyone. Still, as a vision for what scouting could look like after the Boy Scouts, it’s heartening. With its bankruptcy, the Boy Scouts of America may have entered its final chapter. But as my children will tell you, the joy of scouting continues.

Clay Risen is the deputy daily Opinion editor and the author of “The Crowded Hour: Theodore Roosevelt, the Rough Riders, and the Dawn of the American Century.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/us/boy-scouts-bankruptcy-sex-abuse.html?action=click&amp;module=Top%20Stories&amp;pgtype=Homepage).

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PHOTOS: Top, Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, center right, with a group of the original Boy Scouts in Britain. Above, Girl Scouts in Paramount Calif., last year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICK BOWMER/ASSOCIATED PRESS; AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, VIA GETTY IMAGES; BRITTANY MURRAY/LONG BEACH PRESS-TELEGRAM — MEDIANEWS GROUP, VIA GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2020

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[***In Ohio, a Father and Stepdaughter Show the Political Shifts in the Trump Era***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60NF-N5P1-JBG3-60NT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** He’s a union worker and former Democrat now solidly behind President Trump. She’s a onetime Republican now worried about her sons growing up in the Trump era. Family get-togethers can be difficult.

**Body**

He’s a union worker and former Democrat now solidly behind President Trump. She’s a onetime Republican now worried about her sons growing up in the Trump era. Family get-togethers can be difficult.

NEWTON FALLS, Ohio — An hour after Kamala Harris was announced as Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s running mate last week, Dan Moore sat in his living room watching the Fox News coverage of her selection.

“I would’ve liked to see any other candidate for a V.P. than Kamala Harris; what’s that one woman’s name? Amy?” said Mr. Moore, a 60-year-old boiler operator at a steel plant just over the state line in Pennsylvania. “He was influenced to pick a Black woman. I don’t understand the reasoning behind Kamala Harris other than, from what we’re hearing right now, is that she knows how to debate.”

Before [*Donald J. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) began his first presidential campaign, Mr. Moore was a reliable Democrat who had twice voted for Barack Obama. Like legions of white union workers, he found Mr. Trump’s 2016 campaign pledge to shake up Washington appealing. He plans to vote for him again in November.

Two hours away in Columbus, Ohio, Mr. Moore’s stepdaughter, Kelley Boorn, cheered Ms. Harris’s selection. A longtime Republican who was once a vehement anti-abortion activist, her views shifted after a difficult pregnancy. She went from being a one-issue voter and an enthusiastic backer of John McCain’s in 2008, to sitting out in 2012 to becoming an enthusiastic Democratic voter in 2016 and 2020.

“It’s hard waking up and realizing it’s not always black and white,” said Ms. Boorn, an Ohio State-educated chemical engineer, who left the work force to home-school her three sons.

As President Trump prepares to accept the Republican nomination for a second term at the party’s convention this week, Ms. Boorn and her stepfather represent two ships passing in the electoral waters. But what that political reordering will look like in November is uncertain. Well-educated suburbanites, especially women, are providing a powerful counter to Republican gains, as displayed in the 2018 midterms. Whether the defection of white ***working-class*** voters to Mr. Trump endures through the election will be crucial to determining whether Mr. Biden can retake states like Ohio.

Mr. Trump [*carried Ohio by eight percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) in 2016 and the state had long been considered out of reach for the Democrats this year. But Ohio is [*now in play*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html), [*polls show*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html), and [*both campaigns have made major investments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) in television advertising in the state. The Biden campaign on Sunday announced it would begin airing [*a TV advertisement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) in Cleveland that focuses on Mr. Trump’s [*call for a boycott of the Goodyear tire company*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html), which is based in nearby Akron.

The president won [*54 percent of Ohio’s union households*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) in 2016 — 17 percentage points better than [*Mitt Romney did in 2012*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) — exit polls showed. If he is going to win the state again, he needs voters like Mr. Moore to stick with him amid a sinking economy, the spiraling coronavirus crisis and a labor movement whose leadership backs Democratic candidates.

At the same time, Mr. Trump’s re-election is imperiled by his cratering popularity among voters like Ms. Boorn who had either been apolitical or had long voted for Republicans.

In 2016, [*56 percent of Ohio’s college-educated white women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) voted for Mr. Trump, according to exit polls. Two years later, when Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, [*won re-election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html), [*59 percent of college-educated white women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) voted for him.

“We knew that in ’18 we’d have to win one out of seven Trump voters and we did,” Mr. Brown said in an interview. “We did it by running a campaign seen through the eyes of workers.”

Representative Tim Ryan, a Democrat whose northeastern Ohio district includes Newton Falls, said the coronavirus crisis had thrust the choice for voters into sharp relief. “This election is going to be about handling a public health crisis and the economy,’’ he said, “so we just have to step into the void and I think there’s a heck of an opportunity for a political realignment with these suburban voters.”

The first time Mr. Trump ran for president, the interactions between Mr. Moore and Ms. Boorn were tense and fraught, marked by fighting. Ms. Boorn was upset and scared, while Mr. Moore was exultant about Mr. Trump’s rise. Though he had never been political, he volunteered for the Trump campaign in Trumbull County and was selected in early 2017 to host [*a dinner at his home for Mark Zuckerberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html), the chief executive of Facebook, when he wanted to meet Trump voters during his cross-country tour to get to know America better.

Ms. Boorn was apprehensive, worried about climate change, about what her sons were learning by growing up white in America. Now she is worried about the prospect of four more years with Mr. Trump in the White House.

“My husband and I both grew up in northeast Ohio and it’s rural,” she said. “There are people who are openly racist. Coming down to Columbus, we made friends with people of all colors and all religions and it’s so hard to tell people who don’t see that these are just people — it’s not what you see on Fox News.”

Then came the coronavirus pandemic, which wreaked havoc on the state’s economy, while protests against police treatment of Black Americans took place in cities both large and small. Mr. Moore complained on his Facebook profile page about being forced to wear a mask at work, while Ms. Boorn put a Black Lives Matter sign on her car.

“It’s hard raising white men in America,” she said of her three boys, ages 8, 5 and 16 months. “You want to understand that they understand their position as an ally.”

So when Mr. Moore went to visit in Columbus this summer, the whole family sat together to watch two movies on Netflix: “13th,” the [*documentary about racial inequities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) in the American criminal justice system, and “Just Mercy,” a [*real-life legal drama*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) about a Black Alabama man imprisoned for a murder he didn’t commit.

“It’s kind of like you’re sitting there watching things and like, even I had no idea,” Mr. Moore said, watching one of the three TV’s in his house that were tuned to Fox News at that moment. “It’s like we need to talk about this more, you know? Just gathering bits and pieces of information, even before George Floyd.”

He added: “I have Black friends and they told me about something that happens pretty regularly, even today in some of your larger cities, called gentrification. Never heard the word before.”

Mr. Moore said he believed that Mr. Trump had made great strides on improving race relations and prison reform — he praised [*the White House meeting with Kanye West,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) whom the president’s allies are [*trying to get on state ballots*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html)to siphon votes away from Mr. Biden.

He also believes that Mr. Trump’s political rivals are exaggerating the economic damage from the pandemic to hurt the president in the November election.

“Are there some Democrats out there who maybe were saying, ‘We’re not going to go back to work until the election?’” Mr. Moore said. “You got to look at the level of hatred towards President Trump, and there’s people who don’t want him to have a second term.’’

Ohio’s 12th Congressional District, which covers the booming suburbs north of Columbus and a handful of counties in central Ohio, was drawn to be a Republican district by the G.O.P.-controlled state legislature after the 2010 census. The district backed Mitt Romney by 10.5 points in 2012 and Mr. Trump by 11.3 points in 2016.

By 2018, however, the district’s suburban voters had eroded the Republican advantage. An August special election that year to replace Pat Tiberi, a Republican who had resigned the seat, [*was decided by just 1,564 votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html). In the November midterm elections, the Republican candidate, Troy Balderson, beat Danny O’Connor, a Democrat, [*by only four percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html).

“There are a lot of folks who voted for Donald Trump, who voted for me and are voting for Joe Biden,” Mr. O’Connor said, referring to the closeness of his 2018 loss. “I cannot imagine people who voted for me not voting for Joe Biden.”

Mayor Nan Whaley of Dayton put it more succinctly: “White educated voters, I can’t find a single one of them that’s voting for Trump,” she said, adding for emphasis, “These are long-term Republicans.”

But voters like Mr. Moore have stuck with Mr. Trump. Mark Johnson, the president of the Tri-State Building &amp; Construction Trades Council, a group of unions representing workers in southern Ohio, said about 70 percent of his members were backing the president for re-election. There are practical reasons, he said, citing Mr. Trump’s promotion of coal mining, which is prevalent in Southeastern Ohio, and tariffs on imports. But he also said there is an attraction to Mr. Trump’s style, a phenomenon that has made his campaign something of a lifestyle brand in rural white communities.

“Trump relates to the male over-40 crowd and that’s who I represent,” Mr. Johnson said.

“We went from bright blue to purple to bright red,” he added. ”We’re not just buying into the new green deal. Solar panels doesn’t create new jobs for coal miners.”

Last week Ms. Boorn watched most of the virtual Democratic National Convention. She was inspired by [*Brayden Harrington, the 13-year-old*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html) whom Mr. Biden helped deal with a severe stutter, and was moved by Ms. Harris’s stories of [*her upbringing in the civil rights movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html).

“She inspired me when she said that someday we will look back at this time and remember what we did, not what we thought,” she said. “That’s what pushed me out of my comfort zone previously. I want my boys to remember this.”

Mr. Moore watched only [*Mr. Biden’s acceptance speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html), which he said the former vice president “read pretty well from the teleprompter.” He has been consumed with a [*looming strike at NLMK Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/upshot/the-election-night-by-hour.html), the steel plant where he works. He received instructions from the United Steelworks union about how to petition banks and utilities for leniency during an extended work stoppage.

He said his support for Mr. Trump remained “locked in,” but he lamented that he had not heard much lately from either political party about limiting the power of companies to threaten employees’ health care or drastically increase their premiums.

“I voted for President Trump, yeah, but I’m very opposed to corporate greed,” he said. “A lot of Republicans don’t want to talk about that, but it’s very real to me.”

Rachel Shorey contributed research.

PHOTO: Dan Moore, 60, said that his support for President Trump was “locked in,” but his stepdaughter has become a Democratic voter. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSS MANTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16)

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Crisis Tests the Identity of Chinatown: 'Who Are We For?'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6088-PJ71-DXY4-X44C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1658 words

**Byline:** By Nicole Hong, Elaine Chen and Chang W. Lee

**Body**

Hop Kee is a basement Cantonese eatery offering $9.50 shrimp lo mein. Hwa Yuan Szechuan is a three-story, white-tablecloth restaurant where the whole fish with hot bean sauce is $45.

Both have long histories in Manhattan's Chinatown, and a deep aversion to delivery apps.

Hop Kee's owner could not afford the services' high fees. Hwa Yuan's owner, Chen Lieh Tang, 67, said his cuisine was meant to be eaten in one place: Hwa Yuan. ''I don't want people to eat the food cold,'' he said. ''It's not my style.''

So, when the coronavirus pandemic shut down all on-site dining, almost no one was able to enjoy their food, forcing them to confront difficult questions about modernization and adaptation that may reshape businesses across the storied neighborhood.

Since its formation around the 1870s, Chinatown has managed to preserve its ***working-class*** immigrant character, even as wealth transformed nearly every neighborhood around it.

But some of the very traditions that kept Chinatown rooted to its history have made it one of the neighborhoods most heavily scarred by the pandemic. Now, the economic suffering has intensified a long-simmering generational divide, between younger people who believe Chinatown must get with the times to survive, and older ones who worry about it becoming a theme park of Instagrammable desserts and $18 Asian-fusion cocktails.

Chinatown had already seen sharp declines in foot traffic by Lunar New Year in January, typically its busiest season, because of anti-Chinese xenophobia linked to the virus and because of a slowdown in tourism. When the city shut down in March and customers largely stayed home, old-school Chinatown shops were particularly exposed.

Many could not rely on deliveries or curbside pickups, the only transactions permitted for businesses in recent months. (On June 22, the city began allowing limited in-store shopping, as well as outdoor dining, which is a rarity in Chinatown.) Only 38 percent of storefronts in Chinatown had an online presence, compared with more than 70 percent in wealthier neighborhoods like the West Village, according to an analysis by the mapping tech company Live XYZ.

Nearly a third of Chinatown restaurants are cash-only, according to data from the review site Yelp, and most shunned delivery apps because of their fees. They were accustomed to a business model reliant on high-volume, low-priced dishes like $7 noodle soups served to local residents and workers.

Some businesses like Hop Kee, which has been owned by the same family for five decades, are holding the line.

The restaurant's cash register and waiters' uniforms have stayed the same since the 1970s. Hop Kee doesn't take credit cards.

Before the pandemic, it would be packed to capacity with 160 diners on a Saturday night. Now it serves about 20 takeout orders a day for diners who order in person or call Hop Kee's phone number.

''It's not about making money if you're here for the long term,'' said the owner, Peter Lee, 56. ''If you go old-school style, people will look at you like, there's more truth to this. There's no sense of authenticity in the digital world.''

Other restaurants, including Hwa Yuan, are embracing the iPhone age, usually at the urging of younger generations.

Hwa Yuan has a special place in this country's culinary history -- Mr. Tang's father was revered as the chef who introduced Americans to cold sesame noodles.

When the shutdown began, Mr. Tang's son, James, 35, insisted that the restaurant sign up for delivery apps. Now Hwa Yuan can be ordered via Grubhub and DoorDash.

''We basically had to twist his arm,'' said James Tang, an investment banker. The restaurant has suffered $1 million in losses during the pandemic, but, the elder Mr. Tang said, ''at least there's hope.''

All kinds of Chinatown businesses have been facing similar choices. Foot traffic was slow at Po Wing Hong, a specialty grocery with a focus on dried seafood and Chinese herbs, so Sophia Ng Tsao, 37, has persuaded her parents, who opened the business in 1980, to start an online store.

''It's important to diversify your customer base, getting that younger customer, but we'll do it slowly and organically,'' Ms. Tsao said. ''It's a struggle for any multigenerational business.''

Before the virus, walking into parts of Chinatown was the rare Manhattan experience of feeling transported to a different country frozen in time. The sidewalks overflowed with tourists and local shoppers crowding around street vendors and seafood markets, a lively cacophony of sounds and smells.

At the pandemic's peak in April, entire streets had become ghost towns of metal shutters. When Phase 2 of the city's reopening began on June 22, only about half of the 46 businesses on a three-block stretch of Mott Street, the heart of Chinatown, were open. Barbershops offering $9 haircuts had long lines, while other stores had darkened interiors and employees lingering at their entrances.

Many businesses were unable to avail themselves of emergency, government-backed loans because of delays caused by an initial lack of translation of the paperwork, and because some businesses only keep accounting records on paper, according to community advocates.

Longtime residents say they understand when businesses try to survive by diversifying their clientele, especially if those customers explore other stores in the area. But they also worry about trendier establishments turning the neighborhood into a caricature of Chinatown.

''They do attract a crowd that's less respectful of the culture or don't appreciate it,'' said Geoff Lee, 68, a lifelong Chinatown resident. ''They look at Chinatown more as a novelty than a true identity.''

Perhaps no other business has been as boundary-pushing, and controversial to neighborhood stalwarts, as Nom Wah Tea Parlor, which opened in 1920 and was taken over by the previous owner's nephew, Wilson Tang, in 2011.

''I've been told that I'm a sellout,'' Mr. Tang, 41, said. ''I've also been told I'm a beacon of light.''

At Nom Wah, an order of four shrimp dumplings costs $6, twice the price at some other spots nearby. Before the pandemic, it was one of the few Chinatown restaurants on Caviar, a delivery app for upscale restaurants. The restaurant markets its bottled chili oil on Instagram as if it were a sneaker drop.

Nom Wah began selling frozen dumplings online during the pandemic, which helped the business stay afloat this quarter, Mr. Tang said. He hopes the coming release of his cookbook will provide a similar cushion in the fall.

He says that Chinatown businesses that can appeal to non-Asian customers are better equipped to weather the pandemic.

''Change is inevitable,'' he said. ''If you don't morph and do better, you're going to get left behind and die.''

There is no disagreement about the biggest threat to Chinatown: that businesses could close for good. The ripple effects could force small property owners to sell to corporate real estate firms that will increase rents and likely bring in stores that offer nothing for immigrant residents.

Geoff Lee's family has owned properties on Mott Street since the 1920s. One of the tenants, a beauty product store, has not paid rent in at least three months, he said.

Developers have already been calling to ask if the family is willing to sell. (It is not, said Mr. Lee's brother, Jan.) The neighborhood sits on valuable real estate in Lower Manhattan, surrounded by the wealth of SoHo, TriBeCa and the Financial District.

''We're afraid that the pandemic makes that process of displacement much easier to happen,'' said Jill Sung, 51, chief executive of Abacus Federal Savings Bank, a community bank whose oldest branch is in Chinatown. ''We don't want things to disappear overnight. Where's our history? It breaks that connection.''

The neighborhood has already been losing its Chinese residents, even as the Chinese and Asian population has grown citywide, with many settling in the newer enclaves of Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and Flushing, Queens.

About 58 percent of Chinatown's residents are Asian, according to the latest five-year survey by the Census Bureau, down from about 69 percent in 2000.

Local businesses are also struggling with the prospect that the neighborhood is becoming a retirement community. Among the Asians left in Chinatown, the only age group in which the population has increased is 65 or older.

Adding another challenge for reopening, the neighborhood's restaurant workers tend to be older and live far from Chinatown.

Jing Fong, an 800-seat dim sum hall, could not begin takeout orders during the pandemic until this week, partly because many employees are in a higher-risk age group and were unwilling to commute in, said Truman Lam, the restaurant's third-generation manager.

The staffing is also a reason the restaurant has struggled to update its computer systems to, for instance, accept gift cards, said Mr. Lam, 35. ''It's like teaching your parents how to use an iPhone,'' he said.

Kenneth Ma, 35, whose family has owned optical stores in Chinatown for four decades, had pushed for the business to go cashless, but his family worried the switch would drive away older neighbors who depended on them for eye exams.

The stores, including Chinatown Optical and Mott Street Optical, have managed to straddle the old and the modern. They sell affordable metal glasses alongside trendy plastic frames. Every employee speaks Mandarin, Cantonese and English.

Mr. Ma recently hired an expert in search engine optimization for Mott Street Optical's website and is developing a way for customers to try on glasses at home. His mother and uncle became open to these changes, he said, after the pandemic halted foot traffic from young professionals.

''We always ask, who are we for?'' Mr. Ma said. ''We are for everybody that comes by Chinatown -- whoever lives here, eats here, stops by on the weekend. That's always changing.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/30/nyregion/chinatown-coronavirus-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/30/nyregion/chinatown-coronavirus-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Most residents of Manhattan's Chinatown are Asian, but their share of the population has steadily fallen since 2000, and the only growing group is older Asians.

Peter Lee, Hop Kee's owner, says he does not think that relying on delivery apps or digital campaigns fits his restaurant.

Cooking one of the few orders that Hop Kee, which doesn't use delivery apps, receives each day. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 2, 2020

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[***Win or Lose, Trump's Power Over the G.O.P. Will Not End***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60ND-7WF1-JBG3-600T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Ross Douthat

**Body**

It must pain Donald Trump, deep down in his showman's soul, to have had his convention taken away from him. The arguable peak of his presidency, the hubristic State of the Union that preceded the coronavirus, raised the reality-television elements of the address to new heights -- reuniting a military family! Bestowing a Presidential Medal of Freedom! You can only imagine what brazen gimmicks, what WWE stagecraft, Trump would have rolled out for a convention taking place in normal times.

Alas he has only four days of speeches via streaming video, the absence of cheering crowds itself an exhibit of his administration's coronavirus failure. And for members of his party privately pining for his evaporation or feeling their way back toward pre-Trump positioning, the diminished convention can't help but feel like a hopeful thing -- instead of a showcase for Trumpian power, a weeklong indicator of its ebb.

That hopefulness is misplaced. Trump could still win re-election, and his convention is irrelevant to a comeback that mostly hinges on what happens with the pandemic between now and Election Day. But even if he loses, his power over the Republican Party will probably ebb only slowly, if at all. His allies and sycophants will have every reason to maintain a court in exile. His enemies and frenemies in the mainstream media will continue to elevate him for the sake of ratings and attention. And the man himself will seek the spotlight as assiduously as ever.

The knowledge that Trumpism has delivered -- about what is possible in American politics, what Republicans will vote for and accept, what conservatism can accommodate -- will not simply disappear. It may go underground for a time, if there is a temporary restoration of Republican politics as usual under a Joe Biden presidency. But the lessons will still be there to be picked up, the truths exposed hard to suppress. Any future Republican who seeks or occupies the presidency will have learned something from the years of Donald Trump.

But what they learn will make all the difference. Here are three different ways that the G.O.P. could remain the party of Trump long after he is gone.

Trumpism as a governing agenda

First, Trumpism could come into its own as an ideological agenda, a genuine policy alternative to both left-liberalism and the zombie Reaganism that the Republicans offered before Trump's advent.

In this scenario, Trump's successors would learn two lessons from his rise. First, that Republican voters aren't necessarily wedded to ideological nostrums about limited government, and so a politician can succeed in a Republican primary by running, as Trump did, against elements of movement-conservative orthodoxy. Second, that the sustained failures of the establishment center create a practical need for a policy agenda that's populist in the best sense -- it would defend and rebuild the decaying America that exists outside the coastal metropoles, tech hubs and university towns.

This agenda would start with ideas that Trump campaigned on in 2016 and then abandoned or only half-pursued: not just infrastructure spending, but a self-conscious industrial policy to bring back the capacities and jobs that America has lost to Asia. It would follow his rhetoric rather than his administration's lawyering and make peace with universal health insurance. It would pick up the most populist pieces from his tax bill and build on them, finding ways to transfer tax advantages to ***working-class*** families and away from blue-state rentiers. Its watchwords would be ''work and family'' instead of ''you built that,'' with real support for wage-earners and child-rearers instead of hazy sentiment about entrepreneurs.

On foreign policy it would follow Trump's public posture toward confrontation with China rather than imitating his trade-negotiation gestures of appeasement. It would follow his instincts and withdraw (assuming Biden hasn't already) from Afghanistan and jettison the fixation on regime change in Iran. There would be no grand crusade for democracy: Instead there would be alliances of interest (including, yes, with Russia) aimed at the containment of Beijing.

Finally, this kind of future-Trumpism would shift the grounds of the culture war -- with stronger overtures to conservative-leaning minority voters (a strategy Trump has pursued when he isn't race-baiting) and an aggressive agenda to reshape universities, using the power of the purse and the rhetoric of ideological diversity.

If successful, this strategy could help the Republican Party escape its current demographic trap and win majorities again -- as a party of the pan-ethnic middle class, not just a shrinking, aging white base.

Trumpism as permanent minority rule

But just because something makes political sense doesn't mean that it will happen. And if there's anything we've learned over the nearly 20 years since Ruy Teixeira and John Judis prophesied an emerging Democratic majority founded on demographic change, it's that the combination of a Democratic Party that keeps being pulled leftward and a Republican Party with strength in rural states -- and thus the Electoral College and the Senate -- can keep the G.O.P. competitive even if it doesn't win actual majorities.

Unite this electoral reality with Trump's anti-democratic tendencies -- his obsession with voter fraud at the expense of voting rights, his Twitter authoritarianism -- and you can imagine another way that the G.O.P. remains Trump's party after he's gone. Instead of developing his populism to build a new majority, it could develop his anti-majoritarianism to sustain its own power even under demographic eclipse.

This kind of evolution would start with opposition to Democratic attempts to admit new states (and new senators), add extra justices to the Supreme Court or expand automatic voter registration and early voting. But Republicans could also mount a counteroffensive to lock in their current advantages -- expanding voter-ID laws and making them stricter, pushing for House apportionment to exclude noncitizens, even trying to set up Electoral College-like systems for statehouse elections in states that might trend left.

You can see a dangerous cycle here, where the resilience of a counter-majoritarian Republican Party further delegitimizes the system in the eyes of Democrats, who become more radical in response, pushing us toward some stress point that's far more serious than this month's war over the Post Office.

I have spent much of the Trump era arguing that he is too feckless and incompetent, too much of a buck-passer and coward, to represent an authoritarian menace in his own right. But even if there are limits to how far the party will go with him -- witness the swift disavowal of his election-postponement speculation -- he has clearly habituated many of his supporters to a ''caudillo'' style, a politics of enmity, a sense that transferring power to Democrats is like letting suicide bombers seize the plane.

So it's hardly fanciful to imagine a Republican successor who maintains the authoritarian style but drops the fecklessness. Put that kind of figure in charge of a party organized around holding power without majority support, pit it against a Democratic Party nurturing fantasies of an American ''color revolution'' -- in which mass protests and even military intervention force out a right-wing government -- and you could have a constitutional crisis sooner rather than later, and a Trumpian legacy that's very dark indeed.

Trumpism as virtual reality

But there is a final potential afterlife for the Trump era, in which it turns out the essential substance of the Trump phenomenon isn't populism or authoritarianism, but a kind of playacting -- all performative nonsense, cable-news illusions, online smoke and mirrors -- that might itself be permanently appealing as a style of right-wing government.

Presidential gestures have always mattered, but Trump has demonstrated that you can hold together a political coalition even when those gestures are essentially illusory. You can issue seemingly sweeping executive orders that don't do what you claim; take credit for real policies that predate your administration and pretend ones that never happen; and fight culture wars that are about symbolic issues rather than anything as real as marriage or abortion.

This style may be especially appealing to conservatives, who have reached a point of cultural marginalization where the kind of victory they seek is much easier to conjure in virtual reality. This is the point of certain kinds of right-wing infotainment, and certainly the point of QAnon, which as Matthew Walther of The Week has pointed out, exists precisely to invent ''nonexistent victories'' for the right:

Trump has not replaced the Affordable Care Act or saved millions of good manufacturing jobs or remade our trade relationship with China, it is true. But no one expects miracles, after all. Besides, has he not worked tirelessly, if invisibly, to root out corruption, to expose the sinister plots of the cabal behind the Democratic Party, to remove anthropophagic pedophiles from the upper reaches of the federal bureaucracy? Has he not, in accomplishing all these things thanklessly, amid the persecution of his enemies in the liberal media establishment, shown us he cares? Whatever individual Trump supporters might believe about the actual facts of the alleged conspiracy, the bare outline of QAnon -- Trump winning for them simply by existing and holding the office of the presidency -- is in fact an accurate representation of their feelings about him.

QAnon is thus a perfervid version of a future in which the G.O.P. neither embraces a policy-rich populism nor lapses into constitution-threatening authoritarianism. Instead, the lesson that Republicans might take from the Trump era is that so long as much of the country fears a liberalism that's increasingly beholden to the left, Republicans can win their share of elections just on the promise to not be Democrats, to hold off liberal hegemony ''simply by existing.''

And for Republican voters who want more -- well, for them you can just make up some triumphs, whether banal (a new social-media executive order!) or exotic (a secret purge of pedophiles!), and trumpet them as victories worthy of Reagan, Lincoln or F.D.R.

In which case Trump could be a special kind of pioneer, and the party he shaped a digital-age novelty: the first political party to exist entirely as a simulation.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR5)

**Load-Date:** August 23, 2020

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[***In a Shifting Ohio, Two Voters Share a Family, but Not a Party***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60NK-9TW1-DXY4-X0GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1754 words

**Byline:** By Reid J. Epstein

**Body**

He's a union worker and former Democrat now solidly behind President Trump. She's a onetime Republican now worried about her sons growing up in the Trump era. Family get-togethers can be difficult.

NEWTON FALLS, Ohio -- An hour after Kamala Harris was announced as Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s running mate last week, Dan Moore sat in his living room watching the Fox News coverage of her selection.

''I would've liked to see any other candidate for a V.P. than Kamala Harris; what's that one woman's name? Amy?'' said Mr. Moore, a 60-year-old boiler operator at a steel plant just over the state line in Pennsylvania. ''He was influenced to pick a Black woman. I don't understand the reasoning behind Kamala Harris other than, from what we're hearing right now, is that she knows how to debate.''

Before Donald J. Trump began his first presidential campaign, Mr. Moore was a reliable Democrat who had twice voted for Barack Obama. Like legions of white union workers, he found Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign pledge to shake up Washington appealing. He plans to vote for him again in November.

Two hours away in Columbus, Ohio, Mr. Moore's stepdaughter, Kelley Boorn, cheered Ms. Harris's selection. A longtime Republican who was once a vehement anti-abortion activist, her views shifted after a difficult pregnancy. She went from being a one-issue voter and an enthusiastic backer of John McCain's in 2008, to sitting out in 2012 to becoming an enthusiastic Democratic voter in 2016 and 2020.

''It's hard waking up and realizing it's not always black and white,'' said Ms. Boorn, an Ohio State-educated chemical engineer, who left the work force to home-school her three sons.

As President Trump prepares to accept the Republican nomination for a second term at the party's convention this week, Ms. Boorn and her stepfather represent two ships passing in the electoral waters. But what that political reordering will look like in November is uncertain. Well-educated suburbanites, especially women, are providing a powerful counter to Republican gains, as displayed in the 2018 midterms. Whether the defection of white ***working-class*** voters to Mr. Trump endures through the election will be crucial to determining whether Mr. Biden can retake states like Ohio.

Mr. Trump carried Ohio by eight percentage points in 2016 and the state had long been considered out of reach for the Democrats this year. But Ohio is now in play, polls show, and both campaigns have made major investments in television advertising in the state. The Biden campaign on Sunday announced it would begin airing a TV advertisement in Cleveland that focuses on Mr. Trump's call for a boycott of the Goodyear tire company, which is based in nearby Akron.

The president won 54 percent of Ohio's union households in 2016 -- 17 percentage points better than Mitt Romney did in 2012 -- exit polls showed. If he is going to win the state again, he needs voters like Mr. Moore to stick with him amid a sinking economy, the spiraling coronavirus crisis and a labor movement whose leadership backs Democratic candidates.

At the same time, Mr. Trump's re-election is imperiled by his cratering popularity among voters like Ms. Boorn who had either been apolitical or had long voted for Republicans.

In 2016, 56 percent of Ohio's college-educated white women voted for Mr. Trump, according to exit polls. Two years later, when Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, won re-election, 59 percent of college-educated white women voted for him.

''We knew that in '18 we'd have to win one out of seven Trump voters and we did,'' Mr. Brown said in an interview. ''We did it by running a campaign seen through the eyes of workers.''

Representative Tim Ryan, a Democrat whose northeastern Ohio district includes Newton Falls, said the coronavirus crisis had thrust the choice for voters into sharp relief. ''This election is going to be about handling a public health crisis and the economy,'' he said, ''so we just have to step into the void and I think there's a heck of an opportunity for a political realignment with these suburban voters.''

The first time Mr. Trump ran for president, the interactions between Mr. Moore and Ms. Boorn were tense and fraught, marked by fighting. Ms. Boorn was upset and scared, while Mr. Moore was exultant about Mr. Trump's rise. Though he had never been political, he volunteered for the Trump campaign in Trumbull County and was selected in early 2017 to host a dinner at his home for Mark Zuckerberg, the chief executive of Facebook, when he wanted to meet Trump voters during his cross-country tour to get to know America better.

Ms. Boorn was apprehensive, worried about climate change, about what her sons were learning by growing up white in America. Now she is worried about the prospect of four more years with Mr. Trump in the White House.

''My husband and I both grew up in northeast Ohio and it's rural,'' she said. ''There are people who are openly racist. Coming down to Columbus, we made friends with people of all colors and all religions and it's so hard to tell people who don't see that these are just people -- it's not what you see on Fox News.''

Then came the coronavirus pandemic, which wreaked havoc on the state's economy, while protests against police treatment of Black Americans took place in cities both large and small. Mr. Moore complained on his Facebook profile page about being forced to wear a mask at work, while Ms. Boorn put a Black Lives Matter sign on her car.

''It's hard raising white men in America,'' she said of her three boys, ages 8, 5 and 16 months. ''You want to understand that they understand their position as an ally.''

So when Mr. Moore went to visit in Columbus this summer, the whole family sat together to watch two movies on Netflix: ''13th,'' the documentary about racial inequities in the American criminal justice system, and ''Just Mercy,'' a real-life legal drama about a Black Alabama man imprisoned for a murder he didn't commit.

''It's kind of like you're sitting there watching things and like, even I had no idea,'' Mr. Moore said, watching one of the three TV's in his house that were tuned to Fox News at that moment. ''It's like we need to talk about this more, you know? Just gathering bits and pieces of information, even before George Floyd.''

He added: ''I have Black friends and they told me about something that happens pretty regularly, even today in some of your larger cities, called gentrification. Never heard the word before.''

Mr. Moore said he believed that Mr. Trump had made great strides on improving race relations and prison reform -- he praised the White House meeting with Kanye West, whom the president's allies are trying to get on state ballots to siphon votes away from Mr. Biden.

He also believes that Mr. Trump's political rivals are exaggerating the economic damage from the pandemic to hurt the president in the November election.

''Are there some Democrats out there who maybe were saying, 'We're not going to go back to work until the election?''' Mr. Moore said. ''You got to look at the level of hatred towards President Trump, and there's people who don't want him to have a second term.''

Ohio's 12th Congressional District, which covers the booming suburbs north of Columbus and a handful of counties in central Ohio, was drawn to be a Republican district by the G.O.P.-controlled state legislature after the 2010 census. The district backed Mitt Romney by 10.5 points in 2012 and Mr. Trump by 11.3 points in 2016.

By 2018, however, the district's suburban voters had eroded the Republican advantage. An August special election that year to replace Pat Tiberi, a Republican who had resigned the seat, was decided by just 1,564 votes. In the November midterm elections, the Republican candidate, Troy Balderson, beat Danny O'Connor, a Democrat, by only four percentage points.

''There are a lot of folks who voted for Donald Trump, who voted for me and are voting for Joe Biden,'' Mr. O'Connor said, referring to the closeness of his 2018 loss. ''I cannot imagine people who voted for me not voting for Joe Biden.''

Mayor Nan Whaley of Dayton put it more succinctly: ''White educated voters, I can't find a single one of them that's voting for Trump,'' she said, adding for emphasis, ''These are long-term Republicans.''

But voters like Mr. Moore have stuck with Mr. Trump. Mark Johnson, the president of the Tri-State Building & Construction Trades Council, a group of unions representing workers in southern Ohio, said about 70 percent of his members were backing the president for re-election. The are practical reasons, he said, citing Mr. Trump's promotion of coal mining, which is prevalent in Southeastern Ohio, and tariffs on imports. But he also said there is an attraction to Mr. Trump's style, a phenomenon that has made his campaign something of a lifestyle brand in rural white communities.

''Trump relates to the male over-40 crowd and that's who I represent,'' Mr. Johnson said.

''We went from bright blue to purple to bright red,'' he added. ''We're not just buying into the new green deal. Solar panels doesn't create new jobs for coal miners.''

Last week Ms. Boorn watched most of the virtual Democratic National Convention. She was inspired by Brayden Harrington, the 13-year-old whom Mr. Biden helped deal with a severe stutter, and was moved by Ms. Harris's stories of her upbringing in the civil rights movement.

''She inspired me when she said that someday we will look back at this time and remember what we did, not what we thought,'' she said. ''That's what pushed me out of my comfort zone previously. I want my boys to remember this.''

Mr. Moore watched only Mr. Biden's acceptance speech, which he said the former vice president ''read pretty well from the teleprompter.'' He has been consumed with a looming strike at NLMK Pennsylvania, the steel plant where he works. He received instructions from the United Steelworks union about how to petition banks and utilities for leniency during an extended work stoppage.

He said his support for Mr. Trump remained ''locked in,'' but he lamented that he had not heard much lately from either political party about limiting the power of companies to threaten employees' health care or drastically increase their premiums.

''I voted for President Trump, yeah, but I'm very opposed to corporate greed,'' he said. ''A lot of Republicans don't want to talk about that, but it's very real to me.''

Rachel Shorey contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/23/us/politics/ohio-trump-unions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/23/us/politics/ohio-trump-unions.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Dan Moore, 60, said that his support for President Trump was ''locked in,'' but his stepdaughter has become a Democratic voter. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSS MANTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16)

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2020

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[***‘Who Are We For?’ How the Virus Is Testing the Identity of Chinatown***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:607W-8541-DXY4-X4G8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

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**Byline:** Nicole Hong, Elaine Chen and Chang W. Lee

**Highlight:** Shops and restaurants that shunned digital commerce struggled to reach customers, exposing a generational rift over whether they need to modernize.

**Body**

Hop Kee is a basement Cantonese eatery offering $9.50 shrimp lo mein. [*Hwa Yuan Szechuan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html) is a three-story, white-tablecloth restaurant where the whole fish with hot bean sauce is $45.

Both have long histories in Manhattan’s [*Chinatown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html), and a deep aversion to delivery apps.

Hop Kee’s owner could not afford the services’ high fees. Hwa Yuan’s owner, Chen Lieh Tang, 67, said his cuisine was meant to be eaten in one place: Hwa Yuan. “I don’t want people to eat the food cold,” he said. “It’s not my style.”

So, when the coronavirus pandemic shut down all on-site dining, almost no one was able to enjoy their food, forcing them to confront difficult questions about modernization and adaptation that may reshape businesses across the storied neighborhood.

Since its formation around the 1870s, Chinatown has managed to preserve its ***working-class*** immigrant character, even as wealth transformed nearly every neighborhood around it.

But some of the very traditions that kept Chinatown rooted to its history have made it one of the neighborhoods most heavily scarred by the pandemic. Now, the economic suffering has intensified a long-simmering generational divide, between younger people who believe Chinatown must get with the times to survive, and older ones who worry about it becoming a theme park of Instagrammable desserts and $18 Asian-fusion cocktails.

Chinatown had already seen [*sharp declines in foot traffic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html) by Lunar New Year in January, typically its busiest season, because of [*anti-Chinese xenophobia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html) linked to the virus and because of a slowdown in tourism. When the city shut down in March and customers largely stayed home, old-school Chinatown shops were particularly exposed.

Many could not rely on deliveries or curbside pickups, the only transactions permitted for businesses in recent months. (On June 22, [*the city began allowing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html) limited in-store shopping, as well as outdoor dining, which is a rarity in Chinatown.) Only 38 percent of storefronts in Chinatown had an online presence, compared with more than 70 percent in wealthier neighborhoods like the West Village, according to an analysis by the mapping tech company [*Live XYZ*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html).

Nearly a third of Chinatown restaurants are cash-only, according to data from the review site Yelp, and most shunned delivery apps [*because of their fees*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html). They were accustomed to a business model reliant on high-volume, low-priced dishes like $7 noodle soups served to local residents and workers.

Some businesses like Hop Kee, which has been owned by the same family for five decades, are holding the line.

The restaurant’s cash register and waiters’ uniforms have stayed the same since the 1970s. Hop Kee doesn’t take credit cards.

Before the pandemic, it would be packed to capacity with 160 diners on a Saturday night. Now it serves about 20 takeout orders a day for diners who order in person or call Hop Kee’s phone number.

“It’s not about making money if you’re here for the long term,” said the owner, Peter Lee, 56. “If you go old-school style, people will look at you like, there’s more truth to this. There’s no sense of authenticity in the digital world.”

Other restaurants, including Hwa Yuan, are embracing the iPhone age, usually at the urging of younger generations.

Hwa Yuan has a special place in this country’s culinary history — Mr. Tang’s father was revered as the chef who [*introduced Americans to cold sesame noodles*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html).

When the shutdown began, Mr. Tang’s son, James, 35, insisted that the restaurant sign up for delivery apps. Now Hwa Yuan can be ordered via [*Grubhub*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html) and DoorDash.

“We basically had to twist his arm,” said James Tang, an investment banker. The restaurant has suffered $1 million in losses during the pandemic, but, the elder Mr. Tang said, “at least there’s hope.”

All kinds of Chinatown businesses have been facing similar choices. Foot traffic was slow at Po Wing Hong, a specialty grocery with a focus on dried seafood and Chinese herbs, so Sophia Ng Tsao, 37, has persuaded her parents, who opened the business in 1980, to start an online store.

“It’s important to diversify your customer base, getting that younger customer, but we’ll do it slowly and organically,” Ms. Tsao said. “It’s a struggle for any multigenerational business.”

Before the virus, walking into parts of Chinatown was the rare Manhattan experience of feeling transported to a different country frozen in time. The sidewalks overflowed with tourists and local shoppers crowding around street vendors and seafood markets, a lively cacophony of sounds and smells.

At the pandemic’s peak in April, entire streets had become ghost towns of metal shutters. When Phase 2 of the city’s reopening began on June 22, only about half of the 46 businesses on a three-block stretch of Mott Street, the heart of Chinatown, were open. Barbershops offering $9 haircuts had long lines, while other stores had darkened interiors and employees lingering at their entrances.

Many businesses were unable to avail themselves of emergency, government-backed loans because of delays caused by an initial lack of translation of the paperwork, and because some businesses only keep accounting records on paper, according to community advocates.

Longtime residents say they understand when businesses try to survive by diversifying their clientele, especially if those customers explore other stores in the area. But they also worry about trendier establishments turning the neighborhood into a caricature of Chinatown.

“They do attract a crowd that’s less respectful of the culture or don’t appreciate it,” said Geoff Lee, 68, a lifelong Chinatown resident. “They look at Chinatown more as a novelty than a true identity.”

Perhaps no other business has been as boundary-pushing, and controversial to neighborhood stalwarts, as [*Nom Wah Tea Parlor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html), which opened in 1920 and was taken over by the previous owner’s nephew, [*Wilson Tang*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html), in 2011.

“I’ve been told that I’m a sellout,” Mr. Tang, 41, said. “I’ve also been told I’m a beacon of light.”

At Nom Wah, an order of four shrimp dumplings costs $6, twice the price at some other spots nearby. Before the pandemic, it was one of the few Chinatown restaurants on Caviar, a delivery app for upscale restaurants. The restaurant markets its bottled chili oil on Instagram as if it were a sneaker drop.

Nom Wah began selling frozen dumplings online during the pandemic, which helped the business stay afloat this quarter, Mr. Tang said. He hopes the coming release of his cookbook will provide a similar cushion in the fall.

He says that Chinatown businesses that can appeal to non-Asian customers are better equipped to weather the pandemic.

“Change is inevitable,” he said. “If you don’t morph and do better, you’re going to get left behind and die.”

There is no disagreement about the biggest threat to Chinatown: that businesses could close for good. The ripple effects could force [*small property owners*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html) to sell to corporate real estate firms that will increase rents and likely bring in stores that offer nothing for immigrant residents.

Geoff Lee’s family has owned properties on Mott Street since the 1920s. One of the tenants, a beauty product store, has not paid rent in at least three months, he said.

Developers have already been calling to ask if the family is willing to sell. (It is not, said Mr. Lee’s brother, Jan.) The neighborhood sits on valuable real estate in Lower Manhattan, surrounded by the wealth of SoHo, TriBeCa and the Financial District.

“We’re afraid that the pandemic makes that process of displacement much easier to happen,” said Jill Sung, 51, chief executive of Abacus Federal Savings Bank, [*a community bank whose oldest branch is in Chinatown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html). “We don’t want things to disappear overnight. Where’s our history? It breaks that connection.”

The neighborhood has already been losing its Chinese residents, even as the Chinese and Asian population has grown citywide, with many settling in the newer enclaves of Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and Flushing, Queens.

About 58 percent of Chinatown’s residents are Asian, according to the latest five-year survey by the Census Bureau, down from about 69 percent in 2000.

Local businesses are also struggling with the prospect that the neighborhood is becoming a retirement community. Among the Asians left in Chinatown, the only age group in which the population has increased is 65 or older.

Adding another challenge for reopening, the neighborhood’s restaurant workers tend to be older and live far from Chinatown.

[*Jing Fong*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/dining/hwa-yuan-szechuan-review-chinese-food.html), an 800-seat dim sum hall, could not begin takeout orders during the pandemic until this week, partly because many employees are in a higher-risk age group and were unwilling to commute in, said Truman Lam, the restaurant’s third-generation manager.

The staffing is also a reason the restaurant has struggled to update its computer systems to, for instance, accept gift cards, said Mr. Lam, 35. “It’s like teaching your parents how to use an iPhone,” he said.

Kenneth Ma, 35, whose family has owned optical stores in Chinatown for four decades, had pushed for the business to go cashless, but his family worried the switch would drive away older neighbors who depended on them for eye exams.

The stores, including Chinatown Optical and Mott Street Optical, have managed to straddle the old and the modern. They sell affordable metal glasses alongside trendy plastic frames. Every employee speaks Mandarin, Cantonese and English.

Mr. Ma recently hired an expert in search engine optimization for Mott Street Optical’s website and is developing a way for customers to try on glasses at home. His mother and uncle became open to these changes, he said, after the pandemic halted foot traffic from young professionals.

“We always ask, who are we for?” Mr. Ma said. “We are for everybody that comes by Chinatown — whoever lives here, eats here, stops by on the weekend. That’s always changing.”

PHOTOS: Most residents of Manhattan’s Chinatown are Asian, but their share of the population has steadily fallen since 2000, and the only growing group is older Asians.; Peter Lee, Hop Kee’s owner, says he does not think that relying on delivery apps or digital campaigns fits his restaurant.; Cooking one of the few orders that Hop Kee, which doesn’t use delivery apps, receives each day. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Win or Lose, Trump Will Hold Power Over the G.O.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60N7-8H41-DXY4-X3XC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 22, 2020 Saturday 20:25 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; sunday

**Length:** 1812 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** But what Republicans learn from the Trump era will make all the difference.

**Body**

It must pain Donald Trump, deep down in his showman’s soul, to have had his convention taken away from him. The arguable peak of his presidency, the hubristic State of the Union that preceded the coronavirus, raised the reality-television elements of the address to new heights — reuniting a military family! Bestowing a Presidential Medal of Freedom! You can only imagine what brazen gimmicks, what WWE stagecraft, Trump would have rolled out for a convention taking place in normal times.

Alas he has only four days of speeches via streaming video, the absence of cheering crowds itself an exhibit of his administration’s coronavirus failure. And for members of his party privately pining for his evaporation or feeling their way back toward [*pre-Trump positioning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/opinion/trump-republicans-tea-party.html), the diminished convention can’t help but feel like a hopeful thing — instead of a showcase for Trumpian power, a weeklong indicator of its ebb.

That hopefulness is misplaced. Trump could still win re-election, and his convention is irrelevant to a comeback that mostly hinges on what happens with the pandemic between now and Election Day. But even if he loses, his power over the Republican Party will probably ebb only slowly, if at all. His allies and sycophants will have every reason to maintain a court in exile. His enemies and frenemies in the mainstream media will continue to elevate him for the sake of ratings and attention. And the man himself will seek the spotlight as assiduously as ever.

The knowledge that Trumpism has delivered — about what is possible in American politics, what Republicans will vote for and accept, what conservatism can accommodate — will not simply disappear. It may go underground for a time, if there is a temporary restoration of Republican politics as usual under a Joe Biden presidency. But the lessons will still be there to be picked up, the truths exposed hard to suppress. Any future Republican who seeks or occupies the presidency will have learned something from the years of Donald Trump.

But what they learn will make all the difference. Here are three different ways that the G.O.P. could remain the party of Trump long after he is gone.

Trumpism as a governing agenda

First, Trumpism could come into its own as an ideological agenda, a genuine policy alternative to both left-liberalism and the zombie Reaganism that the Republicans offered before Trump’s advent.

In this scenario, Trump’s successors would learn two lessons from his rise. First, that Republican voters aren’t necessarily wedded to ideological nostrums about limited government, and so a politician can succeed in a Republican primary by running, as Trump did, against elements of movement-conservative orthodoxy. Second, that the sustained failures of the establishment center create a practical need for a policy agenda that’s populist in the best sense — it would defend and rebuild the decaying America that exists outside the coastal metropoles, tech hubs and university towns.

This agenda would start with ideas that Trump campaigned on in 2016 and then abandoned or only half-pursued: not just infrastructure spending, but a self-conscious industrial policy to bring back the capacities and jobs that America has lost to Asia. It would follow his rhetoric rather than his administration’s lawyering and make peace with universal health insurance. It would pick up the most populist pieces from his tax bill and build on them, finding ways to transfer tax advantages to ***working-class*** families and away from blue-state rentiers. Its watchwords would be “work and family” instead of “you built that,” with real support for wage-earners and child-rearers instead of hazy sentiment about entrepreneurs.

On foreign policy it would follow Trump’s public posture toward confrontation with China rather than imitating his trade-negotiation gestures of appeasement. It would follow his instincts and withdraw (assuming Biden hasn’t already) from Afghanistan and jettison the fixation on regime change in Iran. There would be no grand crusade for democracy: Instead there would be alliances of interest (including, yes, with Russia) aimed at the containment of Beijing.

Finally, this kind of future-Trumpism would shift the grounds of the culture war — with stronger overtures to conservative-leaning minority voters (a strategy Trump has pursued when he isn’t race-baiting) and an aggressive agenda to reshape universities, using the power of the purse and the rhetoric of ideological diversity.

If successful, this strategy could help the Republican Party escape its current demographic trap and win majorities again — as a party of the pan-ethnic middle class, not just a shrinking, aging white base.

Trumpism as permanent minority rule

But just because something makes political sense doesn’t mean that it will happen. And if there’s anything we’ve learned over the nearly 20 years since Ruy Teixeira and John Judis prophesied an emerging Democratic majority founded on demographic change, it’s that the combination of a Democratic Party that keeps being pulled leftward and a Republican Party with strength in rural states — and thus the Electoral College and the Senate — can keep the G.O.P. competitive even if it doesn’t win actual majorities.

Unite this electoral reality with Trump’s anti-democratic tendencies — his obsession with voter fraud at the expense of voting rights, his Twitter authoritarianism — and you can imagine another way that the G.O.P. remains Trump’s party after he’s gone. Instead of developing his populism to build a new majority, it could develop his anti-majoritarianism to sustain its own power even under demographic eclipse.

This kind of evolution would start with opposition to Democratic attempts to admit new states (and new senators), add extra justices to the Supreme Court or expand automatic voter registration and early voting. But Republicans could also mount a counteroffensive to lock in their current advantages — expanding voter-ID laws and making them stricter, pushing for House apportionment to exclude noncitizens, even trying to set up Electoral College-like systems for statehouse elections in states that might trend left.

You can see a dangerous cycle here, where the resilience of a counter-majoritarian Republican Party further delegitimizes the system in the eyes of Democrats, who become more radical in response, pushing us toward some stress point that’s far more serious than this month’s [*war over the Post Office*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/opinion/trump-republicans-tea-party.html).

I have spent much of the Trump era arguing that he is too feckless and incompetent, too much of a buck-passer and coward, to represent an authoritarian menace in his own right. But even if there are limits to how far the party will go with him — witness the swift disavowal of his election-postponement speculation — he has clearly habituated many of his supporters to a “caudillo” style, a politics of enmity, a sense that transferring power to Democrats is like letting suicide bombers seize the plane.

So it’s hardly fanciful to imagine a Republican successor who maintains the authoritarian style but drops the fecklessness. Put that kind of figure in charge of a party organized around holding power without majority support, pit it against a Democratic Party nurturing fantasies of an American “[*color revolution*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/opinion/trump-republicans-tea-party.html)” — in which mass protests and even military intervention force out a right-wing government — and you could have a constitutional crisis sooner rather than later, and a Trumpian legacy that’s very dark indeed.

Trumpism as virtual reality

But there is a final potential afterlife for the Trump era, in which it turns out the essential substance of the Trump phenomenon isn’t populism or authoritarianism, but a kind of playacting — all performative nonsense, cable-news illusions, online smoke and mirrors — that might itself be permanently appealing as a style of right-wing government.

Presidential gestures have always mattered, but Trump has demonstrated that you can hold together a political coalition even when those gestures are essentially illusory. You can issue seemingly sweeping executive orders that don’t do what you claim; take credit for real policies that predate your administration and pretend ones that never happen; and fight culture wars that are about symbolic issues rather than anything as real as marriage or abortion.

This style may be especially appealing to conservatives, who have reached a point of cultural marginalization where the kind of victory they seek is much easier to conjure in virtual reality. This is the point of certain kinds of right-wing infotainment, and certainly the point of QAnon, which as Matthew Walther of The Week has [*pointed out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/opinion/trump-republicans-tea-party.html), exists precisely to invent “nonexistent victories” for the right:

Trump has not replaced the Affordable Care Act or saved millions of good manufacturing jobs or remade our trade relationship with China, it is true. But no one expects miracles, after all. Besides, has he not worked tirelessly, if invisibly, to root out corruption, to expose the sinister plots of the cabal behind the Democratic Party, to remove anthropophagic pedophiles from the upper reaches of the federal bureaucracy? Has he not, in accomplishing all these things thanklessly, amid the persecution of his enemies in the liberal media establishment, shown us he cares? Whatever individual Trump supporters might believe about the actual facts of the alleged conspiracy, the bare outline of QAnon — Trump winning for them simply by existing and holding the office of the presidency — is in fact an accurate representation of their feelings about him.

QAnon is thus a perfervid version of a future in which the G.O.P. neither embraces a policy-rich populism nor lapses into constitution-threatening authoritarianism. Instead, the lesson that Republicans might take from the Trump era is that so long as much of the country fears a liberalism that’s increasingly beholden to the left, Republicans can win their share of elections just on the promise to not be Democrats, to hold off liberal hegemony “simply by existing.”

And for Republican voters who want more — well, for them you can just make up some triumphs, whether banal (a new social-media executive order!) or exotic (a secret purge of pedophiles!), and trumpet them as victories worthy of Reagan, Lincoln or F.D.R.

In which case Trump could be a special kind of pioneer, and the party he shaped a digital-age novelty: the first political party to exist entirely as a simulation.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/opinion/trump-republicans-tea-party.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/opinion/trump-republicans-tea-party.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/opinion/trump-republicans-tea-party.html).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR5)

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2020

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[***With Some Ruthlessness, Johnson Consolidates Power in Britain***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y6W-N3Y1-JBG3-60Y1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 15, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Mark Landler and Stephen Castle

**Body**

But what the British prime minister plans to do with his power remains something of a mystery.

LONDON -- When Prime Minister Boris Johnson of Britain convened his new cabinet on Friday, it looked less like a conclave of powerful government officials than a well-mannered classroom on the day the headmaster came to visit.

''How many hospitals are we going to build?'' Mr. Johnson asked.

''Forty,'' they replied in unison.

''How many more police officers are we recruiting?'' he demanded.

''Twenty-thousand,'' they chanted.

Such a display of lock step discipline is a striking change in a country that became used to clamorous politics under Mr. Johnson's predecessors, David Cameron and Theresa May, who struggled to hold together balky coalitions and govern without a Parliamentary majority.

In the two months since Mr. Johnson won a landslide election victory and rolled up an 80-seat majority, he has moved rapidly to take control of the levers of power. And to a degree unmatched by any British leader since Tony Blair, the government is now almost entirely subordinate to him.

But what Mr. Johnson intends to do with all this power is still not totally clear -- though the decisions he has made over the last few weeks suggest he would prefer to govern as a more centrist, less radical figure, than the politician who waged a populist campaign on the promise that he would ''get Brexit done.''

In amassing his power, Mr. Johnson has displayed what is to some a surprising degree of ruthlessness. Even Mr. Blair did not dare move against his finance chief as Mr. Johnson did this week, when he triggered the departure of Sajid Javid, the chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Javid, an ally of Mr. Johnson's, resigned rather than have many of his powers stripped and handed over to Mr. Johnson's aides in 10 Downing Street.

The chancellor is considered Britain's second-most powerful official after the prime minister; several have emerged as rivals to the leader. In appointing Rishi Sunak, a 39-year-old former investment banker who won his seat in Parliament only in 2015, Mr. Johnson is out to make sure that the Treasury will not curb his free-spending agenda.

''A lot of prime ministers would worry about losing their chancellor of the Exchequer, but he realized he and Javid didn't see eye to eye on economic policy,'' said Andrew Gimson, who wrote a biography of Mr. Johnson.

''He won a decisive victory and he is using the freedom that comes from such a majority to put in the people he wants,'' Mr. Gimson said. ''At the moment, he completely dominates British politics.''

Last week, in his first major decision, Mr. Johnson approved a gargantuan high-speed rail project that is designed to link London with the country's economically challenged north. Some of his own aides and members of the Conservative Party fiercely opposed the project, known as High Speed 2, because of the $130 billion-plus price tag.

But for Mr. Johnson, ambitious public-works projects symbolize his pledge to pour resources into Britain's Midlands and north, where many lifelong Labour Party voters defected to the Conservatives in the election, helping the prime minister pile up his Parliamentary majority.

''Everything this government has done bears the mark of careful consideration and triangulation,'' said Anand Menon, a professor of European politics at King's College London. ''They've created a narrative that the government is radical while the government does not do anything radical.''

Jonathan Powell, a former chief of staff to Mr. Blair, said mandates of the kind enjoyed by his old boss and Mr. Johnson were fleeting. He said Mr. Johnson risked making the same mistake Mr. Blair did in not moving quickly enough.

''I'm surprised by how little he is doing with it,'' Mr. Powell said. ''Perhaps he wants to be the nonexecutive chairman of the government.''

Mr. Johnson is also still busy appealing to his pro-Brexit base with populist tactics like attacking the BBC, Britain's public broadcaster. He has accused the BBC of biased reporting and threatened it with legal changes that could dry up its sources of funding.

The prime minister's clash with Mr. Javid was a victory for his influential adviser, Dominic Cummings, who has made a crusade of overhauling the government and centralizing power in the prime minister's office.

But Mr. Javid's departure may be more important because of what it says about Mr. Johnson's fiscal policies. The Treasury, under Mr. Sunak, is expected to loosen limits on government spending, which would allow Mr. Johnson to pursue a liberal economic agenda not unlike that of a Social Democrat in continental Europe.

In that sense, he is starkly different from President Trump, another populist politician to whom he is regularly compared -- and who is also known for running extremely compliant cabinet meetings.

During his 2016 presidential campaign, Mr. Trump spoke privately about his intention to govern as a pragmatist and champion of the ***working class***. Yet after he was elected, he enacted some of the most radical parts of his agenda, like clamping a travel ban on majority-Muslim countries, and rammed through a tax cut favoring corporations and the wealthy.

Mr. Johnson, some commentators argue, is less like Mr. Trump than Michael R. Bloomberg, the onetime Republican who was mayor of New York and is now running for the Democratic presidential nomination. Like Mr. Bloomberg, Mr. Johnson was a big-city mayor, in London. And like Mr. Bloomberg, he likes to apply the lessons of running a municipality to the national stage.

''It makes a lot of sense of his premiership if one thinks of him as trying to be mayor of the U.K.,'' wrote Daniel Finkelstein, a columnist for The Times of London. ''Mayors tend to be pragmatists who know they are judged by whether they get the pavement clear of snow rather than by the speeches they make.''

Whether Mr. Johnson's policies will succeed in clearing Britain's streets is another question. After Mr. Javid's departure, the government could not say that its budget will be rolled out as planned on March 11. Nor could it confirm that it will adhere to strict constraints on borrowing, even though these were mandated in the Conservative Party's election-winning manifesto.

On Friday, the cabinet discussed plans for a post-Brexit immigration system, underscoring another of the complex challenges Mr. Johnson faces. His aides say the new system would give priority to those with qualifications, with a goal of attracting the brightest immigrants and reducing the numbers of those arriving will few or no skills.

That would appeal to Mr. Johnson's base, given the role that anti-immigration fervor played in the 2016 Brexit referendum campaign. But in the short term, such a system could crimp economic growth as employers struggle to recruit at a time when Britain is close to full employment.

''There is a danger that we have promised something we can't deliver,'' said Jagjit Chadha, director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, a research institute based in London.

As Mr. Johnson consolidated his grip on government, his aides were busy trying to douse questions over who paid for an expensive holiday vacation for the prime minister on the chic Caribbean island of Mustique.

In a public filing, Mr. Johnson said the £15,000 cost of the vacation -- almost $20,000 -- was picked up by David Ross, a British billionaire who co-founded Carphone Warehouse. But Mr. Ross said he only ''facilitated'' the rental of a villa for Mr. Johnson and his 31-year-old partner, Carrie Symons, leaving the question of who actually paid for it a mystery.

Labour lawmakers have called for an inquiry into the affair.

The timing could be problematic for Mr. Johnson. Mr. Powell, the former chief of staff to Mr. Blair, noted that in 1997, Mr. Blair's new government was crippled by a fund-raising scandal involving the Formula One mogul, Bernie Ecclestone.

For those who have followed Mr. Johnson's surprising career, it was a reminder that scandals always seem to trail him.

''The public, in this age of populist leaders, tolerates dishonesty,'' Mr. Menon said. ''The one thing the public doesn't like is a sniff of corruption.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/14/world/europe/boris-johnson-britain.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/14/world/europe/boris-johnson-britain.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Prime Minister Boris Johnson, center, on Friday holding his first cabinet meeting at Downing Street in London since a shuffle of his staff. (POOL PHOTO BY MATT DUNHAM)

**Load-Date:** February 15, 2020

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[***Parties Hunt for Message After Split-Decision Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:619H-1W21-JBG3-60GD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns

**Body**

Voters delivered a convincing victory for Joe Biden, but a split decision for the two parties. Now Democrats and Republicans face perhaps the most up-for-grabs electoral landscape in a generation.

WASHINGTON -- America's two major parties had hoped the 2020 presidential election would render a decisive judgment on the country's political trajectory. But after a race that broke records for voter turnout and campaign spending, neither Democrats nor Republicans have achieved a dominant upper hand.

Instead, the election delivered a split decision, ousting President Trump but narrowing the Democratic majority in the House and perhaps preserving the Republican majority in the Senate. As Joseph R. Biden Jr. prepares to take office and preside over a closely divided government, leaders in both camps are acknowledging that voters seem to have issued not a mandate for the left or the right but a muddled plea to move on from Trump-style chaos.

With 306 Electoral College votes and the most popular votes of any presidential candidate in history, Mr. Biden attained a victory that was paramount to many Democrats, who saw a second Trump term as nothing less than a threat to democracy.

Yet on the electoral landscape, both parties find themselves stretched thin and battling on new fronts, with their traditional strongholds increasingly under siege. Indeed, Democrats and Republicans are facing perhaps the most unsettled and up-for-grabs electoral map the country has seen in a generation, since the parties were still fighting over California in the late 1980s.This competition has denied either from being able to claim broad majorities and prompted a series of election cycles, which could be repeated in 2022, in which any gains Democrats make in the country's booming cities and states are at least partly offset by growing Republican strength in rural areas.

The election also represented a continuation of this trench warfare between two parties that are increasingly defined by their activist flanks and limited to only incremental advances.

''We are more divided than any other time in my lifetime,'' said Haley Barbour, the former Mississippi governor and Republican National Committee chair, whose first job in politics was on Richard M. Nixon's 1968 campaign. ''But usually when we're at parity we're bunched up in the middle -- now we've got parity but with extreme polarity.''

Mr. Biden and the Democrats viewed this election as an opportunity to deliver a crushing repudiation to Republicans and the movement known as Trumpism, while Mr. Trump and his allies saw the chance to cement a durable governing coalition led by the far right.

Neither party got all it wanted. Democrats improved considerably on their performance in the last presidential race, repairing their standing in the Midwest, building their strength in the Sun Belt. Yet voters in Ohio, Iowa and Florida delivered a stinging rebuke to the idea the Democrats would pick off increasingly conservative states.

The G.O.P. defied expectations and gained seats in the House, limited its losses in the Senate and protected critical state legislative majorities. But the party experienced troubling erosion in the South and West as Mr. Biden won Arizona and Georgia.

As the results come into sharper focus, a more sober mood has set in on both sides of the aisle.

Unless Democrats can win a pair of Senate seats in Georgia's January runoff elections, Mr. Biden will arrive in the White House facing the same circumstances his predecessors have for eight of the last 10 years: an executive branch controlled by one party and part or all of the legislative branch held by the other.

Mr. Biden, elected officials and strategists in both parties agree, will most likely have a limited window to show he can lead successfully. If he can bridge Washington's bitter partisan divides to craft successful policies to fight the coronavirus pandemic and revive the economy, he may well have a chance to transform his party's loose anti-Trump coalition into a more stable electoral majority.

Already, there are mounting signs of just how difficult it may be for either party to govern through pragmatism and compromise. With Mr. Trump's refusal to concede the election and his talk of running again in 2024, Republicans are worried about Trumpian retribution if they break with a leader who remains the cultural and ideological lodestar of the G.O.P. base.

At the same time, Mr. Trump's defeat this month has removed the single most important force holding the Democratic Party's eclectic coalition together: the president himself. With his ouster, the détente that persisted throughout the year between the Democratic left and center has begun to crumble, with open sniping and blame-casting between figures like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, the party's most prominent young progressive, and Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, a centrist of vital importance to Mr. Biden's agenda in the Senate.

It remains to be seen whether either party will embrace a head-on reckoning with its own electoral vulnerabilities. Moderate Democrats have mostly just criticized the party's left wing for having promoted stances that they believe cost them seats in Congress, while Republicans have largely remained silent on Mr. Trump's intransigence and conspiracy-mongering.

While Mr. Biden rebuilt the Democrats' Blue Wall -- reclaiming the swing states of Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania -- he carried them by a fraction of the margins former President Barack Obama achieved in both the 2008 and 2012 elections. As long as Republicans manage to amass enormous leads with ***working-class*** white voters, those states may not be safely Democratic anytime soon.

Just as troubling to the party, Democrats sagged with voters of color, particularly in Hispanic and Asian-American communities where Republicans' attacks on Democrats as a left-wing party appear to have resonated, denying Mr. Biden a victory in Florida and costing the Democrats congressional seats in that state as well as Texas and California. Indeed, the only House seats Republicans picked up that were not in districts Mr. Trump also carried were in heavily Hispanic or Asian regions.

On a Democratic conference call this past week, Representative Linda Sanchez, a former member of the House leadership, criticized Democrats' Latino outreach strategy as a dismal failure, according to two people who participated on the call. And Representative Donna Shalala of Florida, who lost her seat in a heavily Hispanic district, complained on the call that her party did not effectively rebut Republicans' portrayal of Democrats as socialists.

''Defund police, open borders, socialism -- it's killing us,'' said Representative Vicente Gonzalez, a Democrat from South Texas who won just over 50 percent of the vote, two years after he nearly captured 60 percent. ''I had to fight to explain all that.''

The ''average white person,'' Mr. Gonzalez added, may associate socialism with Nordic countries, but to Asian and Hispanic migrants it recalls despotic ''left-wing regimes.''

Representative Harley Rouda of California, an Orange County Democrat who narrowly lost his bid for re-election, said the party needed to deliver a more assertive and moderate message if it wanted to claim districts like his. Mr. Rouda, who is planning to run again in 2022, said he suffered with centrist voters and his district's numerous Vietnamese-American voters, many of whom recoil from messaging about socialism.

''This narrative that the Democratic Party is borderline socialist, we need to fight back harder on that because it's simply not true,'' he said. ''We needed to be more forceful in defending the moderate position of the Democratic Party as a whole.''

Chuck Rocha, a longtime Democratic consultant, said too many white Democrats ''see Black and brown people as the same'' instead of approaching Hispanics as people open to either party and in need of convincing.

''Our community is not a get-out-the-vote universe,'' said Mr. Rocha, alluding to voters almost certain to support Democrats if they show up at the polls. ''We're a persuasion universe and should be treated like whites.''

Yet if Republicans cling to Mr. Trump, or to his brand of crude nationalism, they will continue to alienate voters in the fast-growing South and West who helped hand Mr. Biden Arizona and Georgia. As Mr. Biden showed, there are hordes of swing voters who find Mr. Trump and his divisive politics even more offensive than the slogans of the hard left.

Mr. Biden's map-stretching victories were not isolated events. They cap a steady expansion of Democratic strength, especially in the West, where the party has gained four Senate seats since 2016: two in Arizona, and one each in Colorado and Nevada.

State Senator J.D. Mesnard of Arizona, a Republican who won a difficult race for re-election this month, said his state had clearly become ''more competitive,'' though he argued that down-ballot results suggested voters hadn't abandoned the party entirely.

''You see similar things in Georgia and North Carolina -- states that have seen a lot of growth,'' Mr. Mesnard said. ''A lot of these places that were pretty hard-core red are now on the bubble.''

The deeper problem for Republicans is the powerful grip Mr. Trump retains on the party -- exactly the factor that made those states competitive.

Among Republicans, there is a stark difference between how lawmakers who are nearing retirement age or are safely ensconced in their seats approach Mr. Trump and how those who still require his favor speak of him.

Senator Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, the senior Senate Republican whose term is up in 2022, insisted that ''the Republican Party is the Republican Party, it's no one man's party.''

And Senator Susan Collins, the Maine Republican who just won re-election without ever endorsing Mr. Trump, said the president ''is an important voice but not the dominant voice in party,'' pointing to ''next generation'' figures like Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and the former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley.

But Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, who may run again in 2022, was more deferential to Mr. Trump. ''It's President Trump's supporters' party,'' Mr. Johnson said. ''That's a group of people I think the Republican Party wants to hang onto.''

For Democrats, the election has illustrated the fragility of their coalition.

With Mr. Biden racking up overwhelming margins in Philadelphia, Detroit and Milwaukee -- and even winning metropolitan Phoenix and Atlanta -- progressives have become angered by the party establishment's complaints about the issues energizing activists.

''While there is a lot of sniping at defund the police, Medicare for all, the Green New Deal and things like that, we also have to recognize that the Black Lives Matter movement was a seminal moment for the country and it also boosted Democratic registration and turnout across the country,'' said Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, co-chair of the House Progressive Caucus.

National Democrats, meanwhile, were shocked that Republicans made incremental gains with voters of color, especially in a campaign pitting Mr. Trump's incendiary persona against Mr. Biden's message of racial-justice message. That development challenged some of the party's basic cultural assumptions.

Longtime lawmakers in both parties expressed guarded optimism that the depth of the country's crises would at least initially force consensus and action, adding that their side would pay a political price if they are seen as obstructionists.

''They may not want to compromise with Mitch McConnell, but their choice is doing nothing that improves people's lives or trying to find a way to compromise,'' Senator Debbie Stabenow, Democrat of Michigan, said of her party's left.

Representative Tom Cole of Oklahoma, a Republican, argued that it would be folly during simultaneous health and economic calamities for Mr. McConnell, the Senate majority leader, to reprise his strategy of denying Mr. Biden bipartisan success the way he did with Mr. Obama.

''We're going to have a tough map in the midterms and we need to get some stuff done,'' Mr. Cole said. ''Next year we better start governing in a normal way.''

The question for both parties is how they can satisfy voters who are pulling further apart, energizing their bases without alienating a bigger share of the electorate.

''The more outrageous one sounds, the greater exposure they get to the public,'' said Representative Emanuel Cleaver II, a Missouri Democrat, lamenting the modern incentive structure in politics. ''But it just deepens the divisions and worsens the climate in the country.''

Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting from Washington, D.C.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/2020-election-recap-democrats-republicans.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Supporters of President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Madison, Wis., left, celebrated his being declared victorious on Nov. 7. Backers of President Trump in Miami marked his winning Florida on Nov. 3. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SCOTT MCINTYRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Biden may have an executive branch controlled by one party and part or all of the legislative branch held by the other. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

President Trump at the White House on Friday. Republicans have largely remained silent on his intransigence after his electoral loss. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14)

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[***Boris Johnson Moves Boldly to Consolidate Power***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y6R-2HB1-JBG3-608N-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** But what the British prime minister plans to do with his power remains something of a mystery.

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“A lot of prime ministers would worry about losing their chancellor of the Exchequer, but he realized he and Javid didn’t see eye to eye on economic policy,” said Andrew Gimson, who wrote a biography of Mr. Johnson.

“He won a decisive victory and he is using the freedom that comes from such a majority to put in the people he wants,” Mr. Gimson said. “At the moment, he completely dominates British politics.”

Last week, in his first major decision, Mr. Johnson approved [*a gargantuan high-speed rail project*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/13/world/europe/sajid-javid-boris-johnson.html) that is designed to link London with the country’s economically challenged north. Some of his own aides and members of the Conservative Party fiercely opposed the project, known as High Speed 2, because of the $130 billion-plus price tag.

But for Mr. Johnson, ambitious public-works projects symbolize his pledge to pour resources into Britain’s Midlands and north, where many lifelong Labour Party voters defected to the Conservatives in the election, helping the prime minister pile up his Parliamentary majority.

“Everything this government has done bears the mark of careful consideration and triangulation,” said Anand Menon, a professor of European politics at King’s College London. “They’ve created a narrative that the government is radical while the government does not do anything radical.”

Jonathan Powell, a former chief of staff to Mr. Blair, said mandates of the kind enjoyed by his old boss and Mr. Johnson were fleeting. He said Mr. Johnson risked making the same mistake Mr. Blair did in not moving quickly enough.

“I’m surprised by how little he is doing with it,” Mr. Powell said. “Perhaps he wants to be the nonexecutive chairman of the government.”

Mr. Johnson is also still busy appealing to his pro-Brexit base with populist tactics [*like attacking the BBC*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/13/world/europe/sajid-javid-boris-johnson.html), Britain’s public broadcaster. He has accused the BBC of biased reporting and threatened it with legal changes that could dry up its sources of funding.

The prime minister’s clash with Mr. Javid was a victory for his influential adviser, Dominic Cummings, who has made a crusade of overhauling the government and centralizing power in the prime minister’s office.

But Mr. Javid’s departure may be more important because of what it says about Mr. Johnson’s fiscal policies. The Treasury, under Mr. Sunak, is expected to loosen limits on government spending, which would allow Mr. Johnson to pursue a liberal economic agenda not unlike that of a Social Democrat in continental Europe.

In that sense, he is starkly different from President Trump, another populist politician to whom he is regularly compared — and who is also known for running extremely compliant cabinet meetings.

During his 2016 presidential campaign, Mr. Trump spoke privately about his intention to govern as a pragmatist and champion of the ***working class***. Yet after he was elected, he enacted some of the most radical parts of his agenda, like clamping a travel ban on majority-Muslim countries, and rammed through a tax cut favoring corporations and the wealthy.

Mr. Johnson, some commentators argue, is less like Mr. Trump than Michael R. Bloomberg, the onetime Republican who was mayor of New York and is now running for the Democratic presidential nomination. Like Mr. Bloomberg, Mr. Johnson was a big-city mayor, in London. And like Mr. Bloomberg, he likes to apply the lessons of running a municipality to the national stage.

“It makes a lot of sense of his premiership if one thinks of him as trying to be mayor of the U.K.,” [*wrote Daniel Finkelstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/13/world/europe/sajid-javid-boris-johnson.html), a columnist for The Times of London. “Mayors tend to be pragmatists who know they are judged by whether they get the pavement clear of snow rather than by the speeches they make.”

Whether Mr. Johnson’s policies will succeed in clearing Britain’s streets is another question. After Mr. Javid’s departure, the government could not say that its budget will be rolled out as planned on March 11. Nor could it confirm that it will adhere to strict constraints on borrowing, even though these were mandated in the Conservative Party’s election-winning manifesto.

On Friday, the cabinet discussed plans for a post-Brexit immigration system, underscoring another of the complex challenges Mr. Johnson faces. His aides say the new system would give priority to those with qualifications, with a goal of attracting the brightest immigrants and reducing the numbers of those arriving will few or no skills.

That would appeal to Mr. Johnson’s base, given the role that anti-immigration fervor played in the 2016 Brexit referendum campaign. But in the short term, such a system could crimp economic growth as employers struggle to recruit at a time when Britain is close to full employment.

“There is a danger that we have promised something we can’t deliver,” said Jagjit Chadha, director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, a research institute based in London.

As Mr. Johnson consolidated his grip on government, his aides were busy trying to douse questions over who paid for an [*expensive holiday vacation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/13/world/europe/sajid-javid-boris-johnson.html) for the prime minister on the chic Caribbean island of Mustique.

In a public filing, Mr. Johnson said the £15,000 cost of the vacation — almost $20,000 — was picked up by David Ross, a British billionaire who co-founded Carphone Warehouse. But Mr. Ross said he only “facilitated” the rental of a villa for Mr. Johnson and his 31-year-old partner, Carrie Symons, leaving the question of who actually paid for it a mystery.

Labour lawmakers have called for an inquiry into the affair.

The timing could be problematic for Mr. Johnson. Mr. Powell, the former chief of staff to Mr. Blair, noted that in 1997, Mr. Blair’s new government was crippled by a fund-raising scandal involving the Formula One mogul, Bernie Ecclestone.

For those who have followed Mr. Johnson’s surprising career, it was a reminder that scandals always seem to trail him.

“The public, in this age of populist leaders, tolerates dishonesty,” Mr. Menon said. “The one thing the public doesn’t like is a sniff of corruption.”

PHOTO: Prime Minister Boris Johnson, center, on Friday holding his first cabinet meeting at Downing Street in London since a shuffle of his staff. (POOL PHOTO BY MATT DUNHAM)

**Load-Date:** February 15, 2020

**End of Document**



[***With Trench Warfare Deepening, Parties Face Unsettled Electoral Map***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6199-Y4J1-DXY4-X4P2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Highlight:** Voters delivered a convincing victory for Joe Biden, but a split decision for the two parties. Now Democrats and Republicans face perhaps the most up-for-grabs electoral landscape in a generation.

**Body**

Voters delivered a convincing victory for Joe Biden, but a split decision for the two parties. Now Democrats and Republicans face perhaps the most up-for-grabs electoral landscape in a generation.

WASHINGTON — America’s two major parties had hoped the 2020 presidential election would render a decisive judgment on the country’s political trajectory. But after a race that broke records for voter turnout and campaign spending, neither Democrats nor Republicans have achieved a dominant upper hand.

Instead, the election delivered a split decision, ousting President Trump but narrowing the Democratic majority in the House and perhaps preserving the Republican majority in the Senate. As [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/biden-presidential-transition.html) prepares to take office and preside over a closely divided government, leaders in both camps are acknowledging that voters seem to have issued not a mandate for the left or the right but a muddled plea to move on from Trump-style chaos.

With 306 Electoral College votes and the most popular votes of any presidential candidate in history, [*Mr. Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/biden-presidential-transition.html) attained a victory that was paramount to many Democrats, who saw a second Trump term as nothing less than a threat to democracy.

Yet on the electoral landscape, both parties find themselves stretched thin and battling on new fronts, with their traditional strongholds increasingly under siege. Indeed, Democrats and Republicans are facing perhaps the most unsettled and up-for-grabs electoral map the country has seen in a generation, since the parties were still fighting over California in the late 1980s.

This competition has denied either from being able to claim broad majorities and prompted a series of election cycles, which could be repeated in 2022, in which any gains Democrats make in the country’s booming cities and states are at least partly offset by growing Republican strength in rural areas.

The election also represented a continuation of this trench [*warfare between two parties that are increasingly defined by their activist flanks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/biden-presidential-transition.html) and limited to only incremental advances.

“We are more divided than any other time in my lifetime,” said Haley Barbour, the former Mississippi governor and Republican National Committee chair, whose first job in politics was on Richard M. Nixon’s 1968 campaign. “But usually when we’re at parity we’re bunched up in the middle — now we’ve got parity but with extreme polarity.”

Mr. Biden and the Democrats viewed this election as an opportunity to deliver a crushing repudiation to Republicans and the movement known as Trumpism, while Mr. Trump and his allies saw the chance to cement a durable governing coalition led by the far right.

Neither party got all it wanted. Democrats improved considerably on their performance in the last presidential race, repairing their standing in the Midwest, building their strength in the Sun Belt. Yet voters in Ohio, Iowa and Florida delivered a stinging rebuke to the idea the Democrats would pick off increasingly conservative states.

The G.O.P. defied expectations and gained seats in the House, limited its losses in the Senate and protected critical state legislative majorities. But the party experienced troubling erosion in the South and West as Mr. Biden won Arizona and Georgia.

As the results come into sharper focus, a more sober mood has set in on both sides of the aisle.

Unless Democrats can win a pair of Senate seats in Georgia’s January runoff elections, Mr. Biden will arrive in the White House facing the same circumstances his predecessors have for eight of the last 10 years: an executive branch controlled by one party and part or all of the legislative branch held by the other.

Mr. Biden, elected officials and strategists in both parties agree, will most likely have a limited window to show he can lead successfully. If he can bridge Washington’s bitter partisan divides to craft successful policies to fight the coronavirus pandemic and revive the economy, he may well have a chance to transform his party’s loose anti-Trump coalition into a more stable electoral majority.

Already, there are mounting signs of just how difficult it may be for either party to govern through pragmatism and compromise. With Mr. Trump’s refusal to concede the election and his talk of running again in 2024, Republicans are worried about Trumpian retribution if they break with a leader who remains the cultural and ideological lodestar of the G.O.P. base.

At the same time, Mr. Trump’s defeat this month has removed the single most important force holding the Democratic Party’s eclectic coalition together: the president himself. With his ouster, the détente that persisted throughout the year between the Democratic left and center has begun to crumble, with open sniping and blame-casting between figures like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, the party’s most prominent young progressive, and Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, a centrist of vital importance to Mr. Biden’s agenda in the Senate.

It remains to be seen whether either party will embrace a head-on reckoning with its own electoral vulnerabilities. Moderate Democrats have mostly just criticized the party’s left wing for having promoted stances that they believe cost them seats in Congress, while Republicans have largely remained silent on Mr. Trump’s intransigence and conspiracy-mongering.

While Mr. Biden rebuilt the Democrats’ Blue Wall — reclaiming the swing states of Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania — he carried them by a fraction of the margins former President Barack Obama achieved in both the 2008 and 2012 elections. As long as Republicans manage to amass enormous leads with ***working-class*** white voters, those states may not be safely Democratic anytime soon.

Just as troubling to the party, Democrats sagged with voters of color, particularly in Hispanic and Asian-American communities where Republicans’ attacks on Democrats as a left-wing party appear to have resonated, denying Mr. Biden a victory in Florida and costing the Democrats congressional seats in that state as well as Texas and California. Indeed, the only House seats Republicans picked up that were not in districts Mr. Trump also carried were in heavily Hispanic or Asian regions.

On a Democratic conference call this past week, Representative Linda Sanchez, a former member of the House leadership, criticized Democrats’ Latino outreach strategy as a dismal failure, according to two people who participated on the call. And Representative Donna Shalala of Florida, who lost her seat in a heavily Hispanic district, complained on the call that her party did not effectively rebut Republicans’ portrayal of Democrats as socialists.

“Defund police, open borders, socialism — it’s killing us,” said Representative Vicente Gonzalez, a Democrat from South Texas who won just over 50 percent of the vote, two years after he nearly captured 60 percent. “I had to fight to explain all that.”

The “average white person,” Mr. Gonzalez added, may associate socialism with Nordic countries, but to Asian and Hispanic migrants it recalls despotic “left-wing regimes.”

Representative Harley Rouda of California, an Orange County Democrat who narrowly lost his bid for re-election, said the party needed to deliver a more assertive and moderate message if it wanted to claim districts like his. Mr. Rouda, who is planning to run again in 2022, said he suffered with centrist voters and his district’s numerous Vietnamese-American voters, many of whom recoil from messaging about socialism.

“This narrative that the Democratic Party is borderline socialist, we need to fight back harder on that because it’s simply not true,” he said. “We needed to be more forceful in defending the moderate position of the Democratic Party as a whole.”

Chuck Rocha, a longtime Democratic consultant, said too many white Democrats “see Black and brown people as the same” instead of approaching Hispanics as people open to either party and [*in need of convincing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/us/politics/biden-presidential-transition.html).

“Our community is not a get-out-the-vote universe,” said Mr. Rocha, alluding to voters almost certain to support Democrats if they show up at the polls. “We’re a persuasion universe and should be treated like whites.”

Yet if Republicans cling to Mr. Trump, or to his brand of crude nationalism, they will continue to alienate voters in the fast-growing South and West who helped hand Mr. Biden Arizona and Georgia. As Mr. Biden showed, there are hordes of swing voters who find Mr. Trump and his divisive politics even more offensive than the slogans of the hard left.

Mr. Biden’s map-stretching victories were not isolated events. They cap a steady expansion of Democratic strength, especially in the West, where the party has gained four Senate seats since 2016: two in Arizona, and one each in Colorado and Nevada.

State Senator J.D. Mesnard of Arizona, a Republican who won a difficult race for re-election this month, said his state had clearly become “more competitive,” though he argued that down-ballot results suggested voters hadn’t abandoned the party entirely.

“You see similar things in Georgia and North Carolina — states that have seen a lot of growth,” Mr. Mesnard said. “A lot of these places that were pretty hard-core red are now on the bubble.”

The deeper problem for Republicans is the powerful grip Mr. Trump retains on the party — exactly the factor that made those states competitive.

Among Republicans, there is a stark difference between how lawmakers who are nearing retirement age or are safely ensconced in their seats approach Mr. Trump and how those who still require his favor speak of him.

Senator Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, the senior Senate Republican whose term is up in 2022, insisted that “the Republican Party is the Republican Party, it’s no one man’s party.”

And Senator Susan Collins, the Maine Republican who just won re-election without ever endorsing Mr. Trump, said the president “is an important voice but not the dominant voice in party,” pointing to “next generation” figures like Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and the former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley.

But Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, who may run again in 2022, was more deferential to Mr. Trump. “It’s President Trump’s supporters’ party,” Mr. Johnson said. “That’s a group of people I think the Republican Party wants to hang onto.”

For Democrats, the election has illustrated the fragility of their coalition.

With Mr. Biden racking up overwhelming margins in Philadelphia, Detroit and Milwaukee — and even winning metropolitan Phoenix and Atlanta — progressives have become angered by the party establishment’s complaints about the issues energizing activists.

“While there is a lot of sniping at defund the police, Medicare for all, the Green New Deal and things like that, we also have to recognize that the Black Lives Matter movement was a seminal moment for the country and it also boosted Democratic registration and turnout across the country,” said Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, co-chair of the House Progressive Caucus.

National Democrats, meanwhile, were shocked that Republicans made incremental gains with voters of color, especially in a campaign pitting Mr. Trump’s incendiary persona against Mr. Biden’s message of racial-justice message. That development challenged some of the party’s basic cultural assumptions.

Longtime lawmakers in both parties expressed guarded optimism that the depth of the country’s crises would at least initially force consensus and action, adding that their side would pay a political price if they are seen as obstructionists.

“They may not want to compromise with Mitch McConnell, but their choice is doing nothing that improves people’s lives or trying to find a way to compromise,” Senator Debbie Stabenow, Democrat of Michigan, said of her party’s left.

Representative Tom Cole of Oklahoma, a Republican, argued that it would be folly during simultaneous health and economic calamities for Mr. McConnell, the Senate majority leader, to reprise his strategy of denying Mr. Biden bipartisan success the way he did with Mr. Obama.

“We’re going to have a tough map in the midterms and we need to get some stuff done,” Mr. Cole said. “Next year we better start governing in a normal way.”

The question for both parties is how they can satisfy voters who are pulling further apart, energizing their bases without alienating a bigger share of the electorate.

“The more outrageous one sounds, the greater exposure they get to the public,” said Representative Emanuel Cleaver II, a Missouri Democrat, lamenting the modern incentive structure in politics. “But it just deepens the divisions and worsens the climate in the country.”

Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting from Washington, D.C.

PHOTOS: Supporters of President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Madison, Wis., left, celebrated his being declared victorious on Nov. 7. Backers of President Trump in Miami marked his winning Florida on Nov. 3.  (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SCOTT MCINTYRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Biden may have an executive branch controlled by one party and part or all of the legislative branch held by the other. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES); President Trump at the White House on Friday. Republicans have largely remained silent on his intransigence after his electoral loss. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14)

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2020

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[***The ‘Defund’ Conundrum***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:603D-5CT1-DXY4-X0RD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. Some white voters are souring on President Trump. Global health officials are worried about virus counts. Let’s start with the debate over “defund the police.”

Advocates for police reform are making the case that the phrase “[*defund the police*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” doesn’t mean what many people think it means. “Be not afraid,” Christy E. Lopez, a Georgetown University law professor, [*wrote in The Washington Post.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) “‘Defunding the police’ is not as scary (or even as radical) as it sounds.”

What it actually means, these advocates say, is reducing police budgets and no longer asking officers to do many jobs that they often don’t even want to do: resolving family and school disputes, moving homeless people into shelters and so on. Instead, funding for education, health care and other social services would increase. (For more detail on the movement’s agenda, [*you can read this Times explainer*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).)

The challenge for advocates is that many people equate “defunding” with a major reduction in policing — and they don’t like that idea. Reducing police budgets is arguably the only high-profile reform idea that’s not popular:

This situation reminds me of several other political issues in the Trump era, like health care and immigration. On all of them, progressives are pushing for multiple policy changes that are [*popular with voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) (like expanded Medicare, the end of migrant-family separation and more police accountability). These changes are typically much more popular than President Trump’s positions on the same issues.

But many progressives have also adopted one big idea in each area that is decidedly unpopular with voters: [*Get rid of private health insurance*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). [*Abolish ICE*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Defund the police.

The combination explains much of the political response you’ve seen in recent days. Joe Biden, Cory Booker and other Democrats [*have distanced themselves*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) from the phrase “defund the police,” while Trump has highlighted it. “They’re saying defund the police,” he said last week. “Defund. Think of it.”

At the same time, some Republicans have begun signaling their openness to other parts of police reform, which is a big change. John Cornyn, a conservative senator facing a tough re-election campaign in Texas, yesterday [*tweeted the following*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing): “I’m dedicated to rooting out racial injustices so no other family has to experience what George Floyd’s family has. It will require bipartisan commitment across the country &amp; listening to the voices of those who have been most affected is the first step — we must not fail to act.”

A shift: A majority of Americans (57 percent) now believe the police are [*more likely to use excessive force*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) against African-Americans. In 2014, the share was only 33 percent. “In my 35 years of polling, I’ve never seen opinion shift this fast or deeply,” Frank Luntz, a Republican pollster, said.

THREE MORE BIG STORIES

1. Trump’s base is fraying

Polls have also been shifting on Trump in recent weeks and show him to have fallen about 10 percentage points behind Biden. Why? Partly because some white ***working-class*** voters [*have soured — at least for now — on the president*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), according to Nate Cohn, a Times polling expert. Trump’s lead among white voters is down to around five percentage points, compared with his 13-point margin among whites in 2016.

“Incumbent presidents usually have an advantage in seeking re-election and that makes his deficit all the more striking,” Nate says. Past candidates have made up big deficits from the summer before the election, but the last incumbent to mount such a comeback was Harry Truman in 1948.

2. The policy debate on policing

Lawmakers around the country continued to consider new policies on policing. New York legislators defied police unions and began to approve [*a package of bills targeting police misconduct*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), including a ban on chokeholds. In Congress, Democrats [*unveiled legislation*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that would make it easier to prosecute police officers for misconduct, and require law enforcement agencies to report data on the use of force.

Trump [*denied that systemic problems existed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), declaring that as many as 99.9 percent of police officers are “great, great people.”

Differing accounts: Attorney General William Barr contradicted Trump on Monday and confirmed that the president was [*taken to an underground bunker*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) last month because of security concerns over street demonstrations outside the White House.

3. How to be safe in a pandemic

By now, many of the key rules for reducing your coronavirus risk are familiar: Wash your hands frequently when you leave the house. Wear a mask. Avoid close conversations. Minimize your time in indoor spaces.

But there’s one rule that probably deserves more attention: Adjust your behavior based on where you live. Virus rates vary significantly by state.

Our colleague Tara Parker-Pope has published a list of [*five rules to live by during a pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Rule No. 1 is “Check the health of your state and community.”

In other virus developments:

* The number of new daily cases worldwide hit a new high on Sunday, the [*World Health Organization reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). The agency urged continued vigilance.

Here’s what else is happening

* The S&amp;P 500 has recovered [*all of its losses on the year*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). But stocks opened down in Europe this morning, suggesting American markets may fall as well.

1. Reports of child abuse in New York City [*have dropped sharply*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) since the pandemic began, which could be a sign that the system to protect children has fallen apart.
2. Adam Rapoport, the editor of Bon Appétit magazine, [*resigned after a 2004 photo of him resurfaced*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) on social media, drawing condemnations for a stereotypical depiction of Puerto Ricans.
3. Lives lived: He was known as Brother Ah (born Robert Northern), a master French horn player (and Washington D.J.) who hopscotched between jazz and classical music before embarking on a solo career making music that defied categorization. [*He has died at 86*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

BACK STORY: New York awakens

Christina Goldbaum, a Metro reporter, reflected on [*New York City’s first day of eased restrictions*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing):

On Monday morning, New York seemed to be slowly waking up from its 100-day hibernation. The streets were still absent the usual crowds and cacophony of car horns. But the return of around 400,000 people to some urban routines offered some sense of normalcy.

Commuters wearing face masks hopped onto [*freshly scrubbed trains*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that smelled like lemon-scented cleaning supplies. Even the more crowded train cars still carried only a dozen or so riders.

By midday, local shops had unlocked their doors for curbside pickup. In the East Village, a half-dozen construction workers who had been home for months chatted and laughed as they lined up to have their temperatures checked.

Other parts of the city remained at a standstill: In SoHo and on Fifth Avenue, where many stores were looted last week, marquee shops were still boarded up. But graffiti on the plywood offered encouragement: “LOVE NYC” was a common motif and, at one store, “STAY STRONG.”

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, HUNT

Embrace tiny fish

Seafood from a can gets a bad rap — dismissed as survival fare that gathers dust in the back of many people’s pantries. But you can do a lot with tinned fish, [*says the cookbook author David Tanis*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can make anchovy crostini, tuna-stuffed peppers or[*a big plate of spicy pasta*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), spruced up with canned baby clams, bacon and peas. Tanis suggests splurging for high-quality anchovies and tuna if you can. If not, work with what you have.

Finding the virtual action

With real-life sports mostly on hiatus, gamblers are flocking to the [*competitive video-game matches known as e-sports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Since early March, half of all sports betting in Europe has reportedly been on video games.

Bettors can wager on players trying to shoot each other in games like Call of Duty, or facing off in sports games like FIFA 20 or Madden NFL 20. Some sports books even offer betting on completely automated matches — that is, computer versus computer.

At least someone’s having a good day

It sounds like a plot lifted straight from Hollywood. A decade ago, a New Mexico art collector named Forrest Fenn buried treasure in the Rocky Mountains and self-published a book challenging people to find it. According to Fenn, the chest — filled with gold, gems and artifacts — is worth around $2 million. Over the weekend, he said, [*someone found it*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

“I do not know the person who found it, but the poem in my book led him to the precise spot,” Fenn wrote on his website. He created the treasure hunt after recovering from kidney cancer.

At least two people died trying to find the treasure, and Fenn still refused to retrieve the chest. “If someone drowns in the swimming pool we shouldn’t drain the pool,” he said in 2017. “We should teach people to swim.”

Diversions

* Craving a visit to a national park? Take the road less traveled (and avoid crowds) with [*a trip to one of these alternatives to popular parks*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

1. The late-night hosts [*shared their thoughts on the protests*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — and on Colin Kaepernick.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Netflix selection (four letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. The word “[*fancams*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” — videos by K-pop fans featuring their favorite singers, recently used in support of the Black Lives Matter movement — appeared for the first time in The Times yesterday, as noted by the Twitter bot [*@NYT\_first\_said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see today’s print front page [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about proposals to defund police departments in the U.S. And in the latest episode of “[*Popcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing),” two former editors of The Source, a hip-hop magazine, retell how the publication covered the 1992 uprisings over the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles.

The Times is providing free access to much of our coronavirus coverage. Please consider supporting our journalism with [*a subscription*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Mural on 16th St. near the White House in Washington. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Amsterdam Considers Apology for Slavery in Former Colony***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y5T-6PK1-JBG3-639J-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Liam Stack

**Highlight:** A reckoning is afoot, centuries after the city became a co-owner of what was then the South American colony of Suriname.

**Body**

A reckoning is afoot, centuries after the city became a co-owner of what was then the South American colony of Suriname.

AMSTERDAM — The most enduring legacy of slavery in the Netherlands may be found in neighborhoods like Bijlmermeer, a ***working-class*** corner of Amsterdam where many — including those who trace their heritage to the former colony of Suriname — have long felt sidelined.

Slave labor in the South American nation of Suriname generated vast wealth for Amsterdam, and that wealth built many of its palaces and canal-side mansions. But it is in Bijlmermeer — a neighborhood long associated with poverty, crime and aggressive policing — that a movement has grown in recent months to press the city to reckon with this chapter of its history.

Politicians from the area, elected during a vote last year that delivered one of the most diverse city councils in recent memory, have championed a push for Amsterdam to apologize formally for slavery. A majority of the 45-member council, which now has several members descended from slaves, has signed on to the apology initiative that is scheduled to be taken up on February 12. Local politicians say it is likely to pass.

“Amsterdam is a beautiful city, but when you look at some of its most beautiful parts, it is hard to deny that they were financed with income that came from the trans-Atlantic slave trade,” said Don Ceder, a council member whose parents are from Ghana and Suriname. “What we want is for the city to own up to its history, to accept it and to apologize.”

The debate over an apology comes as the Netherlands continues to grapple with an influx of migrants and a backlash against them that has complicated the country’s image as a bastion of liberal tolerance.

As part of that backlash, a right-wing, anti-immigrant party — the Forum for Democracy — has surged to become the largest party in the provinces that contain Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam. A contentious law [*was passed in August banning from some public places burqas, niqabs and other face coverings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/01/world/europe/netherlands-burqa-ban.html) that are worn by some Muslim women.

The proposal for Amsterdam — where [*immigrants have fed a population boom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/01/world/europe/netherlands-burqa-ban.html) — to apologize for its role in slavery has generated soul-searching and debate, as well as strong opposition by a newly empowered right wing.

Anton van Schijndel, a council member from the Forum for Democracy, said the initiative was “a drive to instill a sense of guilt and shame about a nation’s history.”

Debates over the legacy of slavery are common in the United States, where slave labor powered the economy and shaped the legal system even before the nation’s inception. But such discussions happen more fitfully in Europe, where those who profited lived thousands of miles from colonies like Suriname.

Amsterdam took an unusually direct role as a co-owner of Suriname in the 17th century. It acquired a one-third stake in the colony in 1683 and became an important conduit in the slave trade, especially between West Africa and South America.

Scholars say wealth continued to pour into Amsterdam — home to banks, insurance companies and most plantation investors — after the Dutch government took control of Suriname in 1795. The colony became independent in 1975, after which many Surinamese migrated to the Netherlands and settled in neighborhoods like Bijlmermeer.

Simion Blom, 31, a City Council member who immigrated from Suriname at the age of 5, grew up in Bijlmermeer.

The area began as a planned community of Modernist high-rises and wide, elevated highways built in the 1960s as a Dutch suburb of the future. But it ultimately failed to attract many Dutch people, and became increasingly gritty and urban.

The isolated exclave surrounded by other cities then became a destination for migrants, who faced housing discrimination in central Amsterdam but could find affordable apartments here.

Sitting at a cafe on a bustling pedestrian shopping street in Bijlmermeer, Mr. Blom said that the country would be strengthened by frankly discussing such a dark period of history, even if it made some people uncomfortable.

“I think that makes us adult as a country and as a society when we are able to talk about this, especially about racism and discrimination, to bring people together,” he said.

The proposed apology would call for the city to make a “reconciliation with the past.”

“It is time to redefine the identity of our city free from the weight of the past, but armed with its knowledge to work toward a reconciliation in the future,” the text of the resolution says. “From a shared history, to a shared future.”

The conservative-leaning party of Prime Minister Mark Rutte has met the proposal with ambivalence, and its city council members have declined to endorse it. And the Forum for Democracy, which swept nationwide provincial elections in March but holds just three of the city council seats, has opposed it.

“A public apology feeds the identity politics which we abhor,” said Mr. van Schijndel, the Forum for Democracy council member. “It pits different ethnic groups against each other. It raises false expectations that someday reparations will be made.”

He added that it is difficult to apologize for what ancestors did centuries ago.

Proponents of an apology say reparations are not on the agenda, and they agree that Dutch people are not to blame for what their ancestors thought or did.

“It’s not about the individual,” said Eduard Mangal, a city council aide of Surinamese descent who helped write the draft proposal. “This is something the country has done as a whole. It’s not only white people who should apologize. I’m also apologizing because I’m also Dutch. I’m also from Amsterdam.”

The idea of an apology has been promoted for years by scholars and activists who argue that an increasingly diverse Amsterdam must have the fortitude to face its past. The current initiative was begun on the city level after a similar push at the national level produced what Mr. Ceder described as a frustrating response that emphasized Dutch sorrow instead of responsibility.

Mr. Mangal, the city council aide, and others say the focus should be on the city’s entanglement with slavery, which was not limited to Suriname.

Slaves worked in other Dutch colonies, including in Asia, said Pepijn Brandon, a historian at the Free University of Amsterdam.

Dutch financiers also invested in American slavery. When Thomas Jefferson mortgaged his plantation, Monticello, to Dutch bankers, they accepted his slaves as collateral for the loan, Dr. Brandon said.

“You should see it as a wide-ranging system, not simply the activities of a number of traders within the slave trade but instead a whole complex of economic activities that happen across national borders,” Dr. Brandon said.

Its impact was even greater on Holland, historically the country’s most powerful province, where slavery accounted for 10 percent of gross domestic product and 40 percent of all economic growth between 1739 and 1779, Dr. Brandon said. Roughly 19 percent of all goods that came through Dutch harbors were produced on slave plantations in the Americas, he said.

“This was actually one of the motors of the Dutch commercial economy of the second half of the 18th century,” he said.

The physical legacy of slavery can be plainly seen in Amsterdam. The city center is crowded with mansions, palaces and stately buildings whose original occupants were linked to the slave trade or industries based on it, historians say.

It is also seen in the official mayoral residence, which was once home to the slave trader and Dutch West India Company director Paulus Godin. The West India House, the former headquarters of the Dutch West India Company, today houses a wine bar.

Amsterdam was also home to the world’s first stock exchange, which was founded in part to trade shares in industries based on slavery. In a sign of the city’s modern dependence on tourism, the site is now home to a tourist information office and a branch of Ripley’s Believe It or Not.

“The Dutch still profit from it,” Mr. Blom said. “The tourism, the heritage in itself is wealth.”

PHOTOS: Revenue from slave labor in Suriname helped produce many of Amsterdam’s mansions, including the Royal Palace on Dam Square. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES); The National Slavery Monument in Amsterdam. Suriname was a Dutch colony for almost 300 years, until independence in 1975. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EVERT ELZINGA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2020

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[***Mothers Are Fed Up, and Democrats Aim to Get Their Vote***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60M9-S5S1-DXY4-X0X1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1801 words

**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer and Jennifer Medina

**Body**

As millions of American families face an uncertain start to the school year, the anger of women who find themselves expected to be teacher, caregiver, employee and parent is fueling a political uprising.

President Bill Clinton introduced America to the ''soccer mom,'' anxiously shuttling her children across swing state suburbs in her minivan. President George W. Bush's re-election campaign found another cutesy moniker, dubbing those voters worried about terrorism after the attacks of Sept. 11 ''security moms.''

President Trump's handling of the pandemic is generating an entirely different sentiment, one not traditionally bestowed upon female voters or mothers.

''I am a rage mom,'' said Senator Patty Murray, the highest-ranking woman in Senate leadership. ''Well, a rage nana, at this point, as my granddaughter would say.''

With millions of American families facing an uncertain start to the school year, the struggle for child care, education and economic stability is fueling a political uprising, built on the anger of women who find themselves constantly -- and indefinitely -- expected to be teacher, caregiver, employee and parent.

As the pandemic roars on, voters across America remain deeply angry and worried about the future. But the vocal outrage from women, in particular, is clear on protest lines and in polling data. Women were more likely than men to report having participated in protests over the past two years, and mothers with children in the home were twice as likely as fathers to report participating in a protest, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll from June.

Now, the rage moms are railing in Facebook groups about school shutdowns and in teacher union meetings about reopening without proper protection from the virus. They're also packing virtual town halls with frustrations about schools, child care and the lack of leadership.

''There's nobody giving us solutions,'' said Kim Lopez, a mother of three in Glendale, Ariz., and part-time financial assistant, who is still unsure what her children's schooling will look like this year. Ms. Lopez said she never considered herself political until this summer, when she brought her children to a small Black Lives Matter protest in the Phoenix suburbs. ''It's as if they don't care what happens to families.''

Ms. Lopez is exactly the kind of voter Democrats hope will push them to victory in November, and they are aiming to turn that frustration with government inaction into a vote against Mr. Trump.

Last month, the Biden campaign kicked off a ''Moms for Biden'' group. On Zoom, one person after another spoke of fears and frustrations. Asked to name the most pressing issue for her, one mother couldn't narrow it down. Instead, she simply said ''less worry.''

Voters are likely to hear more about those child care concerns at the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday night, with remarks from many of the party's most influential female politicians, including their new vice-presidential nominee, Senator Kamala Harris.

The broader focus on caregiving issues marks a significant shift in the political climate of even a few months ago, when Senator Elizabeth Warren made child care a centerpiece of her campaign in the Democratic presidential primary.

At campaign events six months ago, Ms. Warren's proposals for universal, government-funded child care would elicit nods primarily from mothers in the crowd, she said, followed by quiet conversations in the selfie line with women about their personal struggle balancing work and child care.

During a virtual town hall meeting she held last month, however, more than half of the questions from the audience of 70,000 people were about schools, child care and working parents.

''Right now, I think women have just had it up to their eyeballs,'' Ms. Warren said in an interview. ''They no longer feel isolated and one-off in how they couldn't figure out how to make the system work, and recognize the system is broken, and nobody's making it work.''

Ms. Warren added: ''They're fired up. And I love it.''

The pandemic is the spark but the backlash against Mr. Trump has been burning since the day after his inauguration, when millions of women joined protests across the country. Their fire has endured through #MeToo, waves of teachers' strikes led by predominantly female unions, the outcry against school shootings, and Black Lives Matter demonstrations, a movement started largely by female racial justice activists. For the second election cycle in a row, a record-breaking number of female candidates are running for federal office. Mr. Biden's selection of Ms. Harris was widely seen as a nod to the energy women have given the Democratic Party during the Trump era.

''Women are mobilized on a bigger scale than we've seen in a generation at least,'' said Annelise Orleck, a historian at Dartmouth College who studies women's political activism. ''Women are organizing all across the spectrum.''

The activism is diffuse and multiracial, reflecting political battles that ***working class*** women have long waged for better health care, schools and child care. In some ways, more affluent suburban women are simply waking up to the untenable choices poorer women and women of color have faced for generations.

While the anger is loudest on the left, Democrats hope to capitalize on indications that the rage reaches across party lines. The rebellion by white college-educated women against Mr. Trump helped Democrats win key swing districts in 2018, giving the party control of the House. In recent weeks, support for Mr. Trump has begun to drop among white non-college educated women and older women -- two more ideologically moderate groups that bolstered his winning coalition four years ago. The gender split among suburbanites is striking: In a recent Washington Post/ABC News poll, Mr. Biden leads by 24 points among suburban women and just four points among suburban men, a statistical dead heat.

''I am so full of rage,'' said Alida Garcia, the vice president of Fwd.us, an immigration advocacy group and mother of 1-year-old twins. ''We are exhausted.''

Last month, Mr. Biden announced a sweeping $775 billion caregiving proposal that would cover care for young children, older adults and family members with disabilities. He often invokes his experience as a single father caring for his two young sons after his first wife and daughter were killed in a car crash.

Mr. Biden has repeatedly described caregiving as an economic necessity that deserves sustained support, a marked shift in political rhetoric on a topic that was often seen by politicians as a special interest, not an issue to put at the center of a campaign. Other Democratic politicians, too, have begun more forcefully addressing caregiving concerns. Last week, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez sponsored a webinar on ''How to Organize a Child Care Collective.''

Parents with minor children make up about one-third of the country's work force, according to the Brookings Institutions. In 2018, 23.5 million working parents relied upon school and child care programs while they went to work.

''For the last 10, 20 years, this has been sidelined and siloed as just a women's issue,'' said Brigid Schulte, who runs the Better Life Lab at New America, a research group. ''It's not and it never has been.''

Throughout American history, women have wielded an image of maternal respectability to push for labor reforms, temperance, stoke fears of communist infiltration in the 1950s and other political causes.

In recent years, mothers-turned-activists have begun political organizations, including Moms Rising, Vote Like a Mother and Moms Demand Action, a gun control advocacy organization. The majority of volunteers with Indivisible, a liberal advocacy group that helped propel several Democrats to Congress in 2018, are women, and the topic of child care has become a de facto part of many meetings across the country.

''There isn't a single thing you can offer up to women now, whether it's text banking, leadership training, organizing skills, that's not immediately oversubscribed,'' said Cecile Richards, the head of Supermajority, an organization founded last year with the goal of mobilizing female voters. ''It is this extraordinary moment when women are in the ascendancy and finally the issues that women have to deal with every day are at last in the public conversation in a way that they have not been in any time I remember.''

Ms. Richards says Supermajority planned for 800 women to sign up for a recent organizing training it offered. It got 1,800 responses in the first week.

''Moms definitely know how to multitask,'' said Smitha Chadaga, who has spent a career working as an internist in a hospital and became politically active after the 2016 election, when her children asked if their family would have to leave the United States. (Dr. Chadaga's parents immigrated from India and her husband's family came from Nicaragua.)

In addition to her work and her involvement with an Indivisible group in Portland, Ore., Dr. Chadaga is caring for her two boys, ages 8 and 10. It is impossible to miss the heightened interest and anger of mothers, she said.

''The fact that we do not value child care, that we don't value early education, this is not something that Covid created -- it's something that Covid exposed,'' she said. ''The moms and parents around me are all feeling that very same thing.''

While Democrats have proposed the most ambitious plans to tackle child care, there are some signs that Republicans, too, are facing pressure to address the issue. Last month, the House passed two bills that would provide more than $220 billion in funding for child care centers and tax credits. Each bill had support from more than a dozen Republicans, a notable number in a deeply polarized Congress.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, another primary candidate who made child care a central part of her presidential bid, said she constantly hears from people who are worried about child care.

''It wasn't easy for most parents that I've talked to. To have no access to child care is crippling,'' she said. She hopes the crisis point reached by many families during the pandemic will create political momentum for policies like paid leave, universal early childhood education and universal sick days.

For Ms. Murray, the activism is both hopeful and a bittersweet reminder of just how much has stayed the same over three decades.

''I came here, as a senator, as the first working mother. I am now, a generation later, watching my daughter and son deal with the same issue,'' Ms. Murray said. ''This pandemic has ripped wide an open wound that families have struggled with for a long time.''

Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/17/us/politics/democrats-women-voters-anger.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/17/us/politics/democrats-women-voters-anger.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Wall of Moms that emerged from the Portland protests is one of the latest examples of women engaging in activism to strengthen the social safety net. (PHOTOGRAPH BY OCTAVIO JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Teachers and parents organized a car caravan protest calling for public school classes to be held remotely in Chicago. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES)

Women flocked to rallies for Senator Elizabeth Warren, who said: ''They're fired up. And I love it.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH FRANTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2020

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[***The Coronavirus Makes Our Old Culture Wars Seem Quaint***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YR5-8GH1-DXY4-X1HX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1504 words

**Byline:** Bari Weiss

**Highlight:** There are fights worth having. These are some of them.

**Body**

There are fights worth having. These are some of them.

Most of the time, when I think back to the world before, I feel longing. I miss everything. I miss dinner parties and swimming laps. I miss bars. I miss being close enough to eavesdrop. The idea of walking into an office building thrills me.

Sometimes, though, I think back to the old normal and feel disgusted — with its excesses, and how oblivious I could be to them. There are obvious examples that leap to mind. The amount of takeout I ordered. The number of flights I took. The paper towels!

But what really takes my breath away is how out-of-touch the daily debates on the internet were — “the discourse,” as some of us were taught to call it in college. Among the things the pandemic has clarified for me is [*the decadence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html), as my colleague Ross Douthat has described it, of our old culture war. Many of the battles of the past decade now seem self-indulgent and stagnant; others a waste of time.

I would know. I spent a lot of time in the virtual arena where those fights took place. Could a white novelist imagine a black protagonist? How much can [*cultures legitimately borrow*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) from one another without it being called stealing? Was [*a ban on plastic straws*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) actually a critical step toward ending our reliance on the fossil fuel industry?

These now seem to me debates of a world of plenty, not one in which tens of millions of Americans are worried about how they’re going to afford groceries.

This pandemic demands something bigger of all of us. One of the things I hope it ushers in is a culture war worthy of this moment. Because there are fights worth having.

Among them:

What is the right way to protect the American dream?

Looking at David Geffen’s [*drone-shot photograph*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) of his 454-foot superyacht — poor thing, self-isolating in the Grenadines — is enough to radicalize even a person living in a classic six.

The wealthiest 1 percent own something like half of the world’s wealth. But you already know that and a dozen other statistics.

If this kind of gaping inequality persists, the revolution will come. It’s a view that unites the progressive left of Bernie Sanders and the new right of [*Steve Bannon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html).

It is obvious now that many of the people who voted for Donald Trump did so because they lost their jobs and didn’t want to be told to learn to code by people who imagined themselves to be their intellectual betters. So many young people support Mr. Sanders because they own nothing more than their debts.

***Working-class*** Americans, [*as the writer Joel Kotkin has sharply argued*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html), are treated like propertyless serfs. Meantime, the intelligentsia has played its own role in our contemporary caste system by erecting more and more political, [*linguistic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) and cultural tests for membership in the elite.

How can we unravel 21st-century feudalism and make America fairer? Is a universal basic income, an idea promoted by Andrew Yang and now [*the pope*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html), the best solution? Or is it the kind of broader social safety net that prioritizes fixing our [*broken health care*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html)system?

That is a fight worth having.

Have we gone too global?

Do you remember the letter, written in Mandarin, that the woman in Arizona found at the bottom of the purse she bought at Walmart a few years ago?

“Inmates in China’s Yingshan Prison work 14 hours a day and are not allowed to rest at noon,” it read. “We have to work overtime until midnight. People are beaten for not finishing their work. There’s no salt and oil in our meals.”

[*The note*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html), and others like it, went briefly viral until we all went back to mindlessly ordering cheap stuff.

The notion that freer markets would inevitably lead to broader freedoms for the Chinese people — embraced by liberals and conservatives alike for the past three decades — is a dangerous shibboleth.

This was always a moral issue, one we should have faced decades ago. But this pandemic has shown us that we’ve given a totalitarian country control over the supply of many things that we need to survive, like N95 masks and [*basic pharmaceutical products*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html).

How much more would we be willing to pay for goods essential for public health and the national defense to be produced here? And how could we properly value and protect those who do that work?

Can we put truth and science before political correctness?

As a woman who has worn a size 10 for my entire adult life, I have benefited from the body positivity movement.

But I refuse to pretend that obesity is not a public health crisis — one that this virus has made searingly plain. A new study suggests that obesity is [*one of the major predictors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) of whether the coronavirus will land someone in the hospital. The study [*has not yet been peer-reviewed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html), but it jibes with what many doctors have observed.

Can we still rely on the journal Nature for unbiased scientific expertise if it apologizes for “[*associating the virus with Wuhan and with China*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html)” and calls such an association “erroneous”? The journal did so on the grounds that racists are using the coronavirus as an excuse to discriminate against Asian people — something that appalls anyone with a conscience. But there is no dispute whatsoever that the virus emerged in China and that, by [*suppressing crucial information*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html)about the outbreak, including [*heroic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html)whistle-blowers who tried to warn the world, the Chinese Communist Party [*hastened its spread*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html).

You can see the way our scientific thinking has been corrupted in those on the right who insist this pandemic is God’s vengeance against urban hedonists, and those on the left who claim this is payback from an angry Mother Earth. These are the arguments of ideologues using science as a hammer. The fight to reclaim the skepticism that science relies upon is a life-or-death one.

Meanwhile, I don’t want to hear another thing about the healing power of crystals for as long as I live.

What is the right role of technology in our lives?

If we had more sophisticated and widespread technology, could we have avoided crashing the economy in the process of saving ourselves from the ravages of Covid-19? Many point to [*the success of South Korea*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html), which tested people and then obsessively tracked them, and where people have already returned to life outside the apartment. Would that strategy have worked here, or would it have been crippled by our incompetent government bureaucracy?

And of course technology also spies on us, strips us of even [*the illusion of privacy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html), turns our brains into jellybeans, and threatens our [*most basic American rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html).

So what do we do? How can we harness what technology has to offer without letting it be used to control or even harm us? I don’t know. Convince me.

What is the future of city living?

In this moment, nothing seems stupider than being trapped on an island packed with people and governed by an [*inept mayor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html). City living feels unstable, perhaps nowhere more so than in New York. Infrastructure is decaying, the rent is [*too damn high*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) and there are [*more homeless people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) than ever before. The subways were [*a disaster*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) even before the pandemic cut ridership by 90 percent. Public pools won’t open this summer in order to [*save the city $12 million.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html)

Yet [*cities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) have been the great engines of our culture and the economy, nowhere more so than New York, where I moved at 19 years old, fell in love and never looked back.

Who can tell us what life in America’s cities should look like, in the era of social distancing?

I don’t know. I want to find out.

Remember politics?

Politics was always about two things that Twitter never valued: real-life relationships and compromise. Twitter convinced us it was about drama, and turned dramatic overreaction to every burp into something like a civic duty. If smart people are going to make it out of this moment, it’s going to be by resisting that nonsense.

Can we judge political success on mastery of the material world — on competence — rather than on the application of ideology?

We would do well to look to leaders like Gov. Larry Hogan of Maryland, who was able to wrangle [*500,000 coronavirus tests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) for his state from South Korean suppliers with the help of his Korean-born wife.

If there is one thing that this pandemic has insisted on, above all, it is reality. I’ve been thinking a lot lately about how some of the smartest minds in my world used to spend their days on laptops trying to cancel “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” while many women in this world still don’t have access to [*credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) or [*tampons*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html).

Let this be a re-calibration, the pandemic as a tuning fork to get back our pitch. What could be a better reminder of what really matters — and what absolutely doesn’t?

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/opinion/sunday/western-society-decadence.html).

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PHOTO: Perhaps current events will help us to recalibrate what’s actually important in our society, including reducing homelessness. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Spencer Platt/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***The ‘Rage Moms’ Democrats Are Counting On***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60M3-W201-JBG3-64KP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Lisa Lerer and Jennifer Medina

**Highlight:** As millions of American families face an uncertain start to the school year, the anger of women who find themselves expected to be teacher, caregiver, employee and parent is fueling a political uprising.

**Body**

As millions of American families face an uncertain start to the school year, the anger of women who find themselves expected to be teacher, caregiver, employee and parent is fueling a political uprising.

President Bill Clinton introduced America to the “soccer mom,” anxiously shuttling her children across swing state suburbs in her minivan. President George W. Bush’s re-election campaign found another cutesy moniker, dubbing those voters worried about terrorism after the attacks of Sept. 11 “security moms.”

President Trump’s handling of the pandemic is generating an entirely different sentiment, one not traditionally bestowed upon female voters or mothers.

“I am a rage mom,” said Senator Patty Murray, the highest-ranking woman in Senate leadership. “Well, a rage nana, at this point, as my granddaughter would say.”

With millions of American families facing an uncertain start to the school year, the struggle for child care, education and economic stability is fueling a political uprising, built on the anger of women who find themselves constantly — and indefinitely — expected to be teacher, caregiver, employee and parent.

As the pandemic roars on, voters across America remain [*deeply angry and worried*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/us/politics/election-coronavirus-protests-unemployment.html) about the future. But the vocal outrage from women, in particular, is clear on protest lines and in polling data. Women were more likely than men to report having participated in protests over the past two years, and mothers with children in the home were twice as likely as fathers to report participating in a protest, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll from June.

Now, the rage moms are railing in Facebook groups about school shutdowns and in teacher union meetings about reopening without proper protection from the virus. They’re also packing virtual town halls with frustrations about schools, child care and the lack of leadership.

“There’s nobody giving us solutions,” said Kim Lopez, a mother of three in Glendale, Ariz., and part-time financial assistant, who is still unsure what her children’s schooling will look like this year. Ms. Lopez said she never considered herself political until this summer, when she brought her children to a small Black Lives Matter protest in the Phoenix suburbs. “It’s as if they don’t care what happens to families.”

Ms. Lopez is exactly the kind of voter Democrats hope will push them to victory in November, and they are aiming to turn that frustration with government inaction into a vote against Mr. Trump.

Last month, the Biden campaign kicked off a “Moms for Biden” group. On Zoom, one person after another spoke of fears and frustrations. Asked to name the most pressing issue for her, one mother couldn’t narrow it down. Instead, she simply said “less worry.”

Voters are likely to hear more about those child care concerns at the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday night, with remarks from many of the party’s most influential female politicians, including their new vice-presidential nominee, Senator Kamala Harris.

The broader focus on caregiving issues marks a significant shift in the political climate of even a few months ago, when Senator Elizabeth Warren made child care a centerpiece of her campaign in the Democratic presidential primary.

At campaign events six months ago, Ms. Warren’s proposals for universal, government-funded child care would elicit nods primarily from mothers in the crowd, she said, followed by quiet conversations in the selfie line with women about their personal struggle balancing work and child care.

During a virtual town hall meeting she held last month, however, more than half of the questions from the audience of 70,000 people were about schools, child care and working parents.

“Right now, I think women have just had it up to their eyeballs,” Ms. Warren said in an interview. “They no longer feel isolated and one-off in how they couldn’t figure out how to make the system work, and recognize the system is broken, and nobody’s making it work.”

Ms. Warren added: “They’re fired up. And I love it.”

The pandemic is the spark but the backlash against Mr. Trump has been burning since the day after his inauguration, when millions of women joined protests across the country. Their fire has endured through #MeToo, waves of teachers’ strikes led by predominantly female unions, the outcry against school shootings, and Black Lives Matter demonstrations, a movement started largely by female racial justice activists. For the second election cycle in a row, a record-breaking number of female candidates are running for federal office. Mr. Biden’s selection of Ms. Harris was widely seen as a nod to the energy women have given the Democratic Party during the Trump era.

“Women are mobilized on a bigger scale than we’ve seen in a generation at least,” said Annelise Orleck, a historian at Dartmouth College who studies women’s political activism. “Women are organizing all across the spectrum.”

The activism is diffuse and multiracial, reflecting political battles that ***working class*** women have long waged for better health care, schools and child care. In some ways, more affluent suburban women are simply waking up to the untenable choices poorer women and women of color have faced for generations.

While the anger is loudest on the left, Democrats hope to capitalize on indications that the rage reaches across party lines. The rebellion by white college-educated women against Mr. Trump helped Democrats win key swing districts in 2018, giving the party control of the House. In recent weeks, support for Mr. Trump has begun to drop among white non-college educated women and older women — two more ideologically moderate groups that bolstered his winning coalition four years ago. The gender split among suburbanites is striking: In a recent [*Washington Post/ABC News poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/us/politics/election-coronavirus-protests-unemployment.html), Mr. Biden leads by 24 points among suburban women and just four points among suburban men, a statistical dead heat.

“I am so full of rage,” said Alida Garcia, the vice president of Fwd.us, an immigration advocacy group and mother of 1-year-old twins. “We are exhausted.”

Last month, Mr. Biden announced a sweeping [*$775 billion caregiving proposal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/us/politics/election-coronavirus-protests-unemployment.html) that would cover care for young children, older adults and family members with disabilities. He often invokes his experience as a single father caring for his two young sons after his first wife and daughter were killed in a car crash.

Mr. Biden has repeatedly described caregiving as an economic necessity that deserves sustained support, a marked shift in political rhetoric on a topic that was often seen by politicians as a special interest, not an issue to put at the center of a campaign. Other Democratic politicians, too, have begun more forcefully addressing caregiving concerns. Last week, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez sponsored a webinar on “How to Organize a Child Care Collective.”

Parents with minor children make up about one-third of the country’s work force, according to the Brookings Institutions. In 2018, 23.5 million working parents relied upon school and child care programs while they went to work.

“For the last 10, 20 years, this has been sidelined and siloed as just a women’s issue,” said Brigid Schulte, who runs the [*Better Life Lab*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/us/politics/election-coronavirus-protests-unemployment.html) at New America, a research group. “It’s not and it never has been.”

Throughout American history, women have wielded an image of maternal respectability to push for labor reforms, temperance, stoke fears of communist infiltration in the 1950s and other political causes.

In recent years, mothers-turned-activists have begun political organizations, including Moms Rising, Vote Like a Mother and Moms Demand Action, a gun control advocacy organization. The majority of volunteers with Indivisible, a liberal advocacy group that helped propel several Democrats to Congress in 2018, are women, and the topic of child care has become a de facto part of many meetings across the country.

“There isn’t a single thing you can offer up to women now, whether it’s text banking, leadership training, organizing skills, that’s not immediately oversubscribed,” said Cecile Richards, the head of Supermajority, an organization founded last year with the goal of mobilizing female voters. “It is this extraordinary moment when women are in the ascendancy and finally the issues that women have to deal with every day are at last in the public conversation in a way that they have not been in any time I remember.”

Ms. Richards says Supermajority planned for 800 women to sign up for a recent organizing training it offered. It got 1,800 responses in the first week.

“Moms definitely know how to multitask,” said Smitha Chadaga, who has spent a career working as an internist in a hospital and became politically active after the 2016 election, when her children asked if their family would have to leave the United States. (Dr. Chadaga’s parents immigrated from India and her husband’s family came from Nicaragua.)

In addition to her work and her involvement with an Indivisible group in Portland, Ore., Dr. Chadaga is caring for her two boys, ages 8 and 10. It is impossible to miss the heightened interest and anger of mothers, she said.

“The fact that we do not value child care, that we don’t value early education, this is not something that Covid created — it’s something that Covid exposed,” she said. “The moms and parents around me are all feeling that very same thing.”

While Democrats have proposed the most ambitious plans to tackle child care, there are some signs that Republicans, too, are facing pressure to address the issue. Last month, the House passed two bills that would provide more than $220 billion in funding for child care centers and tax credits. Each bill had support from more than a dozen Republicans, a notable number in a deeply polarized Congress.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, another primary candidate who made child care a central part of her presidential bid, said she constantly hears from people who are worried about child care.

“It wasn’t easy for most parents that I’ve talked to. To have no access to child care is crippling,” she said. She hopes the crisis point reached by many families during the pandemic will create political momentum for policies like paid leave, universal early childhood education and universal sick days.

For Ms. Murray, the activism is both hopeful and a bittersweet reminder of just how much has stayed the same over three decades.

“I came here, as a senator, as the first working mother. I am now, a generation later, watching my daughter and son deal with the same issue,” Ms. Murray said. “This pandemic has ripped wide an open wound that families have struggled with for a long time.”

Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: The Wall of Moms that emerged from the Portland protests is one of the latest examples of women engaging in activism to strengthen the social safety net. (PHOTOGRAPH BY OCTAVIO JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Teachers and parents organized a car caravan protest calling for public school classes to be held remotely in Chicago. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES); Women flocked to rallies for Senator Elizabeth Warren, who said: “They’re fired up. And I love it.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH FRANTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2020

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[***Staff Picks From the Book Review***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y5M-4MF1-JBG3-6291-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Body**

Crime stories hold our attention for a reason -- the promise of plot, the chance of violence, the high moral stakes and stark challenges to social norms, or sometimes just the intellectual fun of trying to solve a good mystery. We bring you a host of such stories this week, both in fiction and in non. The true stuff first: Sanam Maher's ''A Woman Like Her'' delves into the phenomenon of honor killings through the story of a Pakistani social media star who was strangled for pushing her culture's boundaries, while Emma Copley Eisenberg's ''The Third Rainbow Girl'' looks at the way a small Appalachian town continues to be haunted by a double murder that took place there decades ago. In fiction, meanwhile, there's a missing child in India (''Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line''), a White House intern who uncovers a plot to assassinate the president (''Deep State''), a psychiatrist's creepy new patient (''Mr. Nobody'') and the latest entry in Joe Ide's IQ series of detective novels (''Hi Five'').

Outside the world of crime, the stakes are just as high -- or even higher, in the case of ''The Bomb,'' Fred Kaplan's engaging new history of nuclear strategy and warfare. Back to fiction, our other recommendations this week include a story collection about women at various stages of life (''Adults and Other Children''), a novel about a young Englishwoman questioning her place in the world (''Saltwater'') and a novel about an Indian woman who discovers a family she never knew she had (''Small Days and Nights'').

Gregory CowlesSenior Editor, BooksTwitter: @GregoryCowles

A WOMAN LIKE HER: The Story Behind the Honor Killing of a Social Media Star, by Sanam Maher. (Melville House, $27.99.) Qandeel Baloch was called ''Pakistan's Kim Kardashian,'' the country's first social media star -- a figure of intense fascination and outrage, adored and reviled for posting videos of herself half undressed, mocking mullahs and promising to perform a striptease for her viewers if Pakistan's cricket team won a match. In 2016, the youngest of her six brothers strangled her while she slept, in a so-called honor killing. She was 26. Sanam Maher's books about Baloch's life and death is an ''exemplary work of investigative journalism,'' our critic Parul Sehgal writes. ''Baloch cannot speak for herself, and Maher allows her to remain elusive, a figure who fashioned her public face out of truth, yearning and exaggeration, and who possessed a dogged insistence on living her life on her own terms.''

DJINN PATROL ON THE PURPLE LINE, by Deepa Anappara. (Random House, $27.) This first novel by an Indian journalist probes the secrets of a big-city shantytown as a 9-year-old boy tries to solve the mystery of a classmate's disappearance. Anappara impressively inhabits the inner worlds of children lost to their families, and of others who escape by a thread. Our reviewer, Lorraine Adams, calls the protagonist ''a boy vivid in his humanity, one whose voice somersaults on the page,'' and praises the book's prose and pacing: ''Rich with easy joy, Anappara's writing announces the arrival of a literary supernova,'' Adams writes. ''If you begin reading the book in the morning, don't expect to get anything done for the rest of the day.''

SALTWATER, by Jessica Andrews. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $26.) The narrator of Andrews's first novel is a university graduate from the ***working class***, holed up in an Irish cottage, trying to figure out her place in the wider world. Andrews's writing, delivered in short fragments, is ''transportingly voluptuous, conjuring tastes and smells and sounds like her literary godmother, Edna O'Brien,'' Penelope Green writes in her review. ''What makes her novel sing is its universal themes: how a young woman tries to make sense of her world, and how she grows up.''

THE BOMB: Presidents, Generals, and the Secret History of Nuclear War, by Fred Kaplan. (Simon & Schuster, $30.) Kaplan provides a rich, and surprisingly entertaining, history of how nuclear weapons and strategy have shaped the United States military and also the country's foreign policy. ''Nuclear strategy is an exercise in absurdity that pushes against every moral boundary but that has likely contributed to the relative safety and stability of the contemporary era, during which nuclear weapons have proliferated but major war has all but vanished,'' our reviewer, Justin Vogt, writes. ''Kaplan has a gift for elucidating abstract concepts, cutting through national security jargon and showing how leaders confront (or avoid) dilemmas.''

THE THIRD RAINBOW GIRL: The Long Life of a Double Murder in Appalachia, by Emma Copley Eisenberg. (Hachette, $27.) Decades after two young women were murdered there, a small town continues to grapple with the crime. This evocative and elegantly paced examination of the murders takes a prism-like view. The book ''is not just a masterly examination of a brutal unsolved crime, which leads us through many surprising twists and turns and a final revelation about who the real killer might be,'' Melissa Del Bosque writes in her review. ''It's also an unflinching interrogation of what it means to be female in a society marred by misogyny, where women hitchhiking alone are harshly judged, even blamed for their own murders.''

HI FIVE, by Joe Ide. (Mulholland, $27.) In South Central Los Angeles, a guy nicknamed IQ -- who has a knack for solving the sorts of crimes that would be inconvenient to bring to the attention of the police -- takes a case from a particularly loathsome arms dealer who wants to prove that his daughter is innocent of murder. This book, the fourth in a series, crackles with life. In a roundup of recent thrillers, Sarah Lyall calls it a ''highly diverting book'' with ''real truths hidden in the entertainment,'' and says that readers should ''savor the freshness, vividness and ingenuity of the author's prose.''

MR. NOBODY, by Catherine Steadman. (Ballantine, $27.) In this tricky psychological thriller, with a story that corkscrews and somersaults, the neuropsychiatrist Emma Lewis finds herself treating a dangerous patient who has lost his memory -- or has he? He seems to know exactly who she is. ''It's a joy to encounter a suspenseful book whose turns lurk, rather than lumber, around the corner,'' Sarah Lyall writers in her thrillers roundup. ''Not everything rings true, but it all makes a kind of warped sense. Past mysteries haunt the present in ways that are both startling and claustrophobic. The patient's real story, when Emma finally figures it out, is even weirder than you might imagine.''

DEEP STATE, by Chris Hauty. (Atria, $27.) An exceedingly capable White House intern, fresh out of the Army, stumbles on a plan to assassinate the president that involves the C.I.A. director, a senator and several titans of finance and industry. ''The bodies pile up, as do the wry asides about what is and what is not good for the country,'' Sarah Lyall writes, reviewing the book alongside other thrillers. The protagonist ''is one of those preternaturally talented solo operatives skilled in every endeavor, from her physical stamina to her administrative competence to her Jason Bourne-like cool in the face of near-death experiences. She also figures in one of the more surprising double-reverse plot twists I have seen in some time.''

SMALL DAYS AND NIGHTS, by Tishani Doshi. (Norton, $25.95.) An Indian poet's novel sends an unhappy expat home to South India to start a new life with a sister she never knew she had. The woman who studiously refused to have children with her husband now becomes a full-time caregiver. ''As the title suggests, the story builds, one daily routine, one daily detail at a time. But Doshi treats this everydayness like the beach on which Grace lives: as a back-and-forth proposition, constantly in motion, always shifting slightly,'' Aditi Sriram writes in her review. ''Impressively, her focus never wavers. ... Doshi keeps the pendulum swinging until the very last page.''

ADULTS AND OTHER CHILDREN: Stories, by Miriam Cohen. (Ig, paper, $16.95.) In 14 linked stories, Cohen tracks the same four women at different points in their lives, creating an acute portrayal of failed relationships and struggles to transcend social norms. ''It's more disconcerting than you might expect to re-encounter as an adult a character you've previously met in her childhood,'' Maya Chung writes, reviewing the book with other debut story collections. ''But unlike in a classic bildungsroman, here, much of the story line in between is missing; the result is curious, sometimes very dark -- and often delightful.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/books/review/10-new-books-we-recommend-this-week.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/books/review/10-new-books-we-recommend-this-week.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2020

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[***Steven Banks vs. Homelessness***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64PV-X621-JBG3-652Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 42

**Length:** 7451 words

**Byline:** By Alex Carp

**Body**

To hear more audio stories from publications like The New York Times, download Audm for iPhone or Android.

A little past midnight one June evening two years ago, Steven Banks, then the commissioner of New York City's Department of Social Services, arrived at the Coney Island-Stillwell Avenue subway station, in South Brooklyn, to help see passengers off the trains. For the past seven weeks, the subway system had been closing for four hours each night -- the first planned overnight shutdown in more than a century. Transit officials had explained the shutdown as a chance for a ''deep cleaning'' in the face of the pandemic, but at a news conference, Gov. Andrew Cuomo admitted that the decision would deny homeless New Yorkers a place to sleep. Banks's department had received four days' notice, and it was all hands on deck.

A train arrived on the far side of the tracks. Stillwell is the last station on the F line, known to homeless-outreach workers as one of the more popular lines for people sleeping on the trains overnight. Many people stepping onto the platform walked right past workers asking, or trying to ask, if they had somewhere to go. Banks joined a pair of outreach workers from the Bowery Residents' Committee, one of the organizations that regularly work with his department. They had stopped to speak with a middle-aged man who stepped off the train a few moments earlier. His head was shaved clean, and he wore a striped dress shirt, open to the chest, and a wood-bead necklace.

The man explained that he was staying at a shelter in Harlem with a work-training program, but when he missed his curfew, the shelter had filled his bed for the night. In one hand, he held a plastic clamshell filled with lettuce and ranch dressing.

''So you need a place to stay?'' Banks asked.

''Just tonight, that's it,'' he said. He dipped a finger in the dressing. ''They're picking me up there at 7 for my program.''

Banks turned to Gabriel Pagano, then an overnight coordinator at the B.R.C. ''You have something you can give him?''

''We're calling for it right now,'' Pagano said.

Banks directed New York City's homelessness strategy from 2016 through the end of the de Blasio administration. But for 33 years before joining city government, Banks was a staff lawyer and ultimately attorney in chief at the Legal Aid Society, where he regularly sued the city on behalf of homeless people. His most famous case lasted 25 years. The litigation he led at Legal Aid hammered together, from the outside, much of the shelter-and-services system New York has today. It also made him one of the city government's most notorious adversaries. As he stood alongside Bill de Blasio at the news conference to announce he'd joined the administration, the mayor was asked if he hired Banks in part to keep him from being able to sue.

Banks made homeless outreach a priority throughout his time as commissioner, and under his watch the number of outreach workers tripled, to more than 600. Department staff members noted that he sometimes broke up workdays by conducting impromptu outreach alone along the half mile in Lower Manhattan between the main offices of the Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration, the two city agencies under the D.S.S. umbrella. ''There's a part of him that almost feels responsible that he hasn't solved the problem,'' Pat Bath, a longtime colleague of Banks's at Legal Aid, said.

Physically, Banks, 64, can make himself inconspicuous. He is 5 feet 7 inches tall, with small, round eyeglasses and a beard that he keeps just a touch thinner than the hair around the sides of his head. On the platform, he wore jeans and a pullover with a D.S.S. logo, and no one coming off the trains seemed to notice the word ''Commissioner'' embroidered on the chest in small, white script.

On the mezzanine at Stillwell, a man wearing flip-flops and a floral bathing suit stopped next to Banks. ''You good?'' Banks asked.

''I need somewhere to stay,'' the man said. ''I don't have nowhere to stay.'' He started to repeat himself, then trailed off.

''OK, we can get you a place to stay,'' Banks said. D.S.S. has a database of New Yorkers who are living on the street, and outreach teams can view their case details -- past conversations with outreach workers, the last shelter where they stayed -- through an app on their phones. (''Nobody wants to keep answering the same questions over and over again,'' Banks says.)

''Where were you last night?'' Banks asked.

''Um, last night I stayed -- where did I sleep last night?'' the man said. ''Oh, I was on the train! I had got off, and I started walking. When I came back, there wasn't anybody at the station. So I waited until like 5, got back on the train.''

''Well, we're going to get you a place for tonight,'' Banks said. He waved Pagano back over.

New York is the only city in the United States with what's known as a universal ''right to shelter,'' which means, broadly, that no one is turned away because the shelters are full. The right to shelter is Banks's most wide-ranging victory -- he won it as a lawyer at Legal Aid, in a lawsuit against an agency he was later appointed to lead -- but also a reason that the city's shelter system has become so overburdened.

When Banks left office, at the end of last year, conditions in some shelters remained dreadful, and investigations by journalists and the agency exposed financial irregularities and ethical concerns at some of the nonprofit organizations that partnered with the agency. Forty-five thousand New Yorkers remained in shelters. But under Banks, the average number of people in shelter declined for three years in a row, after rising for decades. Countless thousands were spared homelessness before they lost their housing, and New York became the first city in the country to guarantee that every tenant in housing court will have a lawyer. The department has been more effective than at any time in its history, yet still not effective enough.

When asked about this, Banks sometimes tells a story about a cross-examination he conducted at Legal Aid, a decade or so into the homelessness litigation. On paper, Banks had already won -- the highest court in the state had ruled unanimously that families had a right to emergency shelter and that New York City had an obligation to provide it to them. But the city had families sleeping on the intake-office floor.

The witness testifying was a senior official at the Human Resources Administration. ''One day the judge is sitting in court, listening to me ask this official, 'What would it take to comply with these orders to provide shelter?''' Banks said. ''And the judge, who had been presiding over this case for years, basically said, 'Yeah, I'd really like to know the answer to this question -- what would it take to comply with my orders that you've been violating all this time?''' Banks was struck by the honesty of the official's response: ''He said you need services to prevent homelessness, you need decent, adequate shelter for people who need it, and you need a way to provide permanent housing.''

Along with outreach, that view is more or less shared by experts across the field. The question of how to end homelessness, in one important way, has been answered for decades.

Banks knew this as a lawyer, and he knew this as commissioner. His career, however, seems to suggest a different question. If the people in charge -- mayors, commissioners, Banks himself -- have long known how to end homelessness, why haven't they?

The Covid-19 pandemic has renewed a sense of a nationwide homelessness crisis. Cities that had long treated informal ''tent villages'' as a public nuisance and a target for removal, especially in residential and business districts, began to sanction them as a solution to meet immediate need. San Francisco established its first one downtown, a block from City Hall, in spring 2020. In New York, homelessness gained renewed visibility during the pandemic as D.H.S. moved 10,000 people, largely single men, from dorm-style shelters in all corners of the city into empty hotel rooms concentrated largely in Manhattan, at a time when remote work and other Covid disruptions reduced most other kinds of life on the street. The decision worked as a safety measure -- the Covid rate in the shelter system was lower than the rate for the city over all -- but the increased presence of shelter occupants in neighborhoods where other residents were not used to seeing them gave many the impression of an emergency out of control.

It has also renewed outdated myths about what homelessness looks like. People may become homeless if they are evicted but also if they age out of foster care, leave prison or a nursing home without support or seek to escape domestic violence. Many live precariously for long periods before an unexpected change upsets the balance of their lives: a death in the family, the loss of a job, a new child. Nationally, the age when people face the highest risk of a shelter stay is infancy. At its peak in New York more than two-thirds of the people sleeping in the city's shelter system were families with children, and one in three families earned income. Homelessness in New York is, in large part, working families who return to a shelter at night.

In the absence of a comprehensive national effort to address homelessness, the responsibility falls to state and local governments. Shelter wait lists and limits on length of stay are not uncommon. Additionally, many shelters have rules that break up families, separating spouses from one another or sometimes a child from a parent. Others open beds only to whoever shows up first each night -- securing one can mean standing in a line that begins in the afternoon, rather than working or looking for a job. In California, a recent reform to bring people off the streets has been found to effectively force a choice between forfeiting many of their possessions for a shelter stay or keeping their things but facing arrest or citation by the police. Some places seem to have shifted their focus from emergency shelter to housing subsidies as a more permanent solution, although the average wait for a subsidy is more than two years.

Almost universally, the resources and authority to address homelessness are spread across different branches of city and state government. Some cities have several departments that provide housing. Others have separate agencies for housing, homelessness and the social services that can keep people in their homes, each with its own political and policy incentives. Very few policymakers with the power to coordinate legislation more broadly -- mayors, governors, members of Congress -- choose to focus on homelessness over other priorities. Many proposals, especially ones written in the urgency of a crisis, seem designed less to improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness than to provide shortcuts to quell a backlash, move homelessness out of the sight of other constituents or minimize a political cost. One of the simplest ways to describe homelessness is as the failure of every other social system a government can provide.

In 2014, Banks was appointed commissioner of the city's Human Resources Administration, which manages public benefits, including food stamps, Medicaid and cash assistance. Banks argued that the goal of the agency was, in addition to fighting poverty and income inequality, to prevent homelessness. (''I understand it's not always the mission that's been embraced previously,'' he said, when pressed by a member of the City Council.) Within two years, he became commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services as well, and soon incorporated the two agencies into the Department of Social Services. Altogether, D.S.S. has about 16,000 employees and a $12 billion budget, which makes it the largest social-services agency in any American city.

New York's homelessness services and shelter system were built by litigation, rather than legislation, a patchwork of narrow, nearly independent fixes to specific circumstances that it had been forced to address in court. In one of his appearances at the City Council as commissioner, Banks said that government officials acted as if they were faced with a temporary problem. ''Modern mass homelessness,'' Banks said, ''has been an emergency for 40 years.'' At D.S.S., he set out to create a total system, with each part aware of the others. It would be, essentially, the city's first.

The litigation that has defined New York's response to homelessness began in 1979, when a young lawyer named Robert Hayes filed a lawsuit that would lead to a right to shelter, but for men only. After Hayes won, New York resisted extending the right to shelter to women, and then to families, until it was sued again and again. ''Government never responds to human need,'' Hayes told me. ''Government responds to pressure. And that became our job, to create pressure.''

Around this time, Banks started working at Legal Aid, where he was assigned to the organization's four-person office on Staten Island. It was a neighborhood office, so the lawyers there handled whatever kinds of cases walked in the door. He has described his early days there as a version of ''My Cousin Vinny,'' a movie that he and his daughter can recite by heart. ''The office was in kind of a run-down building, typical at the time for Legal Aid,'' Banks said. ''If I was interviewing a tenant on a housing case, I'd have to ask about the conditions in their apartment. I would point to the ceiling and say, 'Is your ceiling better or worse than this one?'''

One day in 1982, a woman named Yvonne McCain walked into the Legal Aid office serving southern Brooklyn, looking for help with her public benefits. McCain and her four youngest children had been evicted earlier that year and spent two months ''doubled up'' at her disabled mother's two-room basement apartment in Harlem before she found what she thought would be a new apartment in Brooklyn, close to where her children went to school. When the apartment fell through, she asked the city for shelter and was eventually placed in the Martinique Hotel, in Midtown Manhattan, one of 11 privately operated ''welfare hotels'' that New York had begun to use for makeshift emergency housing.

McCain would later describe her first night at the Martinique as ''one of the worst nights of my life.'' She found the mattresses burned, ripped and stained with urine on both sides, and the windows jammed open; the two rooms she had been assigned were on the 11th floor. ''I stayed up all night crying,'' she later recalled, ''terrified that if I didn't watch them, one of my children might fall out a window.'' There was no heat or refrigeration and sometimes no running water. She put milk on the window ledge to keep it cold and hung a bag of food from a nail in the wall to protect it from mice and rats. She sponged the mattresses with disinfectant and, eventually, took in a stray cat to fight the rodents. Each morning, after accompanying her children on their commute to school in Brooklyn, McCain scoured newspaper listings and looked for affordable housing.

''At the time I didn't altogether know what the Martinique was like,'' Marcella Silverman, the Legal Aid lawyer who helped McCain find emergency housing, said. When she visited McCain's room she felt that she must be looking at a violation of the law. Soon, lawyers from Legal Aid became regular visitors to hotels and city intake offices, looking for other families in similar circumstances -- arbitrarily denied shelter, provided substandard emergency housing or given no notice of city decisions about their cases -- who might be willing to join McCain in a class-action lawsuit demanding a right to shelter for families. ''This was a practice case,'' Silverman said. ''We had to prove what the city's practices were. And the only way to prove a practice is to put before the court more and more people suffering the same harm.''

The right-to-shelter cases built New York City's shelter-and-services system in ways large and small. The city, essentially overnight, found itself with a legal obligation to house thousands of people and to provide minimum shelter standards that could be enforced by the court system. It tried to convert unused hospitals, schools and armories -- buildings that were large, empty and publicly owned. ''We just needed volume,'' said Bonnie Stone, then an assistant deputy administrator at the Human Resources Administration. ''Every day we were on the search for new places.'' Shelters were often opened with little notice, under the cover of night.

A family shelter that was opened briefly in an unused Bronx jail had to be closed after inspectors hired by Legal Aid found lead paint. In other shelters, Legal Aid found violations of fire and safety regulations or hired inspectors who found dangerous levels of asbestos, allowing Banks to file motions that forced the city to find safer quarters. The city continually missed deadlines that he had persuaded the court to impose, and court orders mandating a narrow, legalistic solution to one problem could generate scores of others. With each violation, Banks returned to court, seeking enforcement. By the mid-1990s, he was responsible for enforcing the city's compliance in the cases that Hayes brought as well, bringing every right-to-shelter claim under his purview.

Before long, city officials would make day-to-day decisions with an eye on the courtroom. ''The system before asked essentially one contentious question: Are you eligible for shelter or not?'' Linda Gibbs, then the D.H.S. commissioner, told reporters in 2004. ''Now, instead of hiring investigators, we are hiring staffers with social-services backgrounds. We assume families that come to us have a problem, and we ask, 'How can we help?''' Agency managers grew reluctant to analyze their own data, fearing that reports they produced internally would be subpoenaed by Legal Aid. A former D.H.S. commissioner told the public-policy scholar Thomas Main that when he was considering the job, a city lawyer asked him to be sure he really wanted it, ''because you're about to be named in over 70 lawsuits.''

Over the decades that he worked on the right to shelter, Banks came to know the system of shelters and services better than anyone else, in no small part because, directly or indirectly, it was built in response to what he persuaded the court to demand. By the time the McCain case was settled, in 2008, with a final judgment that permanently enshrined the right to shelter, a system that had barely served a few hundred people had become a city within the city, providing emergency housing for 35,000, and a body of law had been built block by block alongside it.

Thomas Crane, New York City's chief of general litigation, estimates that in nearly four decades as a city lawyer, he has spent more time on homelessness litigation than on anything else. Crane said that ''in the bad old days,'' they were in court ''every week or every other week, and when we weren't in court, we were writing papers to address the motions that were being made,'' he said. In one 18-month stretch, the city submitted more than 300,000 pages to court. ''Steve knew what data was out there, and he'd want to get his hands on it,'' Crane said. ''And we had a lot of dirty laundry.'' He added, ''They were driving us crazy.''

Six years after reaching the settlement, Crane was in a meeting on other city business when, he recalls, ''one of my colleagues who worked with me on homeless litigation burst into this office -- just really burst in, with other people here -- and said: 'You won't [expletive] believe it. Do you know who the new commissioner is?'''

Banks was the rare commissioner who had no previous experience working in government. Certainly no other agency head had made a career working against it. When he was a lawyer, staff members at one of D.H.S.'s intake offices had a running joke about posting Banks's photo behind the desk, like a food critic's in a restaurant kitchen, with a note to call management if he showed up. In the courtroom, it was easy to think that city officials' hardheadedness was all that stood between Banks and the solutions to his clients' problems.

The responsibility for finding open beds fell to a small office within D.H.S. called Housing Emergency Referral Operations, known inside the agency as HERO. HERO ran 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and may be the place inside D.H.S. that felt the right to shelter most acutely. ''The office is working to forecast how much capacity is likely to be needed,'' Banks explained. ''Is there enough? Who is moving out? Where are they moving out from?'' Another D.H.S. staff member who was not authorized to speak on the record described it more bluntly. ''They make the math work,'' he said. ''It was a real thing -- it's not theoretical anymore. They got to show Banks what he had wrought.''

One of the first things Banks learned was that three people had to leave shelter for the city's count, a number known as the census, to drop by one. This indicated not only an unrelenting demand for housing but also a system in near-constant motion. In 2018, when the annual census reached a record high -- an average of 60,000 people per night -- more than 132,000 people spent at least one night in shelter over the course of a year, enough for every bed in the system to turn over. The last thing Banks wanted was to be sued for violating the right to shelter, but the numbers were bleak. ''He never mentioned it,'' a HERO employee who worked closely with Banks at the time but was not authorized to speak on the record, said, ''but if it was me, that's what I'd be thinking, right?''

When Banks started, HERO's day began at 6 or 7 a.m. with a review of remaining vacancies. HERO staff members then spent business hours making calls and visits to shelters and, often, cold-calling hotels for extra rooms. Early on, they were sometimes thwarted by disorganization elsewhere in the agency: They might hear from a shelter operator that had a pocket of open rooms but needed another D.H.S. office to approve its budget before they could be released. The office is legally mandated to place everyone by 4 a.m. -- the next day's first report on new shelter applications arrives just four hours later -- and under Banks, they met their deadline every night, but in his first year sometimes not by much. ''There were many days where the outsider looking in would think, Oh, today is going to be the day where we just don't make it,'' the HERO staff member said. ''I'm sure many nights the commissioner was humbled by his nerves, watching it play out.''

It became clear to Banks that the shelter system should work locally rather than as a triage operation crisscrossing the city. ''If I come from the Bronx and I work in the Bronx or my kids go to school there, or if I have health care needs there, or if my house of worship is there, what can the agency do to say I'm going to be sheltered as close as possible to those anchors of life?'' Banks said. Shortly after he became commissioner, D.S.S. began to work with the City Council member Antonio Reynoso to open a pilot shelter that would prioritize people who lived nearby. Over the summer, the agency made plans for others, including one in Maspeth, a ***working-class*** community in western Queens. The neighborhood had long been majority white, but in recent years that majority became thinner and thinner. Maspeth was the first place where the neighbors called a large town-hall meeting to oppose a proposed shelter. They seemed unable to imagine that New York's homeless residents came from every community district in the city, including theirs.

Residents held a meeting at the gymnasium of a Maspeth high school. The Queens Ledger reported that the gymnasium could hold about 750 people and that turnout surpassed 1,700. Banks stood behind a lectern at one end of the room, facing rows of people sitting in folding chairs. He was not received warmly.

''To the people yelling at me in the front row, saying they should go back to East New York, I want to just emphasize again -- ''

The crowd interrupted with cheers.

'' -- I want to just emphasize again that there are 243 of your neighbors in shelters -- ''

The crowd interrupted with boos.

Later that fall, protesters marched in front of Banks's house four times, and he received a threatening phone call from a woman who declined to identify herself, mentioned his children by name and asked why he hadn't picked up his newspaper the previous weekend. She said he would be hearing from her again. The Police Department instructed him to stop taking the subway to work. ''People ask me, 'You have a listed phone number?''' Banks said. ''I thought that was part of what I was supposed to do, be accessible.'' By mid-October, the landlord for the proposed shelter had pulled out.

Banks took two lessons from Maspeth. In neighborhoods that are likely to be hostile to new shelters, the agency no longer provided wide notice until they had a finalized agreement with the landlord. And Banks began to send an annual request to every community board and elected official in the city, asking for promising locations in their districts. ''Some of them have been extraordinary partners,'' Banks said. ''But in other communities it doesn't happen.'' Eric Ulrich, a former City Council member from a district in southern Queens -- ''He came to a protest at my house,'' Banks noted -- tried to submit a location in the Bronx. ''And when we open a shelter in a community like that, we might hear that there wasn't any consultation. But we can say, 'Well, wait a minute, we asked.''' By the end of 2021, more than 50 borough-based shelters had opened.

From the start, Banks began to put together things he hadn't been able to win as a lawyer. He came into office shortly after the chief judge of New York's highest court, Jonathan Lippman, convened a task force to investigate access to legal services in civil court. What it found was so stark -- in New York City eviction cases, 99 percent of tenants appeared without a lawyer, while only 4 percent of landlords did -- that the city's housing courts began to gain a reputation as a collection-and-eviction service for landlords. ''Ever since Gideon v. Wainwright, the seminal case on criminal legal representation, if your liberty is at stake, you have a right to a lawyer,'' Lippman said. But Gideon applies to criminal cases only, not to civil litigation, like evictions. And if you can't make your rent, it's very unlikely you can pay for a lawyer. ''Who do you think wins when one side's got a lawyer and the other side doesn't?'' Banks asked.

Plenty of lawyers have argued for a right to counsel in housing court. Banks himself couldn't get it to stick while at Legal Aid. But a commissioner who wants to make it a priority, he said, can accomplish things that are much harder to do on the outside. Banks created a pilot program, targeted by ZIP code, that provided counsel in housing court for any person who needed it. Some estimates put the cost of a full program at $200 million a year or more; the funding for Banks's pilot began at $8 million. The idea of a citywide program had support from a growing group of advocates and members of the City Council, but it was received with less enthusiasm in the executive branch. (A spokesperson for the de Blasio administration said that the mayor and Banks worked closely throughout this project to make sure it had the funding and resources to be effective.) During a City Council committee hearing, Letitia James, then the city's public advocate, relayed a conversation with someone she suggested was a city representative, who told her the city ''should basically only give a right to counsel to individuals who have a likelihood of success.'' James left unsaid how the city might evaluate that likelihood.

''Steve was the guy who had to get it across to the administration that you can make this work from a fiscal perspective,'' Lippman said. ''Little by little, he was able to wear the mayor down.'' In 2017, de Blasio signed a law that expanded Banks's program and imposed a deadline to reach every low-income tenant in the city by mid-2022. Lippman called it ''the first really, truly, civil Gideon piece of legislation'' in the country. It will likely have the furthest reach of anything Banks has done.

By the arrival of the pandemic, evictions in the city had dropped by more than 40 percent, and the dynamic of the courtroom had changed in other, indirect ways. Some landlords will stop pursuing certain kinds of evictions, Banks said, once they know there's a lawyer on the other side. ''There's a kind of case that the landlord would never be able to win, because it had no merit,'' he said. ''But they were able to win with an unrepresented tenant.''

In 2020, the court system decided to hold all hearings virtually, and evictions slowed because of the statewide eviction moratorium. But they never entirely stopped. ''So instead of the classic housing court, with thousands of cases on the calendar each day throughout the city, we had a system limited to the number of conferences the 50 judges can do over the internet,'' Banks said. ''And it turns out you can only do about 10 conferences a day, per judge. We could handle all of those.'' As the city began to reopen later that year, the program soon expanded fully. The right to counsel had effectively arrived in housing court two years early.

For decades, the city's response to homelessness had often been built around the idea, stated or not, that the right to shelter meant the shelter system could only grow and grow, regardless of cost, of the strain on other resources and of the number of qualified service providers. When previous administrations fought Banks, that was the idea of the future they were trying to refute.

Over Banks's tenure, a series of investigations repeatedly pointed to the work still to be done. Tenants of a Bronx shelter company accused the chief executive of sexual assault or offering better living conditions in exchange for sex, and employees spoke of a pattern of sexual harassment and assault. A Queens-based nonprofit submitted invoices for services that the city could find no evidence it had provided. Another hired a security company founded by one of its executives as its largest subcontractor. (Many of the executives and providers denied wrongdoing.) Police Department data seemed to dispute D.S.S. safety reports. Several reports documented shelters with vermin and mold, and accounts of violence deterred people from leaving the street.

This fall, The New York Times published an investigation into CORE Services Group, which operated several city shelters, that provided evidence of widespread financial improprieties. The Times noted that D.S.S. had been aware of many of the violations; it also noted that the agency continued to work with the organization after the violations surfaced. The investigation's sharpest critique may have been one of its most subtle: Five people, identified only as current or former D.S.S. officials, told the paper that the city was hesitant to closely scrutinize the finances of nonprofit groups because the immense need for shelter and the legal obligation to provide it left the department with virtually nowhere else to turn.

''Among the things that keep me up at night is the concern that the pace of change isn't fast enough,'' Banks told me in October. ''If CORE or any other organization does not agree to reforms that we are demanding, we will replace them. But we can't replace them by just shutting their doors. We have to find alternate providers, and that takes time.'' (The city cut ties with CORE the following month; the chief executive denies any wrongdoing and a spokesman for CORE disputes the city's account of how their contract ended.) ''I understand that's unsatisfying to the public, because there is a sense that action should happen immediately,'' Banks said. But the risk of tossing people onto the street is unacceptable.

Despite decades of work to ensure shelter, Banks sees it as necessary but insufficient, an ''emergency-room response'' to homelessness. ''The ultimate tool that D.S.S. has to address homelessness is to provide people stability,'' he said, to keep them from becoming homeless in the first place. ''Food assistance, legal services, rent arrears -- even in a good shelter, clients are going through the trauma of losing their home.''

From the start, he was determined to try to help keep residents in their homes. When Banks began at the Human Resources Administration, the city had stopped providing rental assistance entirely. He restarted it. He worked with the city's Department of Education to identify students whose families were on the verge of homelessness, living with friends or relatives. He moved crisis-intervention workers into neglected communities. He reduced administrative barriers to other public benefits and made them available online for the first time.

It was not enough. D.S.S. is a social-services agency; the tools it has are social-service tools. Banks combed the city charter to find a passage that would give D.S.S. the legal authority to build housing; he couldn't find it.

New York has lost roughly 150,000 rent-regulated apartments over the past 25 years, but the city's affordable housing didn't simply disappear -- it was replaced. ''The shelter system seems to me to be part of the housing market in New York City -- it's not like some add-on,'' Kim Hopper, an anthropologist and one of New York City's earliest homelessness advocates, said. ''And I don't see how you get around the problem of affordability without producing affordable housing.''

The city's housing initiatives are assigned to a separate department, Housing Preservation and Development, with its own directives, its own commissioner and its own politics. It was the lead agency of the city's housing plan. The agency began many of its projects with a set number of apartments put aside for people leaving shelter, but by the time negotiations between the city and developers were finalized, these units often vanished. In 2017, the agency's commissioner at the time testified to the City Council that the agency is ''often forced to reduce or eliminate homeless set-asides to garner support for our projects.''

After a few years in office, when Banks looked at the shelter census, he saw a number that had stopped rising but that he couldn't get to drop. Social-service tools could keep more people from needing shelter, but there was hardly anywhere for the people already in shelter to go. Banks began to question why he had come into government. Maybe keeping the census essentially flat was the best D.S.S. could do.

Banks spoke with Lippman, the former chief judge of New York, who had become a kind of mentor and confidant. Banks consulted him before he decided to leave Legal Aid, and Banks approached him again. ''He came to me and said maybe I can't make the kind of change that I want to,'' Lippman said. ''Maybe I have to get out of here.'' The question was whether Banks could hold onto his beliefs while holding onto his job. ''And my advice to him,'' Lippmann said, ''was get the tools you need or get out.''

''He only stayed because the mayor promised him things that would help,'' Lippman said. Without drawing much attention, parts of Banks's social-services agency began to behave like a housing department. D.S.S. pieced together a kind of housing plan outside the city's official housing plan, focused entirely on homelessness. The agency developed teams to investigate and prosecute landlords who discriminate against tenants paying with city vouchers. Banks demanded that landlords of apartments paid for with city public assistance make repairs or address unacceptable conditions. If they didn't, he withheld payment to them or threatened to, which was often as effective, making D.S.S. an enforcer of the city's housing code.

Part of D.S.S.'s portfolio was the ''cluster program'': thousands of apartments the city rented in a series of run-down buildings for use as small-scale shelters, despite substandard maintenance and poor access to services. The city relied on the program for decades, but the cluster program had arguably the worst shelters in the system; Banks had always wanted to end it. ''When I looked at it, I thought, OK, we want to end the program, we want to get clients into permanent housing and we want to preserve permanent affordability of that housing,'' Banks said. ''Why isn't that a public purpose that's suitable for eminent domain?''

Eminent domain is the ability of the government to take private property, at a fair price, and convert it for public use. ''Government, in general, uses eminent domain all the time,'' Banks said. ''How did they create the railroads? How did they create the subways?'' Banks threatened to take the clusters, and the landlords decided they didn't want to test his argument in court. D.S.S. arranged for nonprofit housing organizations to buy and convert 45 cluster buildings, totaling more than 1,700 apartments, for use as permanent affordable housing. Nearly every transaction, by turning what had been a shelter unit into an affordable apartment, simultaneously reduced the number of people in shelter and increased the city's affordable-housing stock. In the converted buildings, the private, market-rate units became permanent affordable housing, too.

The threat of eminent domain, especially from a social-services agency, is widely considered an extremely aggressive tactic. A covert housing program assembled outside the direction of the housing agency is essentially unheard-of. In part, Banks found his way to them out of desperation and creativity, and a conclusion that even prevention and shelter together were falling short.

Another reason might be that the city's affordable-housing plan seemed to largely fail its homeless people. The city typically creates affordable housing in two ways: development and preservation. Development finances the construction of new buildings; preservation ensures that existing affordable housing does not disappear. The de Blasio administration's flagship plan, called Housing New York, promised 200,000 units of affordable housing by the end of 2021. In December, the city announced that it had reached that goal, calling it a signal success. According to Housing Preservation and Development data, however, it can take as long as four years from the time a new building is financed until it is built and occupied. The wait can be even longer for existing housing that the plan preserves: Those apartments are not available to new occupants until the current tenants leave. As of mid-2021, the city listed only one number for units -- approximately 16,000 -- that it had set aside for people exiting shelter. About half those units are supportive housing, available only to people with specific medical or social-service needs. The agency would not provide a more detailed count of the remaining ''homeless set-aside'' units, but according to internal agency data obtained by the Coalition for the Homeless, the number of those units ''financed'' by the spring of 2021 was fewer than 3,000. Even fewer than that, presumably, had been built.

Housing Preservation and Development says it does not have complete data on how many people the department has moved from shelter, though it does track how many units it has filled. As of mid-2021, excluding supportive housing, whose placement is largely determined by D.S.S., that number was 5,133. The agency estimates this to be housing for ''nearly 12,000 people.''

D.S.S. was left to fill the gap, without the tools of Housing Preservation and Development. Over the same period, D.S.S. found post-shelter affordable housing for more than 144,000 people. D.S.S. couldn't build permanent affordable housing to bring New Yorkers out of homelessness, but Banks created more of it than anyone else, including the housing department.

New mayors like to pick their own deputies, and no one wants an adversary for a partner. Last summer, though, after Eric Adams won the Democratic primary, he told the local news channel PIX11 that he was not planning to replace every commissioner and mentioned Banks's work. When Adams won the election, a person ''close to the Adams campaign and transition'' told the news organization City Limits that it was a ''done deal'' that Banks would continue in his role. ''Even if you don't like him, you have to keep him on,'' the person said. (The Adams administration and Banks declined to comment.) But Banks decided to get out. In November he announced that he would lead the pro bono practice at the law firm Paul, Weiss, which litigates public-interest cases nationwide. Adams promoted the administrator of the Human Resources Administration, Gary Jenkins, who had worked for Banks.

The mayors that Banks fought at Legal Aid would argue that they couldn't end homelessness without a state and federal government willing to help. They may have been right in a very narrow sense, but they were wrong where it counted. ''If you want to end homelessness, you need the other two levels of government working with you rather than against you,'' Banks said. ''But that doesn't let the city off the hook.'' The de Blasio administration was the first in 40 years to have fewer people in shelter on its last day than on its first. ''We've shown what the city can do with a social-service response,'' Banks said. He has also shown, he says, how beholden the Department of Social Services is to other systems that create the need for shelter. The cost of their failures appear in the shelter budget.

''When we brought McCain,'' Banks said, referring to the right-to-shelter case he argued for nearly three decades, ''we couldn't make a claim for permanent housing because all of the case law said there wasn't a right to permanent housing.'' The right to shelter was the limit to what the law would allow. The language in the state constitution that anchors it is vague -- it says little more than that ''the aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns, and shall be provided by the state'' -- and had lay dormant for nearly 50 years. ''What brought it to life,'' Banks said, ''was modern mass homelessness.'' New Yorkers were freezing to death in the streets or losing limbs to hypothermia, and Banks and his colleagues thought that the social circumstances should change the way that the courts interpreted the law. Their work, eventually, showed that they were right.

Over the past two years, our social circumstances have been reordered again. A pandemic still not under control has been shown to spread more rapidly in overcrowded housing. ''Is that not a 'public concern'?'' Banks asked. Additionally, he said, ''federal law already provides a right to housing assistance -- if you own your home.'' There are tax deductions available to mortgage holders and a suite of subsidies open to homeowners. The path to prosperity in America -- to the kind of wealth that can be passed from one generation to the next -- runs through housing, and for the bulk of the last century, it also ran through discriminatory policies, like redlining and segregation, that governed homeownership. This means it has also been a way for intergenerational wealth to be denied. Yet the tax code continues to reward homeowners and ignore renters. ''We're at a moment of racial reckoning,'' Banks said. ''Isn't there an argument to be made that now is the time to undo the impact of current law that provides a right to housing assistance if you own your home, but not if you don't?''

The moral argument for a right to housing, cynics might say, remains naïve; it has always been too idealistic to catch on widely. But the grounds for a legal argument may have just taken shape, and Banks has made a career of moral arguments spoken through the language of the law.

''Let me put it this way,'' Banks said. ''I look forward to returning to the practice of law, and it would be a great case to bring.''

Alex Carp is a research editor for the magazine. He has written for The New Yorker, The New York Review of Books online and The Believer. Ahmed Gaber is a photographer who works to capture stories of everyday people and experiences. Originally working in his homeland, Egypt, he now lives and works in New York.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/02/magazine/steven-banks-homelessness.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/02/magazine/steven-banks-homelessness.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (MM40-MM41)

STEVEN BANKS DURING AN OVERNIGHT OUTREACH PROGRAM ON THE SUBWAY IN DECEMBER. (MM42-MM43)

TROY MILLS, 54, AT A SINGLE-ADULTS SHELTER IN THE BRONX WHERE HE HAS BEEN LIVING FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AHMED GABER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM44-MM45)

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[***10 New Books We Recommend This Week; Editors’ Choice***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y51-8041-DXY4-X2F2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1423 words

**Highlight:** Suggested reading from critics and editors at The New York Times.

**Body**

Crime stories hold our attention for a reason — the promise of plot, the chance of violence, the high moral stakes and stark challenges to social norms, or sometimes just the intellectual fun of trying to solve a good mystery. We bring you a host of such stories this week, both in fiction and in non. The true stuff first: Sanam Maher’s “A Woman Like Her” delves into the phenomenon of honor killings through the story of a Pakistani social media star who was strangled for pushing her culture’s boundaries, while Emma Copley Eisenberg’s “The Third Rainbow Girl” looks at the way a small Appalachian town continues to be haunted by a double murder that took place there decades ago. In fiction, meanwhile, there’s a missing child in India (“Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line”), a White House intern who uncovers a plot to assassinate the president (“Deep State”), a psychiatrist’s creepy new patient (“Mr. Nobody”) and the latest entry in Joe Ide’s IQ series of detective novels (“Hi Five”).

Outside the world of crime, the stakes are just as high — or even higher, in the case of “The Bomb,” Fred Kaplan’s engaging new history of nuclear strategy and warfare. Back to fiction, our other recommendations this week include a story collection about women at various stages of life (“Adults and Other Children”), a novel about a young Englishwoman questioning her place in the world (“Saltwater”) and a novel about an Indian woman who discovers a family she never knew she had (“Small Days and Nights”).

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[*A WOMAN LIKE HER: The Story Behind the Honor Killing of a Social Media Star*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Sanam Maher. (Melville House, $27.99.) Qandeel Baloch was called “Pakistan’s Kim Kardashian,” the country’s first social media star — a figure of intense fascination and outrage, adored and reviled for posting videos of herself half undressed, mocking mullahs and promising to perform a striptease for her viewers if Pakistan’s cricket team won a match. In 2016, the youngest of her six brothers strangled her while she slept, in a so-called honor killing. She was 26. Sanam Maher’s books about Baloch’s life and death is an “exemplary work of investigative journalism,” our critic Parul Sehgal writes. “Baloch cannot speak for herself, and Maher allows her to remain elusive, a figure who fashioned her public face out of truth, yearning and exaggeration, and who possessed a dogged insistence on living her life on her own terms.”

[*DJINN PATROL ON THE PURPLE LINE*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Deepa Anappara. (Random House, $27.) This first novel by an Indian journalist probes the secrets of a big-city shantytown as a 9-year-old boy tries to solve the mystery of a classmate’s disappearance. Anappara impressively inhabits the inner worlds of children lost to their families, and of others who escape by a thread. Our reviewer, Lorraine Adams, calls the protagonist “a boy vivid in his humanity, one whose voice somersaults on the page,” and praises the book’s prose and pacing: “Rich with easy joy, Anappara’s writing announces the arrival of a literary supernova,” Adams writes. “If you begin reading the book in the morning, don’t expect to get anything done for the rest of the day.”

[*SALTWATER*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Jessica Andrews. (Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux, $26.) The narrator of Andrews’s first novel is a university graduate from the ***working class***, holed up in an Irish cottage, trying to figure out her place in the wider world. Andrews’s writing, delivered in short fragments, is “transportingly voluptuous, conjuring tastes and smells and sounds like her literary godmother, Edna O’Brien,” Penelope Green writes in her review. “What makes her novel sing is its universal themes: how a young woman tries to make sense of her world, and how she grows up.”

[*THE BOMB: Presidents, Generals, and the Secret History of Nuclear War*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Fred Kaplan. (Simon &amp; Schuster, $30.) Kaplan provides a rich, and surprisingly entertaining, history of how nuclear weapons and strategy have shaped the United States military and also the country’s foreign policy. “Nuclear strategy is an exercise in absurdity that pushes against every moral boundary but that has likely contributed to the relative safety and stability of the contemporary era, during which nuclear weapons have proliferated but major war has all but vanished,” our reviewer, Justin Vogt, writes. “Kaplan has a gift for elucidating abstract concepts, cutting through national security jargon and showing how leaders confront (or avoid) dilemmas.”

[*THE THIRD RAINBOW GIRL: The Long Life of a Double Murder in Appalachia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Emma Copley Eisenberg. (Hachette, $27.) Decades after two young women were murdered there, a small town continues to grapple with the crime. This evocative and elegantly paced examination of the murders takes a prism-like view. The book “is not just a masterly examination of a brutal unsolved crime, which leads us through many surprising twists and turns and a final revelation about who the real killer might be,” Melissa Del Bosque writes in her review. “It’s also an unflinching interrogation of what it means to be female in a society marred by misogyny, where women hitchhiking alone are harshly judged, even blamed for their own murders.”

[*HI FIVE*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Joe Ide. (Mulholland, $27.) In South Central Los Angeles, a guy nicknamed IQ — who has a knack for solving the sorts of crimes that would be inconvenient to bring to the attention of the police — takes a case from a particularly loathsome arms dealer who wants to prove that his daughter is innocent of murder. This book, the fourth in a series, crackles with life. In a roundup of recent thrillers, Sarah Lyall calls it a “highly diverting book” with “real truths hidden in the entertainment,” and says that readers should “savor the freshness, vividness and ingenuity of the author’s prose.”

[*MR. NOBODY*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Catherine Steadman. (Ballantine, $27.) In this tricky psychological thriller, with a story that corkscrews and somersaults, the neuropsychiatrist Emma Lewis finds herself treating a dangerous patient who has lost his memory — or has he? He seems to know exactly who she is. “It’s a joy to encounter a suspenseful book whose turns lurk, rather than lumber, around the corner,” Sarah Lyall writers in her thrillers roundup. “Not everything rings true, but it all makes a kind of warped sense. Past mysteries haunt the present in ways that are both startling and claustrophobic. The patient’s real story, when Emma finally figures it out, is even weirder than you might imagine.”

[*DEEP STATE*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Chris Hauty. (Atria, $27.) An exceedingly capable White House intern, fresh out of the Army, stumbles on a plan to assassinate the president that involves the C.I.A. director, a senator and several titans of finance and industry. “The bodies pile up, as do the wry asides about what is and what is not good for the country,” Sarah Lyall writes, reviewing the book alongside other thrillers. The protagonist “is one of those preternaturally talented solo operatives skilled in every endeavor, from her physical stamina to her administrative competence to her Jason Bourne-like cool in the face of near-death experiences. She also figures in one of the more surprising double-reverse plot twists I have seen in some time.”

[*SMALL DAYS AND NIGHTS*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Tishani Doshi. (Norton, $25.95.) An Indian poet’s novel sends an unhappy expat home to South India to start a new life with a sister she never knew she had. The woman who studiously refused to have children with her husband now becomes a full-time caregiver. “As the title suggests, the story builds, one daily routine, one daily detail at a time. But Doshi treats this everydayness like the beach on which Grace lives: as a back-and-forth proposition, constantly in motion, always shifting slightly,” Aditi Sriram writes in her review. “Impressively, her focus never wavers. … Doshi keeps the pendulum swinging until the very last page.”

[*ADULTS AND OTHER CHILDREN: Stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review-woman-like-her-qandeel-baloch-sanam-maher.html), by Miriam Cohen. (Ig, paper, $16.95.) In 14 linked stories, Cohen tracks the same four women at different points in their lives, creating an acute portrayal of failed relationships and struggles to transcend social norms. “It’s more disconcerting than you might expect to re-encounter as an adult a character you’ve previously met in her childhood,” Maya Chung writes, reviewing the book with other debut story collections. “But unlike in a classic bildungsroman, here, much of the story line in between is missing; the result is curious, sometimes very dark — and often delightful.”

PHOTOS

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[***What to Know About Montessori Preschools***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YPK-0WG1-DXY4-X08B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Melinda Wenner Moyer

**Highlight:** They’re popular, but how do they differ from conventional nursery schools?

**Body**

They’re popular, but how do they differ from conventional nursery schools?

This story was originally published on Aug. 20, 2019 in NYT Parenting.

The first time I walked into a Montessori preschool classroom six years ago, I thought to myself, what is this sorcery? The materials were beautiful but unfamiliar; the room seemed eerily calm considering it held so many 3-year-olds; and the terms the teachers used were new and confusing to me. They’re not lessons or activities, they’re “work”; and what, pray tell, was that pink tower thing everyone kept talking about?

Now that both of my kids have gone through Montessori preschools, I have a much better understanding of how they work. That’s not to say the philosophy is easy to wrap one’s head around — and, of course, every school is different. But if you’re considering Montessori preschools for your child, or you just want to learn more about them, here are some basics about the history of the philosophy, how well kids learn in Montessori preschools, and what parents should look for — and avoid — if they’re going the Montessori route.

Montessori’s roots

The schools are named after Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician born in 1870, who was fascinated by children and closely observed them. After years of doing so, she developed a theory of human development based on the idea that children instinctively know what they need to learn, and that, when they are surrounded by the right hands-on materials, they can educate themselves independently. “She took this notion that deep inside, we know what we need for our development,” explained Angeline Lillard, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist at the University of Virginia who studies Montessori education. Another Montessorian idea is that kids learn by practicing the kinds of “real” activities they see adults doing. For example, in her Montessori classroom my daughter particularly loved pouring water from a teapot into cups.

In 1907, Dr. Montessori [*opened a school*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf) based on these theories in the ***working-class*** Rome neighborhood of San Lorenzo, for children aged 3 to 6. In it, children learned at their own pace, following their own interests, using materials that Dr. Montessori had specially prepared for her classrooms. She allowed the children to have long, uninterrupted work cycles in which they could spend as much time as they wanted on a particular activity — what she called “work” — and then move on to a new choice when they had finished.

Dr. Montessori’s school was extremely successful, so she started more, and soon Montessori schools began appearing in other parts of Europe as well as the United States.

The Montessori classroom

Montessori preschool classrooms usually look quite different from “traditional” preschool classrooms. For one thing, kids ages 3 to 6 all work in the same room, so the younger ones can learn from their elders and the older children can develop a sense of leadership and authority. (When children go through Montessori preschools, they stay with the same teacher over the three years.)

The classrooms also use specifically designed Montessori materials, so you probably won’t see Lego bricks and dress-up corners. (More on that later.) And although children might do certain activities as a large group, they tend to work alone or in very small groups. “Montessori is all about the child — meeting the child where his or her needs are, and having an environment prepared for the child so they can be successful independently and have that opportunity to concentrate on what they need to,” said Hilary Green, director of the Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies in Silver Spring, Md.

How well Montessori kids learn

Research on preschool education can be hard to conduct and interpret, because kids who go to different preschools may differ in various ways, such as by socioeconomic status, which itself affects academic achievement. To get around these differences, in a 2017 [*study*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf), Dr. Lillard and her colleagues compared educational outcomes among 141 preschoolers who had been randomly chosen via lottery to attend either a Montessori preschool or a traditional preschool. The two groups weren’t academically any different when they started school, but by the end of the three-year study, the kids who had gone through Montessori preschools were more academically advanced and had better social skills than those who went to a traditional school. The Montessori students also reported enjoying school more.

What about kids with special needs, sensory processing issues or conditions such as attention deficit disorder? Some parents have told me they felt Montessori wasn’t a good fit for their kids with learning or behavioral differences. But Dr. Lillard said that Montessori preschools can [*work well*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf) for such students. “Montessori, when it’s done right, adjusts to every child as an individual,” she said. “Every child can learn in their own pace, in their own way.” But it’s crucial to have responsive teachers, Dr. Lillard said, who can help these children understand their needs. Some especially energetic kids, for instance, might need to take regular breaks, and good teachers can help students recognize when they need them and what kind of breaks help them the most.

Montessori variations

It’s important to keep in mind that schools can call themselves “Montessori” even if they aren’t. “Anybody can have a picture of a pink tower and call itself Montessori and there’s no recourse for that,” said Paige Bray, Ed.D., director of the Center for Montessori Studies at the University of Hartford. (The [*pink tower*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf), if you are wondering, is a sensory-based Montessori work that involves stacking pink cubes of different sizes.)

Some schools might use Montessori materials and approaches but supplement them with more traditionally American materials or classes; my kids’ preschool, for instance, incorporated music, art and Spanish classes. Montessori scholars disagree about just how strictly today’s preschools should adhere to Dr. Montessori’s original principles. The [*American Montessori Society*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf), a non-profit organization based in New York City, embraces a more modern, supplemented approach. “Things have changed, and there are some new modern things out there that we have access to that weren’t available when she was doing this work,” said Green, who serves on the society’s board of directors. On the other hand, the [*Association Montessori Internationale*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf), which was founded by Dr. Montessori and is now based in Amsterdam, believes that the schools should adhere closely to her original ideas, in part because they align with unchanging principles of child development.

Some research suggests that the more classic, A.M.I.-aligned Montessori schools are the most academically effective. In a 2012 [*study*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf), Dr. Lillard compared academic outcomes among kids who went to classic Montessori preschools, supplemented Montessori preschools and more traditional high-quality preschools. (The schools weren’t determined by lottery, but Dr. Lillard tried to match students according to socioeconomic status and other factors.) Those in the classic Montessori preschools, she found, made the biggest gains in math, reading, vocabulary and social problem-solving over the course of the school year. Those in the supplemented and traditional preschools fared about the same as one another.

Montessori tuition varies significantly from school to school, depending on location and whether the program is traditional or supplemented (which can require more teachers, and often a higher cost). The Montessori School of Peoria in Illinois, for example, is $6,970 per year for a full-day program, whereas the Kingsley Montessori School in Boston is $30,400. The school day can also vary, but typically starts at 8 or 9 a.m., and goes to noon, for a half day, or 3 p.m., for a full day.

What to look for — and avoid

How do you know if the preschool you’re considering for your child is truly a Montessori school? And how can you discern between classic and supplemented curricula? One of the key trademarks of the Montessori method is the mixed-age classroom, so no matter what, if it’s Montessori, you should see kids aged 3 to 6 grouped together. Montessori schools should also have a three-hour block in the morning in which students work uninterrupted with Montessori materials. (If the school you’re looking at adheres to these tenets but also lets kids use toys, Lego bricks or other non-Montessori materials, then it may be a supplemented Montessori school.) It’s also important, Green says, for Montessori teachers to have credentials from a program that has been accredited by the [*Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf).

Ultimately, whether it’s classic or supplemented Montessori, or not Montessori at all, the best preschool for your child is one that feels good and right. Do the students seem happy and relaxed? Does the classroom atmosphere feel positive and conducive to learning, and do the teachers seem warm and responsive? Parenting so often requires trusting your gut — and finding the right preschool for your kid should tap into those instincts, too.

[For more on early childhood education, read about the [*Waldorf method*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf),[*forest schools*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf), and the [*Reggio Emilia method*](https://amiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/amiusa-maria-montessori-biography2.pdf).]

Melinda Wenner Moyer is a mom of two and a science journalist who writes for Slate, Mother Jones, Scientific American and O, The Oprah Magazine, among other publications.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Angie Wang FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Watch These 12 Underseen Indie Movies on Hulu***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YMD-XRP1-JBG3-6205-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The streaming service has become a reliable destination for independent films. Here are some of our favorites.

**Body**

The streaming service has become a reliable destination for independent films. Here are some of our favorites.

Outside of big cities like New York and Los Angeles, many moviegoers don’t have access to great independent films until they reach home video, and even those who can see them in theaters don’t always take advantage. Hulu has become a steady destination for films from quality distributors like Neon, Magnolia and Bleecker Street; these are 12 titles the streamer is currently carrying that deserve to find an audience.

‘The Art of Self-Defense’ (2019)

After getting assaulted in his neighborhood, an ineffectual accountant (Jesse Eisenberg) starts taking karate classes at a strip-mall dojo in this dark comedy, which gets darker by the minute as the dojo’s violent, alpha-male culture starts to reveal itself. The most obvious point of comparison for “The Art of Self-Defense” is “Fight Club,” another film about a rogue visionary who builds a philosophy around brutal masculinity. The Brad Pitt role here belongs to an inspired Alessandro Nivola, a sensei who teaches his students to listen to death metal music, kick with their fists and commit the occasional crime after hours.

‘Beach Rats’ (2017)

Before wowing Sundance earlier this year with the drama “Never Rarely Sometimes Always,” the writer and director Eliza Hittman explored the secret desires of a young man in a hypermasculine environment in this insightful and dreamily realized character piece. Harris Dickinson stars as a Brooklyn teenager who has a girlfriend (Madeline Weinstein) but trolls for older male sexual partners online, carefully keeping this information from his friends while telling himself he’s neither gay nor bisexual. “Beach Rats” sounds adjacent to “Moonlight,” but it has more in common with the specific New York cultural dynamics of “Saturday Night Fever,” another film about thrill-seekers who run in packs, always looking for an escape from their dead-end lives.

‘Golden Exits’ (2018)

The prolific writer-director Alex Ross Perry has a reputation for high-toned misanthropy and emotional distress, with credits that include the literary comedy “Listen Up Philip,” the ’70s-style psychodrama “Queen of Earth” and the musical meltdown “Her Smell.” But in the middle of that run, Perry turned down the volume for “Golden Exits,” an ensemble piece about midlife crisis starring Emily Browning as a 25-year-old from Australia who destabilizes the lives of two different Brooklyn families. Perry keeps the conflict to a minimum, especially by his standards, leaving the subtle anomie to a great cast, including Adam Horowitz, Mary-Louise Parker, Jason Schwartzman, Analeigh Tipton and Chloë Sevigny.

‘Knives and Skin’ (2019)

Wearing its many influences on its sleeve, Jennifer Reeder’s candy-colored slice of life movie draws from cult favorites like “Repo Man,” “Suspiria,” “Heathers” and the films of John Hughes. It’s something of a feminist twist on “Twin Peaks,” spinning out from the disappearance of teenage girl. Reeder does give the audience a glimpse of what happened to her Laura Palmer type, who went missing after denying a jock a sexual favor, but she’s equally compelled by what it means to her mother (Marika Engelhardt), a high-school choir teacher, and classmates who are embroiled in their own secret lives. “Knives and Skin” doesn’t hold together perfectly, but Reeder imagines a Midwest town unlike any other and takes a particularly keen interest in how its girls interact under strange and terrifying circumstances.

‘Little Woods’ (2019)

The North Dakota border town of Nia DaCosta’s “Little Woods” is like a ***working-class*** variation on the rural Ozarks in “Winter’s Bone,” with more jobs available in construction, perhaps, but a population equally hooked on opioids. Tessa Thompson plays a reformed drug runner who’s late in her probation and eyeing an opportunity for legitimate work in Spokane, Wash., but with the family home nearing foreclosure and her sister (Lily Jones) close to destitution, she unearths a bag of 500 pills she buried and starts selling again. DaCosta, who directed the upcoming remake of “Candyman,” grounds her hero’s predicament in an austere setting where life is difficult under the best of circumstances and people are always on the precipice of disaster.

‘Luce’ (2019)

Lighting a long fuse on issues of race, revolution and the legacy of global conflict, Julius Onah’s provocative drama stars the gifted Kelvin Harrison Jr. as an accomplished high-school athlete, debater and scholar who isn’t the uncomplicated success story he appears to be. After his history teacher (Octavia Spencer) assigns the class to write a paper from the perspective of a historical figure, he chooses Frantz Fanon, the political philosopher who believed that colonialism could only be toppled by violent revolt. His parents (Tim Roth and Naomi Watts), who adopted him from war-torn Eritrea, don’t understand her alarm, but they soon discover that their son hasn’t been forthcoming about how he feels and what actions he intends to take.

‘Lucky’ (2017)

Not many actors get the opportunity to end their careers like Harry Dean Stanton. “Lucky,” a drama tailor-made for Stanton, was his last film in an onscreen career spanning more than six decades; it was released in theaters less than two weeks after he died at 91. Then again, not many actors are as brilliant as Stanton was or as willing to reveal so much of himself that close to the end. Directed by another character actor, John Carroll Lynch, the film is about a 90-year-old Texan who’s been cheating death for years but must finally face the inevitable after taking a fall. What might have been a pre-fab tribute to Stanton is deepened by his willingness to show fear and vulnerability, as well as the regret of a loner who doesn’t have loved ones to say goodbye.

‘Mister America’ (2019)

There’s a for-fans-only quality to Tim Heidecker’s satirical comedy: It’s the latest expansion of the “On Cinema at the Cinema” universe, a “Siskel &amp; Ebert”-style movie review show parody that began life as a podcast before breaking as a web series on Thing X and Adult Swim. But even newcomers who don’t get all the in-jokes can appreciate “Mister America” as an absurdist commentary on a period in politics when unctuous boors felt they were entitled to public service jobs. Heidecker stars as a no-hope independent candidate for district attorney of San Bernardino County, Calif., running mostly to unseat the man who charged him for second-degree murder for hawking tainted vape juice at an EDM festival.

‘Skate Kitchen’ (2018)

Crystal Moselle made her directorial debut with 2015’s “The Wolfpack,” a documentary about home-schooled brothers in Manhattan’s Lower East Side who learned about the world through movies, which they’d then re-enact at home. “Skate Kitchen” is Moselle’s graceful transition into features, but she takes a piece of documentaries with her in the film’s on-the-fly naturalism and her continued interest in outcasts banding together. Real-life skateboarder Rachelle Vinberg plays a Long Island teenager who befriends a multiracial group of boarders at a New York skate park and stops coming home to her conservative mother. The improvised street scenes in “Skate Kitchen” may recall Larry Clark and Harmony Korine’s “Kids,” but Moselle has a subtler feel for social dynamics and the stolen pleasures of youth.

‘The Standoff at Sparrow Creek’ (2019)

“Reservoir Dogs” (1992) proved that sticking a bunch of great character actors in a warehouse and turning up the heat was a cheap and efficient formula for tense genre film. To that end, the drum-tight thriller “The Standoff at Sparrow Creek” is stocked with recognizable faces that may not come with recognizable names — James Badge Dale, Brian Geraghty and Patrick Fischler are the leads — but add depth to Henry Dunham’s story about militia members hiding out after one of them is accused of shooting up a police funeral. The film’s Waco-influenced politics are clouded with ambiguity, but the slow-burn tension is cleanly rendered, with the inevitable spasm of violence reserved for maximum impact.

‘Support the Girls’ (2018)

The spirit of the late Jonathan Demme lives on in Andrew Bujalski’s funny and generous slice of Americana, set at a downmarket Hooter’s-like “breastaurant” called Double Whammies. Regina Hall is wonderful as its general manager, who spends her day dealing with emotionally volatile waitresses, rude customers, a faulty cable-TV connection, an attempted robbery of the office safe and the encroaching threat of a new chain about to open up. Through all this hectic action, Bujalski offers rare insight into the humbling challenges of the service industry, where hourly workers scrape together rent money with thin margins for health or child care emergencies.

‘The Unicorn’ (2019)

Well-known in improv circles and for her turns on the TV series “Orange is the New Black” and “Crashing,” the comedian Lauren Lapkus hasn’t gotten the breakout roles in film that she deserves, but her daffy performance in Robert Schwartzman’s cringe comedy is evidence of her talent. Lapkus and Nick Rutherford star as a long-engaged couple who head to Palm Springs, Calif., for her parents’ 25th wedding anniversary. In a bid to recharge their own flatlining relationship, the couple spends one spectacularly awkward evening in search of a threesome, but their crippling inhibitions make them a poor fit for swinger culture.

PHOTO: Jesse Eisenberg plays an ineffectual accountant who takes up karate in “The Art of Self-Defense.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bleecker Street, via Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Taking Sex and Intimacy Seriously***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YPH-XW61-JBG3-61KC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Eleanor Stanford

**Body**

This adaptation of Sally Rooney's best-selling novel is a rare TV show about teenagers that respects intimacy as a powerful storytelling tool, both on and off camera.

DUBLIN -- Paul Mescal, battling a cold, collapsed into a chair on the edge of a busy set just outside the city here.

The Irish actor was midway through a ''beast'' of a day, he said, shooting the high-profile adaptation, by Hulu and the BBC, of Sally Rooney's wildly popular novel ''Normal People.''

''It's like I've been thrown into the sea, never mind the deep end,'' Mescal said, laughing, of his leading role playing Connell. ''But I've been looked after by the people I've been working with, so I've been given various life rafts.''

As a young actor, just two years out of drama school, making his television debut in an eagerly anticipated adaptation, it's not surprising that Mescal, 24, was experiencing a steep learning curve. But ''Normal People'' brings an extra degree of difficulty: The novel focuses almost exclusively on the intimate, explicitly rendered relationship between Connell and Marianne, his on-again, off-again love. Rooney presents sexuality as a transformative, healing, complicated form of communication for both characters, and the series faithfully follows suit; both roles include full-frontal nudity in scenes of striking rawness and delicacy.

The result -- 12 half-hour episodes landing on Hulu April 29 -- is an unusually thoughtful and moving depiction of young people's emotional lives. The sex between teenagers you're likely to see on television at the moment is frequently fumbling and hilarious (''Sex Education'') or designed to shock (''Euphoria''). But in ''Normal People,'' the intimacy of these moments between Marianne and Connell is so distinct, especially their first time together, you almost feel like an intruder.

The production hired an intimacy coordinator, and thought carefully about how to translate the physical and emotional vulnerability of the book for television in a way that was respectful to both the original story and the actors performing it. The environment was warm and supportive, Daisy Edgar-Jones, the British actor who plays Marianne, said on set.

But she added that some of the heavier scenes had stayed with her. Filming the period when Marianne is very depressed and looking to violent sex for comfort left Edgar-Jones, 21, feeling ''really strange for a few days, it's hard not to take that stuff on.''

Overall, though, the show's prevailing themes, as represented by Marianne and Connell's relationship, are inspirational, she said.

''Hopefully people will watch it and learn from it how you should treat yourself,'' she said, ''and how you should be treated by others.''

We meet Marianne and Connell as schoolmates in a small town in West Ireland: He is athletic, popular, ***working class*** and quietly very clever. She is wealthy, lonely and droll, wielding her intelligence like a flamethrower. Connell's mother cleans Marianne's large family home, and the teenagers start sleeping together in secret before both heading to Dublin for college, where they spend the next few years oscillating between being friends and lovers.

''When they're together, they're just happy,'' Mescal said. ''It's deeply frustrating when they're not together.''

Rooney's first novel, ''Conversations With Friends,'' was popular, but ''Normal People,'' released in Britain in 2018 and America the following year, was a sensation. It sold over 500,000 print copies in North America and over one million copies across all formats outside of the U.S., according to her publishers -- huge numbers for literary fiction.

New York booksellers talked about trying to keep up with ''Rooney fever,'' and critics argued with themselves over whether she was ''the first great millennial writer.'' Her editor at Faber & Faber called her the ''Salinger for the Snapchat generation.''

Rooney, though, continues to be wary of the breathlessness that has surrounded her work. ''I live each day at present with a mild frisson of dread at the idea of becoming any more widely known than I already am,'' she wrote in an email, adding she hopes the show is celebrated but that ''my existence is kindly forgotten by all.'' (With a BBC television adaptation of ''Conversations With Friends'' also in the works, this seems unlikely.)

Work adapting ''Normal People'' into a series began before the novel had even hit bookstores. Lenny Abrahamson (''Room'') and his producing partner Ed Guiney (''The Favourite'') at Element Pictures, had read the galley and mulled various approaches for a screen version. They settled on a half-hour TV show to suit the book's linearity and lack of subplots.

The BBC signed on early to produce. The broadcaster had been looking for ''a millennial drama series that would feel like an antidote to the bigger supernatural or sci-fi shows that are often aimed at a younger audience,'' Piers Wenger, the BBC's head of drama programming, said in a telephone interview. Hulu then came on as the U.S. distributor and producer.

Filming began last year in June; the producers wanted a quick turnaround to capitalize on the early buzz of the book's popularity. Unlike recent literary adaptations that have used the source materials as jumping off points (''Little Women'' or ''The Personal History of David Copperfield''), the ''Normal People'' mantra on set was ''the book is the Bible.''

The novel's narrative is always told from either Connell or Marianne's perspective, and translating that interiority and shifting viewpoint onto the screen was one of the production team's biggest priorities -- and challenges. In many scenes, this looks like obliquely cropped close-ups of characters' faces, or frames showing the back of their heads.

''It seems like a paradox,'' Abrahamson said in a telephone interview. But ''if you make it harder for an audience to see quite what's happening in a character's face, you think your way toward them, and it feels like you really are in the room rather than in some artificial space of perfect access.''

Abrahamson, who set the show's tone by directing the first six episodes, wanted the book's nuanced view of sexuality reflected onscreen. He had directed sex scenes before, but never with the nudity required for ''Normal People,'' and he wanted to get it right -- and for his young actors to feel empowered.

''As an established director working with a youngish cast, when it comes to explicit scenes and nudity, part of me worried that they may say, 'Yes, I do feel comfortable with it,''' he said, ''because they don't want to disappoint me, because we have a good creative relationship and I've got a reputation.''

Over the last couple of years, since the #MeToo movement revealed extensive exploitation and abuse in the entertainment industry, there has been new focus on what is demanded of actors and actresses on set, especially when male directors and producers are involved (Hettie Macdonald directed the latter six episodes.)

So the production turned to a professional increasingly sought after in the entertainment industry: an intimacy coordinator. Ita O'Brien, the ''Normal People'' coordinator, sees her work as bringing the same professionalism to sex scenes that you have at other stages of a shoot, to keep actors from being coerced or left to work out the choreography themselves. She speaks with the director and actors one-on-one, hearing their concerns and establishing the scene's shape, so there are no surprises when everyone is on set.

O'Brien's work may have been especially valuable given Rooney's approach to writing intimate moments. In the book, she grounds sex in sensation and the context of a character's emotional life, rather than description. She also co-wrote the first six episodes of the show with Alice Birch, and described the sex scenes as ''probably less 'written' than other parts of the script.'' She wanted to leave room for Abrahamson, Edgar-Jones and Mescal to decide what worked best for them, she said.

Abrahamson and the cinematographer Suzie Lavelle were inspired by the photographer Nan Goldin, namely her work's rich color palette and incidental nakedness. This influence is evident in the way the leads' full frontal nudity, specifically, is shown in moments of quiet and repose. There is little sexualization or voyeurism to be found, just shared vulnerability.

Then there is Marianne's exploration of B.D.S.M. and submissive sex, which emerges first in the book with Connell's certainty that ''She would have lain on the ground and let him walk over her body if he wanted,'' and with subsequent partners hitting her during sex. In both the novel and the show, Marianne's experiences are consensual -- if not always positive -- and a key way she comes to understand herself.

Through Marianne, the show depicts the complexity of a young woman's sexuality with empathy, even avoiding some of the book's tendency to pathologize her desires. Onscreen, the tone of Marianne's intimacy is an effective shorthand for communicating her state of mind as we meet her at a new point in her life, similar to the way her outfits and hairstyles change.

Edgar-Jones said she's proud of ''Normal People,'' including the sex scenes, and of the fact that the nudity is ''50-50'' between her and Mescal.

''I've watched the episodes,'' she added, laughing. ''I'm well prepared for the bits where I have to tell my flatmates and parents to look away.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/17/arts/television/normal-people-hulu.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/17/arts/television/normal-people-hulu.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''Normal People,'' which debuts April 29 on Hulu, traces the relationship of Connell (Paul Mescal) and Marianne (Daisy Edgar-Jones) from high school to the end of college. Most of the show's filming was done in Ireland, with Irish cast and crew. During shooting, Edgar-Jones stayed in Marianne's Irish accent on and off the set. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ENDA BOWE/HULU)

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[***‘You Can’t Run From the City … if You Want to Run the City’: Winners and Losers of New York’s Second Mayoral Debate; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62TX-K9F1-DXY4-X4GB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Welcome to the Times Opinion scorecard for New York City’s second mayoral [*debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/10/nyregion/how-watch-nyc-mayor-debate.html) of 2021, which featured the eight leading Democratic candidates on Wednesday night. A mix of Times writers and outside political experts assessed the contenders’ performances and rated them on a scale of one to 10. One means the candidate probably doesn’t belong in Gracie Mansion and maybe not even on the debate stage (though whatever you thought of the debate itself, the sight of the eight contenders in the same room was very welcome); 10 means he or she is ready to take over from Mayor Bill de Blasio, who can’t run again because of the city’s term-limits law.

Eric Adams

Gerson Borrero (8/10) — From his clear opening statement to his calm responses showing a person who doesn’t get bent out of shape, Adams handled the attacks against him like a guy who’s comfortable with his current status as numero uno in the race. He won the night.

Mara Gay (8/10) — Much of the second debate focused on public safety, and Adams was clearly in his element. His steady focus on fighting gun violence and education worked well. Adams, a likely front-runner, kept his cool amid a barrage of attacks. “I’m very popular,” Adams joked, as his competitors piled on.

Michelle Goldberg (7/10) — He got beat up a bit and could barely hide his contempt for Maya Wiley and Andrew Yang, but the other candidates still haven’t settled on a coherent case against him.

Christina Greer (7/10) — Linked public safety to the economy, which resonates with voters. Definitely wasn’t the firecracker we’ve seen in previous debates. Less may be more for Adams at this moment, especially as questions pertaining to past statements continue to follow him.

Celeste Katz Marston (7/10) — Smiling and confident, Adams leaned a bit more into the personal story that informs his career and campaign than he did in the first debate. Reined in his tendency to talk down to challengers, but couldn’t shake it completely.

Eleanor Randolph (6/10) — Managed to look serene, except when Yang accused him of facing a “trifecta of corruption investigations” by various government agencies. Wiley also wanted to know how he could say he would bring a gun to church.

Grace Rauh (7/10) — Most powerful moment was his back-and-forth with Yang, battling for front-runner status. Adams to Yang: “You can’t run from the city, Andrew, if you want to run the city.”

Brent Staples (7/10) — He brought gravitas, clarity and concision to a chaotic debate. He was especially potent when recounting his experience as a public school student.

Howard Wolfson (7/10) — No major mistakes debating as a front-runner, and strongly wove biographical details into policy answers. Gave as good as he got in the exchange with Yang, but spent way too much time complaining to moderators about his lack of speaking opportunities. No one wants a whining mayor.

Kathryn Wylde (9/10) — Adams served the city in a bullet-proof vest for 22 years and could have used one on the debate stage. But he smoothly parried assaults from all quarters and showed himself a resilient front-runner.

Shaun Donovan

Gerson Borrero (4/10) — For a dude with such an impressive résumé, including having Obama to name-drop, Donovan once again fell short. But at least having his papi’s millions to boost his campaign will cushion his continued fall.

Mara Gay (3/10) — He looked like he had a nice tan, which is maybe something to look into.

Michelle Goldberg (5/10) — I’m still not quite sure why he’s remaining in the race, though toward the end he had a good riff on homelessness.

Christina Greer (4/10) — Donovan needed to make a splash and he did not. Relationships with Biden and Obama (and Bloomberg, which he fails to mention) haven’t translated into clear policy proposals for New Yorkers.

Celeste Katz Marston (6/10) — On the off chance anyone missed it in the last debate, he still used to work for Obama. Did a better job this time of emphasizing his track record on housing. Not the gamechanger he needed, though.

Eleanor Randolph (5/10) — He would make an excellent deputy mayor. He knows the problems and has detailed plans to fix them.

Grace Rauh (5/10) — Fighting for attention — and engaging in budget-one-upmanship with Ray McGuire and Scott Stringer — but didn’t have memorable breakout moments.

Brent Staples (6/10) — Improved his performance over the last debate, wisely hewing to policy prescriptions — and reining in the preachiness.

Howard Wolfson (7/10) — Like Stringer, Donovan came back from a subpar performance in debate one to make a strong case for himself as the candidate with the track record of implementing bold ideas. But what’s a 15-minute neighborhood?

Kathryn Wylde (7/10) — The brainiac in the field, he makes a convincing case that he is well prepared to run city government. But is that enough?

Kathryn Garcia

Gerson Borrero (7/10) — A poised and confident Garcia continued to articulate her solutions for the city’s current problems with what appears to be a reasonable and sensible plan.

Mara Gay (6/10) — It’s still clear that Garcia is a first-time candidate, but she was much better-prepared in this debate and it showed. “I invite anyone on this stage to talk about track records because I actually have one,” she quipped early on. She smartly held her own without attacking her opponents, which worked for her.

Michelle Goldberg (7/10) — No one treated her like a leading candidate, so no one tore her down. She continues to exude down-to-earth competence.

Christina Greer (5/10) — There were quite a few times I forgot Garcia was onstage. Garcia needs to show voters she is not only qualified but actually interested in the discussions pertaining to how to do the job as an executive.

Celeste Katz Marston (7/10) — Her main job was probably to avoid major missteps. She achieved that. Worked in mentions of her big newspaper endorsements; played carefully to women voters. Steady, practical, and never flashy — exactly on brand for her campaign.

Eleanor Randolph (7/10) — Held her own against new critiques of her time as sanitation commissioner. She said that during the worst Covid times, she was told that when people heard the garbage truck, they knew things would be OK.

Grace Rauh (6/10) — Moving up in the polls, but still not shining on the debate stage. Solid performance and points for straight talk, like when she said she’d raise the cap on charter schools after Adams ducked the question.

Brent Staples (6/10) — Clear, calm and specific in her answers, especially on public safety and child care. Made a strong rhetorical move when she asked voters to decide which candidate they most trust.

Howard Wolfson (6/10) — Cornered the market on competency and managed to mention her newspaper endorsements, but missed repeated opportunities to create breakout moments. Why question Stringer instead of one of the other moderates? Why not talk about her multiracial family? It’s time to get personal!

Kathryn Wylde (7/10) — Easy to believe she can solve problems and drive an agenda, but in this forum her passion for achieving a “livable, healthier, safer city” did not come through.

Raymond J. McGuire

Gerson Borrero (5/10) — The newbie in politics is not going to finish in the top three ranked-choice voting slots, but once again he showed he has a vision for a city that needs more new thinkers with creative solutions.

Mara Gay (6/10) — Until recently, McGuire has mostly campaigned in corporate-speak. But when he talked about supporting undocumented immigrants Wednesday night, he sounded like a city mayor. “They’re New Yorkers,” he said. “We need to respect them. We need to treat them with dignity.” He’s getting better at this.

Michelle Goldberg (5/10) — He has a lot more administrative experience than Yang, but his anti-politician schtick is even less convincing.

Christina Greer (5/10) — McGuire brought receipts but needed to translate them for people just tuning in. What does his extensive Wall Street experience mean for ***working-class*** New Yorkers? He needed to lay that out more succinctly. Maybe they’ll go to his website?

Celeste Katz Marston (6/10) — Used his time to actually inform voters about the details of his platform (and website). Probably didn’t catapult himself into the top tier, but framed himself as serious and detail-oriented enough to merit voters’ consideration.

Eleanor Randolph (7/10) — Finally displayed some of the fight he must have shown in the back rooms of the corporate world. He even challenged the comptroller, Scott Stringer, about his oversight of the city’s massive pension investments.

Grace Rauh (6/10) — At his best when making the case that New Yorkers need someone without government experience to lead the city. “I got receipts.”

Brent Staples (5/10) — He is stuck on the unpersuasive metaphor of city government as the rerun of a bad movie.

Howard Wolfson (4/10) — Gave a strong answer on education, but his total unwillingness to actually mention his tenure at Citi raises fundamental questions about why he is on the stage. When the business candidate can’t mention his business, there is a problem.

Kathryn Wylde (8/10) — New to public service, he has mastered the facts and come up with new ideas for dealing with our toughest issues. Best line: “This is a bad movie playing out at City Hall with the same characters — we simply cannot afford a disastrous sequel.”

Dianne Morales

Gerson Borrero (5/10) — As a [*badly wounded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/10/nyregion/how-watch-nyc-mayor-debate.html) first-time candidate, Morales stuck to her campaign platform and articulated the main ideas of the most progressive agenda in this primary. Not distracted. Admirable.

Mara Gay (4/10) — Had a quiet night. The implosion of her campaign seemed to take the wind from her sails.

Michelle Goldberg (4/10) — There’s no way she could have saved her imploding campaign, but she had no good answer for the accusations that her own staff have leveled against her.

Christina Greer (6/10) — By far the most traditional progressive candidate. She did not insert herself into discussions that many assumed she would or should lead in this debate. Curious to see if her base sticks with her through this campaign storm.

Celeste Katz Marston (5/10) — Firmly stood her ground on the left flank of the progressive movement. Likely pleased and held onto her left-leaning supporters, but didn’t necessarily attract many new ones to her cause or provide extra specifics on city problem solving.

Eleanor Randolph (4/10) — Has faced a revolution from her own campaign staff in recent days. Countered that such problems were not uncommon for managers like herself.

Grace Rauh (5/10) — Pulls back to discuss the big picture on public safety, linking the rise in crime to economic instability and housing and food crisis many faced during Covid. But the upheaval with her campaign staff is still a distraction.

Brent Staples (5/10) — Has a lot of work to do to convince voters that her public safety proscriptions are the right ones.

Howard Wolfson (4/10) — Facing questions about authenticity amid a week of internal campaign strife, Morales seemed ill at ease and unsure of her footing.

Kathryn Wylde (3/10) — Her defense of her campaign implosion — that staff quickly grew at a huge rate — suggests that her management of a city with more than 330,000 employees would be a not-so-beautiful mess.

Scott M. Stringer

Gerson Borrero (6/10) — While he still looks like he’s thinking, “I coulda been a contender!” Stringer performed better than a candidate who most experts feel has plateaued.

Mara Gay (7/10) — Stringer stayed focused, keeping the spotlight on the housing, health care and public education the most vulnerable New Yorkers need to succeed in an unequal city. It was refreshing.

Michelle Goldberg (8/10) — He was detailed and unflappable and had the night’s most incisive jab at Yang: “You’re focusing on TikTok houses in the midst of a housing crisis.”

Christina Greer (7/10) — Landed quite a few jabs and was definitely on the offensive and much more alert compared with the previous debate. Stringer pushed his way into the top tier during this debate.

Celeste Katz Marston (7/10) — More engaged and aggressive than in the first debate; did a better job explaining how he’d parlay his most relevant work experience — serving as comptroller — into tackling the mayoralty.

Eleanor Randolph (6/10) — Went on the attack this time. At one point, he said to Yang, “I actually don’t think you’re an empty vessel, I think you’re a Republican.”

Grace Rauh (7/10) — Do not count Stringer out. He bounced back after a quiet first debate — seizing the spotlight whenever he could. Pitching himself as a progressive with experience.

Brent Staples (5/10) — Competent but did not improve his standing with voters who have doubts.

Howard Wolfson (8/10) — A solid rebound from his lackluster performance in the first debate. Consistently on message as the progressive with the experience to make change happen. A glimpse into what his campaign might have looked like before it was derailed by sexual misconduct allegations.

Kathryn Wylde (7/10) — Showed his mastery of government and renewed confidence after a rough patch in the campaign, making a strong case that he is ready to deal with the challenges facing the city on day one.

Maya Wiley

Gerson Borrero (7/10) — Like a true neoyorquina running to catch the express train during rush hour, Wiley pushed her way through the crowd of wannabes and made space for her views in a clear and at times vociferous manner.

Mara Gay (5/10) — Could be more concise.

Michelle Goldberg (6/10) — Wiley was eloquent on the scourge of police violence, but she often seemed aloof from New Yorkers’ anxiety about surging violent crime.

Christina Greer (7/10) — The quality of Wiley’s statements were often diluted by their excessive quantity. I am curious if voters just tuning in to this debate (and this race) found her strategy effective or off-putting.

Celeste Katz Marston (6/10) — In the first debate, she came off as commanding and challenging. In this rematch, her repeated interruptions and blowing off time limits weren’t nearly as effective — and could have been seen as grandstanding, even for an accomplished public servant.

Eleanor Randolph (6/10) — She was the queen of overtime in the last debate, but remained mostly within her allotted segments for this one. She did manage to lay out a solid progressive platform, noting that the police department is “bloated” and should share some of its wealth with community centers.

Grace Rauh (7/10) — TV savvy and it shows. Strong line of attack against Adams for saying he’d carry a gun as mayor. “Isn’t this the wrong message to send our kids we’re telling not to pick up the guns?”

Brent Staples (5/10) — She seems to have plateaued rhetorically. She lost ground by engaging too much in the attack scrum.

Howard Wolfson (6/10) — Came looking to draw Adams into a one-on-one debate over criminal justice, but was only marginally successful in doing so. She was a spectator to the Adams-Yang exchange and consistently spoke over her allotted time, which became distracting.

Kathryn Wylde (6/10) — “I’m a mom” is not a qualification for mayor. Not believable that she would make public safety job one, but shows she is a good listener as well as an effective talker.

Andrew Yang

Gerson Borrero (3/10) — Yang’s clearly getting worse at explaining how his lack of voting experience in past New York mayoral elections somehow makes him qualified for the role of mayor. He was the obvious loser in this debate.

Mara Gay (4/10) — Yang is usually good on his feet, but Adams got under his skin, and it showed. His exchange with Adams, who accused him of fleeing the city, was cringeworthy. “I wore a bulletproof vest for 22 years,” Adams said, slamming Yang — who left during the pandemic — as uncommitted to New York. Oof.

Michelle Goldberg (6/10) — The other candidates started out attacking Yang like he was still the front-runner and landed several blows. But he was able to rattle Eric Adams by bringing up his “rare trifecta of corruption investigations.”

Christina Greer (5/10) — Yang has not moved much beyond a diagnostic phase. He understands a crowded debate format, but his policies are Daisy Buchanan: smashing things carelessly, retreating back into his moneyed people and leaving it to others to clean up his mess.

Celeste Katz Marston (6/10) — Stayed the course, but not a breakout performance. Not clear if voters will keep warming to his folksiness or if he sometimes seems overly glib or lighthearted at a troubled time for the city.

Eleanor Randolph (6/10) — Let criticism bounce off him like any expert politician. He noted that if he looked short, he was standing next to Ray McGuire, who is 6 foot 4. He said instead of defunding police, New York needs a recruitment drive and more connection to people in communities — “They know who’s trouble.”

Grace Rauh (8/10) — Came under frequent fire — “empty vessel,” “Republican” — but didn’t get rattled. Saved his most brutal line for Adams: “You’ve achieved the rare trifecta of corruption investigations.”

Brent Staples (5/10) — The jokiness has worn thin. He was shaken by predictable — and damaging — questions about his record.

Howard Wolfson (7/10) — Handled his sharp exchange with Adams well and calmly rebutted attacks from other candidates. Some voters may wonder where the Happy Warrior went, though, watching him tear into Adams.

Kathryn Wylde (5/10) — Again with the goofy “Hello New York City” opener (this is a mayoral debate, not “S.N.L.”) and ending with a shout out for a Knicks win. Does he take this race seriously?

About the authors

Gerson Borrero is the host and political editor of “Estudio DC” at HITN and a former editor in chief of El Diario Nueva York.

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[***Becoming a Dad Meant Losing My Edge***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:605C-7WP1-JBG3-605K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** And it was worth it.

**Body**

And it was worth it.

When I first heard my wife was in labor, I was 700 miles away, preparing for a 10-day dive trip. I was waiting for the weather to clear so I could get on a boat with a National Geographic photographer to travel to a remote island to shoot manta rays.

Why would I schedule a reporting expedition so close to such an important event? Well, the obstetrician said the baby would be late, so I would have at least five days to spare. You see, I swore that fatherhood wouldn’t change me. I was an environmental journalist, adventurer, explorer and former mountain guide. I said things like, “The baby will have to adapt to my lifestyle, not the other way ’round.” But from the start, the kid had other plans.

We were living in Mexico City at the time, so, after getting the call, I bought a ticket for a last-minute flight, bribed a cop to take me to the airport and caught a ride with a taxi driver who drove 25 miles per hour through bumper-to-bumper traffic [*blasting the theme song*](https://www.lastwordonnothing.com/2015/12/02/what-to-do-in-mexico-when-your-wife-is-in-labor-700-miles-away/) to James Bond the whole way. To this day I’m not sure how I made it in time.

And then I was a father. I had always assumed I would go right back to what I was doing, and for a while I did. I published a book about belief and medicine and went deep into the story of the endangered vaquita marina, or Mexican porpoise. But it wasn’t the same — something had shifted.

Today, I live in the suburbs and edit stories about occupational therapy and baby spit-up. And I love it (both topics are fascinating, it turns out). As a journalist, I have always been led by what I felt were the most important stories to tell, those that make differences in people’s lives. My son didn’t adapt to my lifestyle and he didn’t stop me from exploring. He showed me a whole new world of stories to discover.

My life has swiveled from a constant search for inspiration to a constant effort to inspire the little person I helped make. And I’m not alone in this mission.

Expectations for fathers have changed over the past few decades, said Mark Anthony Neal, Ph.D., a professor of African and African-American studies at Duke University, who studies how society perceives masculinity, especially in the media. “We expect fathers to be more nurturers now,” he said. “We expect them, more so than we did 40 years ago, to try to make a space in their professional lives with their children.”

Switching my young illusions of manhood to actual fatherhood was jarring. I’ve been at this for four years now, and I’m just starting to understand how I have changed. Take rock climbing, for example. It’s harder to take even small risks because a little voice in my head keeps whispering that I have a family now. And there’s a part of me that is sad about the dust collecting on my wetsuit.

It’s difficult in today’s world to reconcile our ideas of being a real man with being a caring father. It’s easy to feel we are failing at both. So, I turned to two fathers who have always inspired me with their adventurous spirit, starting with a mountaineer.

It’s hard to say who the greatest living mountaineer is. Different people have particular specialties on big mountains, steep overhangs or tiny boulders. For my money, it’s Tommy Caldwell. In 2005, the summer before I started journalism school, I climbed El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. Caldwell was up there at the same time, climbing arguably the hardest long route anywhere — the Nose of El Capitan. He and his partner were only the second team to do it.

In 2013, Caldwell’s first child was born. That same year he climbed [*an entire Patagonian ridgeline*](https://www.lastwordonnothing.com/2015/12/02/what-to-do-in-mexico-when-your-wife-is-in-labor-700-miles-away/), including the ice monster, Fitz Roy, for the first time ever — seven massive peaks in one go. Then he climbed a route on El Capitan called the [*Dawn Wall*](https://www.lastwordonnothing.com/2015/12/02/what-to-do-in-mexico-when-your-wife-is-in-labor-700-miles-away/), which spurred a documentary film and still might be the hardest climb of its kind in the world. Two career-making achievements in one year, with a baby in his life.

“You think you’re busy, and then when you have kids you redefine that,” said Caldwell. “Having this kid has turned me into a higher producing individual — I kind of really love it.”

When his son was born, he worried that he might lose his edge, the way I did two years later. That he would be 5,000 feet off the ground in some perilous moment and he would hear his baby’s laugh in his head and wouldn’t be able to continue. But fear of his own fear drove him to push himself.

Lately he’s started to throttle back, however. He wrote a book, he’s turning down expeditions to Patagonia, and he’s doing more speaking gigs and environmental work. He’s wondering if being a professional athlete is really as important as it once was. I asked him if he regrets becoming a dad and a husband.

“I’d certainly be going off to the Himalayas two or three times a year, I’d be going on big expeditions all the time,” he said. “I’d probably be dead right now if I didn’t have a wife and kids. And my life is so wonderful.”

When I bring up my own existential worries about losing myself to parenthood, Caldwell looks puzzled. He doesn’t worry about his identity nor the kind of father he is becoming. Anxiety and regret aren’t a very big part of his life, he said. A career chasing mountains has taught him to live comfortably in the moment.

My next phone call took me from the highest mountains to the deepest seas, and arguably the most amazing job on the planet. Brian Skerry grew up in a small ***working-class*** Massachusetts town. Most of his friends and family worked in a nearby textile plant, and as a young man he sold packaging cardboard. But he nurtured dreams of being an underwater photographer.

“My daughter was born in 1997, and I got my first assignment from National Geographic in 1998,” said Skerry. “And that was the Holy Grail for me. That was the Mt. Everest, the thing I wanted most.”

Since then, Skerry has balanced a family of four with an impossible shooting schedule that keeps him on the road for as many as eight months a year. Currently, he is shooting his 29th story for National Geographic magazine, an incredible feat in one of the most competitive fields on earth. He took 36 reporting trips last year; he has swum with whales, sharks and U.S. presidents. He’s spoken to the U.N. General Assembly and at Davos. His work hangs in the homes of world leaders and celebrities, along with countless museums.

Skerry has seen things underwater that the rest of us can’t imagine. I asked him if he had a time machine what he would like to do once more. He paused, then he talked about a time when his daughters were young, and he would become a tickle monster and chase them around the house.

“As many amazing wildlife encounters as I have had throughout my career,” he said, “if there was one thing I could go relive, it would be those times with my daughters.”

His children are almost grown now. He said he never missed the important days, the Christmases and the birthdays. His kids hang out with people like oceanographer Sylvia Earl and primatologist Birutė Galdikas, and he said his family has always been more important than his camera, but there is a wistful note in his voice. Not for missed white sharks but for bygone tickle sessions.

Skerry has done a good job imparting his sense of adventure. His older daughter is starting her own career, not in environmentalism or photography, but in Broadway theater.

“I tried to be the voice of reason, telling her, what are the odds of becoming a Broadway actress? But she said, ‘Dad, what are the odds of becoming a National Geographic photographer?’” he said, chuckling.

So there you have it: two of my heroes — both great dads — one at the beginning of fatherhood, the other looking at an empty nest. The first is a professional athlete who laughs off the notion of midlife crises, and the second a consummate explorer telling me to savor the sweet moments before they’re gone.

Our culture often tells boys they can’t be great men and great dads. Great men take charge, travel the world and put their work above everything else. Great dads spend an entire weekend drawing weird monsters, giving them funny names and making up stories about them. And at some point, we have to choose.

Dr. Neal said his own ideals shifted when he had children, though more when they were teenagers. Previously he aspired to be a scholarly ascetic, a man unattached and plunged deep into his work. “Living the life of the mind, and not having to worry about the world,” he said. “That, of course, doesn’t work with kids.”

While he found fatherhood made him more efficient, he admits a twinge of envy while watching the careers of his childless colleagues soar. Still, he wouldn’t trade away the opportunity to drive his daughter to swim practice and talk about her day. And to set an example of modern masculinity for them.

For me, the choice between explorer and dad made itself. I’m just not driven to spend weeks in a Guatemalan jungle visiting archaeological wonders anymore. I’ll probably never bag that peak in Antarctica. My old life just isn’t as interesting as it had been, nor is my precious self-image as an intrepid foreign journalist.

These days, I’m happy to stay home and just watch a tiny brain grow and discover the world. To make up ball games and play “Sorry.” To watch my little family flourish. I was so worried that fatherhood would force itself into my perfect adventurous life that it never occurred to me that, one day, I would happily let it in.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Antoine Maillard FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Can a Billionaire’s Son Spend His Way to a House Seat in New York?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:605H-K5K1-JBG3-61JV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1667 words

**Byline:** Dana Rubinstein

**Highlight:** Nita Lowey’s decision to step down after three decades has created a seven-way free-for-all in Tuesday’s Democratic primary.

**Body**

Nita Lowey’s decision to step down after three decades has created a seven-way free-for-all in Tuesday’s Democratic primary.

In the suburban enclaves just north of New York City, a seven-way race to replace a retiring matriarch in the House of Representatives has devolved into something far less idyllic: a venomous fight between the son of a pharmaceutical billionaire and rivals who accuse him of trying to use his wealth to buy political power.

The high stakes may well explain the ferocity. The race represents a once-in-three-decades opportunity to win an open seat in a secure Democratic district, where incumbency is likely to grant the winner a lengthy tenure in Congress.

More than $7 million has already been spent on the contest, and more than half of that comes from one wealthy candidate who is trying to break away from a crowded pack.

Adam Schleifer, a former federal prosecutor in California, has spent [*more than*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) $4 million on the race in the district, which covers Rockland County and part of Westchester. That’s roughly $1 million more than the six other contenders combined.

Most of Mr. Schleifer’s campaign war chest comes from his own pocket — $3.7 million in total, a reflection of the wealth he [*derives*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) from his father, Leonard Schleifer, whose company, [*Regeneron*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/), [*boasts*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) a $50 billion market capitalization. But he has received donations, too, including from real estate developers like Jeffrey Gural, a prominent Democratic fund-raiser.

Mr. Gural said that Mr. Schleifer, 38, “understands the issues,” but he acknowledged that a victory could raise prickly questions about the power of money.

“If he wins, it shows that you can buy an election,” Mr. Gural said in a recent interview.

The contest is likely to decide who succeeds Representative Nita Lowey, the first woman to chair the House Appropriations Committee and a beloved figure among Democrats in the lower Hudson Valley district.

Last October, Ms. Lowey, facing a challenge from a progressive upstart, [*Mondaire Jones*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/), [*announced*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) her intention to retire after more than three decades in office. She has yet to make an endorsement in the race to succeed her.

At this point, the primary contest appears to be a tossup among four candidates: Mr. Schleifer, who, as an assistant U.S. attorney in California, helped [*prosecute*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) the “Varsity Blues” case involving the actress Felicity Huffman; Mr. Jones, a former lawyer for the Westchester County Law Department who attended Harvard Law School after growing up poor in Rockland County; Evelyn Farkas, a former Obama administration deputy assistant secretary of defense who handled Russian policy and contends that the Kremlin is [*working*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) against her; and David Carlucci, a state senator whose district includes parts of Rockland and Westchester Counties.

Mr. Carlucci’s legislative background may actually hurt him: He is a former member of the now-disbanded Independent Democratic Conference, which had collaborated with Republicans in the State Legislature. The American Prospect, a progressive magazine, called[*him*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) “the Republican-in-Democrat’s-Clothing.”

The recent protests against police violence are expected to help Mr. Jones, the best-known African-American candidate in the race. He has become the chosen candidate of the institutional left, winning the support of Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the New York Working Families Party.

A [*poll*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) of 1,141 likely Democratic primary voters released on Tuesday found Mr. Jones leading the race with 25 percent of the vote, followed by Ms. Farkas and Mr. Schleifer tied at 14 percent each and Mr. Carlucci at 11 percent. Twenty-four percent of voters were undecided.

“It’s definitely in flux,” said Jim Williams, the Public Policy Polling analyst who conducted the survey, which he said was funded by local Democrats who oppose Mr. Carlucci’s bid.

The candidates are generally in agreement on the issues, including the creation of a robust public health insurance option, although only Mr. Jones supports the creation of a single-payer health care system. They all back the [*Green New Deal*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) and repealing the federal cap on residents’ ability to deduct state and local taxes from their federal taxes. Several are campaigning on the promise of improving mass transportation options for Rockland County residents, whose access to Manhattan by rail is limited.

With not much separating the candidates on the issues, they have sought to distinguish themselves through their credentials, as well as through personal attacks.

Mr. Carlucci has characterized Ms. Farkas, Mr. Jones and Mr. Schleifer, all of whom returned full-time to the district relatively recently, as carpetbaggers. Mr. Jones, in turn, has labeled Ms. Farkas, Mr. Schleifer and Mr. Carlucci as being more akin to Republicans than Democrats. Other candidates routinely note that Ms. Farkas and Mr. Jones [*benefit*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) from independent expenditures and donors from outside the district.

Mr. Schleifer’s bountiful spending has prompted comparisons to the former New York City mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s failed presidential bid, and prompted one of the seven candidates, Asha Castleberry-Hernandez, to lament the laxity of campaign finance regulations that allow for a deluge of personal wealth and outside money.

“It doesn’t have to be that way, especially for people who come from the ***working class*** who want to run,” said Ms. Castleberry-Hernandez, a major in the U.S. Army Reserve who now teaches at Baruch College and is the other African-American in the contest. She has raised only $74,000 to run for the seat.

“It’s just an undemocratic process,” she said.

Mr. Schleifer said in a statement that his largely self-funded campaign meant that he did not “rely on those outside interests,” allowing him the freedom to execute his “vision for a more cohesive, creative, and responsive government, guided by science, data, and a deep commitment to justice.”

Nonetheless, his liberal use of his wealth sparked a noteworthy contretemps during a [*debate*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) hosted on Tuesday by the Business Council of Westchester.

After Ms. Farkas expressed concern “about the big money sloshing around in this election,” and Mr. Schleifer’s unwillingness to divest from pharmaceutical stocks, Mr. Schleifer said she was acting like “a snake.”

“All you know is the fog of the beltway,” Mr. Schleifer said, referring to Ms. Farkas’ decades-long career in Washington. “You talk about being a staffer. You’ve been in the back rooms of Congress for so long that you can’t see straight.”

The district encompasses Indian Point, the nuclear plant that helps power the downstate region and is in the process of shutting down. Not only will the district lose jobs, but questions remain about the safety of the decommissioning process.

While the district is known for its affluence, it contains significant pockets of poverty.

“Westchester and Rockland have two very different DNAs to them,” said Allison Fine, a Westchester-based candidate who counts herself lucky to have a campaign manager from Rockland County well-versed in its intricacies.

“Rockland is not as wealthy as Westchester,” she said. “It has the largest community of Hasidic Jews, second only to Williamsburg. There’s a lot of tension between the religious and secular communities there and they have very little economic growth, which is a huge problem. And then they have transportation problems. Can’t get into the city.”

Some consider the Hasidic vote, which often is delivered in a bloc, as pivotal, and it’s not clear yet which candidate will receive it.

“I think the two candidates that are putting in a lot of effort and getting support from voters in the Jewish community in Rockland are Buchwald, Schleifer,” said Yossi Gestetner, a Town of Ramapo resident and the co-founder of the Orthodox Jewish Public Affairs Council, referring to Mr. Schleifer and David Buchwald, the assemblyman from Westchester.

During a recent visit to New Square and Kaser, towns with heavy Hasidic populations, several residents said they had received phone calls and mailers from Mr. Schleifer’s campaign, but they had yet to develop much of an opinion about him.

Most of the contenders for this congressional seat are making their first run for elective office. Before he served as an assistant U.S. attorney, Mr. Schleifer worked as a former lawyer in Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo’s Department of Financial Services and in private practice. Ms. Farkas spent several years at the Department of Defense and as an employee of the Senate’s Armed Services Committee.

Before serving as a county lawyer in Westchester, Mr. Jones had been in private practice and spent a year working as a fellow at the Department of Justice.

Ms. Fine, a former chairwoman of the NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation, is the other candidate with experience in public office: She spent two years as an elected trustee in Sleepy Hollow in the 1980s.

Mr. Carlucci and Mr. Buchwald, in contrast, are political veterans.

Mr. Buchwald, a former tax lawyer and physics major, has substantial institutional support from Westchester Democrats like George Latimer, the county executive. Mr. Buchwald [*helped*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00728600/) write state legislation to give Congress access to President Donald Trump’s state tax returns.

“All those things come together to create a solid skill set” that would serve the residents of the lower Hudson Valley well, Mr. Buchwald said.

In an interview, Mr. Jones said Mr. Buchwald’s institutional support would mean little to voters.

“People want to be inspired,” Mr. Jones said. “This is the United States Congress.”

Nate Schweber contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: A seven-way Democratic primary in upstate New York appears to be a tossup among four candidates: Adam Schleifer, a former federal prosecutor and the son of a pharmaceutical billionaire, top with his wife, Nicole; and, from left, Mondaire Jones, a lawyer; David Carlucci, a state senator; and Evelyn Farkas, a former Obama administration official. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AL J. THOMPSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2020

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[***In Close Quarters, a Mother of 6 Battles Coronavirus***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YP5-2GN1-DXY4-X329-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** PARENTING

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**Byline:** Kevin Powell

**Highlight:** ‘I didn’t go to the hospital because I was scared.’

**Body**

‘I didn’t go to the hospital because I was scared.’

On a typical morning during the first bursts of spring, Tanya Denise Fields, a South Bronx mother, is up by 6 a.m. to prepare her six children, ages 4 to 17, for school: getting the smallest ones dressed, passing out breakfast food or money to grab a snack, and later calling the older ones on their cellphones to confirm they made it safely to class.

Next is a quick HIIT workout to keep off the more than 100 pounds she proudly lost in a year, then she spends the day administering a nonprofit from her tiny home office. Finally, welcoming her kids back by 6 p.m., she prepares dinner and helps with homework.

But on this particular April day, everything was different.

Fields, or “Mama Tanya” as many refer to her, a tall woman with flowing dreadlocks and a gigantic smile that makes the hoop dangling from her nose flip up and down, was housebound with the coronavirus. And her children wouldn’t be attending school for months to come.

Mama Tanya, 39, kept her distance from a reporter and photographer so she wouldn’t infect them, but agreed to share what life is like for her and her family. She waved frantically at visitors from a small window of the tenement building where she lives with her children and her boyfriend, Mustaphai, who is not the father of any of her kids but helps to take care of them.

The signs of poverty are obvious up and down her sepia-toned block: bloated and ignored garbage bags lining the streets, folks milling about on street corners doing nothing at all, people begging for change or food, no grocery store in sight but a fully stocked liquor store directly below Mama Tanya’s window where residents casually come and go, some wearing protective masks and gloves, some not.

This is Mama Tanya’s world where she is raising her family as a single mother. Despite the built-in hardships, she is a dynamic leader — an urban farmer who manages a nearby city-owned plot of land where she grows fruits and vegetables for the community; an outspoken crusader for women whose organization, the Black Feminist Project, works for food justice and reproductive rights; and a gifted public speaker and organizer whose brutally [*naked musings*](https://www.facebook.com/tanyadenisefields) on [*social media*](https://www.facebook.com/tanyadenisefields) bring to mind the bottomless courage of Fannie Lou Hamer, the storytelling genius of Toni Morrison and the self-empowerment ethos of Cardi B.

But, most importantly, Mama Tanya is a parent who was terrified when she realized in mid-March that she may have contracted the coronavirus during a recent trip to New Orleans for a conference. Knowing that she could also spread it to her children and her partner was even more frightening.

“I called my doctor immediately,” she said. “They called me back in a couple of hours and I gave him all of my symptoms — the chills, the body aches, a headache like I’ve never had in my life before. My eyeballs hurt.”

She lay in bed and kept her eyes closed because they were sensitive to even the dimmest of light. A sore throat and stomach troubles plagued her. “I just could not eat anything. Everything made me nauseous,” she said.

There are no nannies or caretakers for women like Mama Tanya, no extended family to help. She is the parent, disciplinarian, educator, nurse, cook, house cleaner, therapist — even when there is no global pandemic. So when her symptoms kicked in with a ferocious intensity, Mama Tanya was emotionally devastated, and she had to wait two weeks to get a test.

“I didn’t go to the hospital because I was scared,” she said. “I was like ‘If they find fluid in my lungs, then I’m gonna die. I’m gonna need to be on a ventilator and we don’t have enough ventilators and I’m gonna die.’”

Her fears were rooted in a grim reality: The pandemic has [*disproportionately affected black people*](https://www.facebook.com/tanyadenisefields) in New York City, as well as nationwide, in places like Detroit, Chicago and New Orleans. It does not help that many black people, like Mama Tanya, harbor a deep distrust of the medical establishment because of past experiences.

“I can tell you horror stories about having my children in hospitals,” she said. “Just having a baby, which should be like the happiest part of your life — the microaggressions and the medical racism.” She attributes birthing injuries she incurred to the thinly veiled bias of medical professionals she encountered, which drove her to deliver some of her children at home.

Indeed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that [*black women*](https://www.facebook.com/tanyadenisefields) are 3.3 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women are, a fact widely attributed in part to racial inequalities in health care. So what kind of support can a black mother expect in a pandemic?

Mama Tanya eventually found her way to a makeshift emergency room, where she was given a chest X-ray. She was initially denied a coronavirus test, for 15 days, but finally tested “presumptive positive” for the virus in the first week of April. Her partner and each of her children, except her 4-year-old, have had symptoms of high fever and debilitating nausea, but no one else in the three-bedroom apartment has been tested.

For a ***working-class*** family living in one of America’s [*poorest communities*](https://www.facebook.com/tanyadenisefields), there is no space to social distance, no spare room, attic or basement in which to self-quarantine. If one person in the household gets the coronavirus, as Mama Tanya did, it is likely others living there will, too.

Mama Tanya was feeling lightheaded on the day the reporter and photographer arrived, but she mustered up the energy to take pictures alone, then with her six children and their dog, Pebbles. The eldest child, her daughter, Taylor, is heading to college upstate in the fall to be a filmmaker, if the semester is not [*postponed*](https://www.facebook.com/tanyadenisefields). “She’s totally stressed about that,” Mama Tanya said, “and trying to cope with those feelings.”

Trist’ann, 15, suffers from severe asthma, and aside from her mother had the most frightening reactions after falling ill, at times unable to breathe.

“I felt very guilty,” Mama Tanya said, her voice haunted by sadness. “I gave her this. I was sick and then I made her sick.” She’d tried her best to shield the family from the virus, wearing gloves, frequently washing her hands and disinfecting surfaces regularly. But she’s convinced her children and partner caught it despite her precautions.

The family’s current location isn’t ideal for any child with asthma to recover from a respiratory illness. Inside their apartment building last week the scent of marijuana wafted through the air, accompanied by the loud talk and music of Mama Tanya’s neighbors. It is these elements she longs to escape, but cannot, because of her financial situation. She has survived domestic violence and debilitating low self-esteem, and understands the dehumanizing effects of poverty on mothers like her better than any scholar or politician.

“There are people who are living on very fixed incomes who have to decide between ‘Do I want to be in debt after all of this is over?’ and have to navigate a housing system that is not kind to poor people,” she said. “The single mamas have to figure out whether they’re gonna use their limited amount of income to pay their portion of the rent, or to buy diapers and formula.”

On a different and quieter day, via telephone, Mama Tanya said her health was improving: “I feel much better, but I am concerned how long I’ll be contagious.” She paused with a sigh, the weight of her thoughts like that heavy load Langston Hughes once [*described in a poem*](https://www.facebook.com/tanyadenisefields). “I am tempted to get tested again to see if I’m negative, but don’t wanna be bothered with all that is involved with getting tested.”

Mama Tanya said people like her are “a miracle” — those from poor backgrounds who, in spite of limited resources, make a way out of no way. So she pushes herself and her children, through her days battling to get well without any treatment other than her homemade remedies and drugstore products like Tylenol. Her partner, Mustaphai, co-parents however he can, but the children have had to, at times, home-school themselves, clean up when she cannot and even prepare their own meals. Yet in the midst of that, Mama Tanya is still finding hope, and joy.

“I do feel such a deep happiness right now to be alive,” she said. “Because those of us who did get through it have the obligation to create a world that is better able to sustain for all of us. I hope that that is what comes up out of this pandemic. ”

Kevin Powell is a poet, journalist, public speaker and author of several books, including his autobiography, “The Education of Kevin Powell.” He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

PHOTO: Tanya Fields (third from the right) with her six children in their South Bronx apartment building. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kay Hickman FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Joe Biden's Magic***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617V-5MF1-JBG3-63K6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 2239 words

**Byline:** By Anand Giridharadas

**Body**

He has the power to make transformational progress look like ''C'mon Man'' common sense. Will he use it?

This article has been updated to reflect news developments.

Let's never do that again.

Soon, the worst president in modern American history will resume private life. Everyone who favors the rule of law, decency and truth is exhaling a long-deferred sigh of relief. Millions are upset that the election was as close as it was. Still, however narrowly, Americans have snatched our republic from the jaws of an encroaching autocracy. We deserve the catharsis -- whether dancing in the streets or joy-scrolling in quarantine.

Gone from the White House will be an administration whose gaslighting operation was matched only by its hostility and deadly incompetence. Gone will be the necessity for, and our stupid hope in, saviors: Robert Mueller, state attorneys general, Anonymous, ''concerned'' Senators Susan Collins and Mitt Romney. Gone will be the Muslim bans, the human-rights violations at the southern border, the photo-op Bible shaken like a martini after federal police gassed nonviolent protesters. The parade of disheveled presidential associates under indictment, the Jared and Ivanka leaks, MSNBC's nightly seminars on Russian oligarchs, the presidential retweets of literal white supremacists -- gone.

Given the collective frenzy of these years, President-elect Joe Biden intuited that legions of Americans wanted a return to normal -- a restoration, a reversion. The earnest hope in his promise ''to restore the soul of America'' was that the same country that uplifted Donald Trump and let itself be consumed by internet-fueled culture wars could heed its better angels again, as it did when it elected the nation's first Black president on a hope-and-change mandate not so long ago.

But if this election is to have lasting meaning, we cannot see a Biden campaign victory as license to cast away politics as a presence in our daily lives. We cannot succumb to the liberal temptation parodied by the comedian Kylie Brakeman to ''vote for Biden so we can all get back to brunch.''

However effective it might have been at closing this race, this restorationist fantasy would be a terrible governing philosophy. Because the pre-Trump world -- in which voting rights were being gutted and 40 percent of Americans couldn't afford a $400 emergency bill -- is no kind of place to go back to. Mr. Biden himself seemed to concede this point by tempering his restoration message with the slogan ''Build Back Better.''

II.

On Election Day eve, I spoke with Senator Chuck Schumer of New York -- the minority leader, who could, by a razor's edge, become the majority leader in 2021 if the results of two presumptive runoffs for Senate seats in Georgia go the Democrats' way. Because, like Mr. Biden, Mr. Schumer is an institutionalist and a moderate, I asked him about this idea of restoration versus transformation. Almost as soon as he heard me say the word ''normalcy,'' he began, for lack of a better term, to filibuster: ''No, no, I don't buy that.''

''My view,'' he told me, ''is if we don't do bold change, we could end up with someone worse than Donald Trump in four years.'' What passed for change in the past two decades (including during the Obama years) had not, he acknowledged, been ''big enough or bold enough.'' When I asked if Democrats bore some responsibility for that, he deflected: ''There's plenty of blame to go around.''

Even if, improbably, the Senate is on Mr. Biden's side in 2021, he and his advisers will have to pull off a grueling balancing act: pushing federal policy to reflect popular will so that people's lives can measurably improve, while making fundamental changes to the workings of American democracy and managing to heal rather than inflame the cultural resentments, racial hatred and party polarization that still imperil the Republic (and that the Republican Party thrives on).

Mr. Biden may take the oath of office facing a lattice of crises that make some other tough-times inaugurations look enviable: a health crisis, an economic crisis, a racial-justice crisis, a climate crisis and a crisis of representative democracy revealed and exacerbated by his predecessor. These are problems that snicker at incrementalism.

In one favorable scenario, come January, two Democratic runoff victories in Georgia leave a President Biden facing a 50-50 Senate, with his vice president, Kamala Harris, possessing the crucial tiebreaking vote. Even then, the scope of available policy reforms would still be substantially limited unless Mr. Biden sought to eliminate the filibuster that requires 60 Senate votes to get major legislation enacted. Doing away with this rule would, of course, immediately doom any chance of a constructive working relationship with Republicans.

But it could still be a risk worth taking. If Democrats win the two presumed Georgia runoffs, Senate Democrats will represent roughly 41 million more people than the Republican half of the chamber. If Mr. Biden is to meet this moment, he can't let his cautious temperament and deep hankering for civic comity stop him from making the policy changes families need.

The most immediate problem is the plague. Mr. Trump was so inept at containing it that he couldn't even keep it from infecting him. But the sanity and science-based competence that Mr. Biden has promised will go only so far. Suppressing the virus and executing a vaccine rollout, while boosting an economic recovery that will have slowed over the winter, would require trillions of dollars in investment and a font of bureaucratic creativity.

For tens of millions, the economic traumas of the pandemic have come on top of decades of stagnation and precariousness. Since 1989, the wealth of the bottom 50 percent of Americans has fallen by $900 billion. Before Covid-19, 44 percent of American workers were being paid median annual wages of $18,000. And the evictions now surging are coming in the wake of a housing market that has long been unaffordable. Even if high unemployment were reversed, it would hardly repair our increasingly classist and Uber-ized labor market.

And if Democrats do win the Senate? Senator Schumer told me he envisions a first 100 days filled with a raft of measures on the virus and economic relief, mixed in with policies that address inequality, climate change, student debt, immigration and more. A Biden administration's early days ''ought to look like F.D.R.'s,'' he said. ''We need big, bold change. America demands it, and we're going to fight for it.''

Much, however, could still get in the way. First, Mr. Biden's own instinct toward caution -- which can easily end up enabling paralysis at a time when Democrats' window for proving the promise of an active government could be closing. Any measure of success is likely to be determined by how seriously a Biden administration takes the inevitable calls for fiscal conservatism and austerity (despite historically low interest rates).

And there are early warning signs: Ted Kaufman, who is leading the Biden transition team, recently told The Wall Street Journal that because of Trump-era deficit spending, ''when we get in, the pantry is going to be bare.''

A Biden administration could also perceive itself as owing a political debt to the most influential and visible center-right elements of his sweeping, unwieldy alliance of supporters. Young leftists of color from cities in major swing states are arguably more responsible for his win than Republican defectors like former Senator Jeff Flake and the former Republican operatives turned media darlings of the Lincoln Project. But who will have more of a voice in Washington?

On various matters of policy, Mr. Biden could find himself in an awkward fox trot with wealthy donors in liberal power centers like Silicon Valley and Wall Street -- the kind of people who may love hanging ''Black Lives Matter'' signs in their yards more than they love Biden proposals like a Section 8 expansion that would allow more ***working-class*** Black families to live in their midst.

III.

And this, mind you, is the congenial scenario. It is a bit more plausible that Mr. Biden will face a Republican-controlled Senate, in which the majority leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, reprises his record-breaking Obama-era obstructionism to thwart Mr. Biden's agenda and his re-election chances.

In this case, Mr. Biden could bypass Congress to make forceful changes in people's lives -- changes that would in their own way help address one root cause of the very gridlock those actions would be working around: lack of faith in government.

The growing sense, among both the party's technocrats and its populists, is that their midterm fate lies in whether voters give Democrats credit for improving their lives -- not on the processes used or norms violated to do so.

''A public health and economic crisis is not the time for incremental steps, small ideas or meekness,'' Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, a leading Democrat in the House Progressive Caucus, told me. ''Joe Biden can deliver on this from Day 1 with executive orders and administrative actions that cancel student debt, lower drug prices, strengthen workers' rights and cut emissions.'' The American Prospect recently published ''277 Policies for Which Biden Need Not Ask Permission,'' based on the results of the Biden-Sanders unity task force.

Mr. Biden has an opportunity to seize on policies that, thanks to the heterodoxy of Trumpism, now have surprising resonance in both parties -- but not for the traditional reasons of being milquetoast or appealing to corporatist moderates. A wealth tax polls surprisingly well among Republican voters. Using the Department of Justice to crack down on monopolies and threats from China has some bipartisan support. As does actual infrastructure investment and, to a limited extent, raising the minimum wage.

Mr. Biden also does not need Mr. McConnell's permission to build a down-ballot pipeline. One of the failures of the Obama years was the attrition of the Democratic Party beneath the president: By 2017, its Senate seats had dwindled to 48 from 59, and it lost 62 House seats, 12 governorships and a whopping 948 seats in state legislatures.

Amanda Litman, the executive director of Run for Something, a progressive group that grooms candidates for office at all levels, proposes this corrective: ''Bring back the 50-state strategy. Invest in all state parties to build grass-roots infrastructure,'' she told me. ''Set the direction and tone: No office is too small, no community too unimportant. Then raise money for all of it.''

To the extent that, for the next two years, divided government severely limits the sort of public action that progressives dreamed about in their 2020 primaries, Mr. Biden could use his office to create task forces that normalize and build a public consensus for more significant small-d democratic changes to American politics achievable only down the road.

IV.

Despite our divisions, Mr. Biden could use the bully pulpit to bring the country together. He could promote local projects of dialogue and reconciliation, and continue to hold genuinely bipartisan town halls throughout his term.

Joe Biden -- simply by being himself and not Donald Trump -- can make a monumental difference. His evident basic goodness and empathy being of real use. And yet the Biden way -- the smiles, the giving out of his phone number, the backslapping of political foes -- tends to elevate personal kindness over systemic justice.

In the end, a basic choice may stalk Mr. Biden: What matters more, the radiation of personal decency or the pursuit of structural fairness?

There are some reasons to hope that he could be a bolder president than anticipated. He is that rare candidate who tacked toward the party base rather than the center in the general election. In certain areas, such as climate change and student debt, he has shown a willingness to have his initial policy view revised by others. He is less motivated by ideology than by the path of least resistance. Whether that path aligns with donors, the Beltway consensus or organized popular movements, he takes it.

The example of Lyndon Johnson -- a longtime senator and a vice president less charismatic than the president he served and succeeded who, nevertheless, became more consequential -- provides a possible historical analogue. Mr. Biden could turn out to be an improbably deft salesman for progressive priorities, using his disarming, folksy, median-voter-friendly patois, that ''C'mon, man'' Americana vibe, to make major changes seem like common sense.

''Joe Biden's magic is that everything he does becomes the new reasonable,'' Andrew Yang, once Mr. Biden's rival for the Democratic nomination, told me. ''He has shown the ability to move the mainstream of the Democratic Party on issues before. As president, whatever he does, he will bring the whole center with him.''

Mr. Giridharadas, publisher of The.Ink, is the author of ''Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World.''

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**Graphic**

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

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[***I’ve Never Given Birth – but I’ve Done My Share of ‘Parenting’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YNX-NV01-DXY4-X1DK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** PARENTING

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**Byline:** Angely Mercado

**Highlight:** In communities like the one I grew up in, nannies are a rarity, but a ‘village’ of neighbors and relatives can be counted on to pitch in with child care.

**Body**

In communities like the one I grew up in, nannies are a rarity, but a ‘village’ of neighbors and relatives can be counted on to pitch in with child care.

This story was originally published on Oct. 14, 2019 in NYT Parenting.

At 27, I’ve never given birth and I’ve never been pregnant. But I like to joke that I have “children.” I didn’t intend to spend my preteen and teenage years helping to raise several of my neighbors’ children. But somehow, children always found me.

My first baby was J, whose mother moved into the apartment next to ours when I was in elementary school in Ridgewood, Queens. I helped her clean her apartment some Saturdays, and she’d help me bake brownies. We watched ’90s telenovelas together – it was J’s mother, and not my own, who explained the plotline of “[*La Usurpadora*](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0211878/)” to me.

When I was 11 she told my family that she was pregnant. My mom explained that the situation behind our neighbor’s pregnancy was complicated, and that she would need our support. So I looked at sonograms, helped her carry heavy bags, and painted the baby’s room. My siblings and I pitched in to organize and set up the baby shower. And right after J was born, I slept on my neighbor’s couch, getting up at 2 a.m. to help fix his bottle and feed him. I almost fell asleep at school that first week, but I liked helping out. J was tiny and warm and he smelled like milk, and I loved sitting in my neighbor’s living room, rocking him to sleep. I used to wonder what kind of job he’d want in the future, if he’d look like his mom, or if he’d be tall.

My neighbor fainted when she went into labor and broke her leg, so she was put on bed rest to help her recover. During this period, she struggled with severe mood swings. I didn’t know [*what postpartum depression*](https://parenting.nytimes.com/health/postpartum-depression) was at the time; all I knew was that after someone had a baby, they became sad and tired and would sometimes wear the same house dress for over a week.

I couldn’t comfort my neighbor like her relatives or my mom could, and I certainly couldn’t understand why having a baby seemed to have made her so stressed out and unhappy. But I could help her care for her son. I was excited to finally meet J. I talked to him while I changed his diapers, I marveled at how tiny his toes were, and I practically cried when he started trying to gurgle responses to my questions.

I was there when J started learning how to walk and talk, and I was there when he started drawing recognizable pictures of things like airplanes and cars. I pushed J in his stroller while I followed his mom around grocery shopping, at doctors’ appointments, and on beach trips. My house name, Anga, was one of the first names J learned to pronounce. When he learned to read, J and I would help each other pick picture books. J liked anything to do with airplanes and animals so I always made sure to help him find those in the piles of books his mom had in her bedroom closet. I’d walk him to activities when his mom couldn’t and, as my parents often babysat J too, he was around pretty often.

But his early grade-school years were hard. J had trouble behaving, and I often had to mediate between him and his mother. I was still just a high schooler myself, but J and his mom had always felt like family. I wanted to do anything I could to make sure they would be O.K., even though I was really frustrated with his behavior, too.

“I don’t want to do laundry,” I remember him yelling at his mom. “I’m not going to the laundromat.”

I handed him his sneakers and walked with him to the laundromat. He complained and cried the whole time but I just kept handing him clothing to sort. Some days he’d refuse to get ready for school, or to leave the front steps of our building. My parents and I would help get J to school, convince him to do some chores, and talk to him about listening to his mom.

When I was in college, I’d drop J off at summer camp before heading to my summer class or summer job. On days when I was too busy to drop J off, a family friend whose daughters attended the same camp would take him. But his mom would tell me that he’d cry whenever I wasn’t there.

“The other girls are nice too, walking with them isn’t so bad,” I told him.

“Yeah, but I want to walk with you, not them,” he said.

J eventually started getting help for some of his behavioral issues, which made hanging out with him and his mom easier. As he transitioned into middle school, I didn’t have to watch him as often, but we’d go for walks sometimes and we’d hang out on my old block and talk about comic books and fan fiction.

I think of J as my “first baby,” but he wasn’t the only one. After I started high school, my nephews were born, and I graduated from one kid to a set of three. Whenever I felt overwhelmed, I’d remember what I did with J and it helped me through my auntie shifts with diaper explosions, middle-of-the-night bottles of milk, and the terrible twos. I’d take my nephews to the park, help watch them when my brother and sister-in-law ran errands, and I’d get them to finally go to sleep by telling bedtime story after bedtime story.

As I started meeting more people outside my community, I learned that affluent people didn’t always rely on neighbors and relatives and would hire nannies or babysitters. Most people from ***working-class*** communities don’t have nannies. But they have people like me.

Around that time, I learned that my mom had also helped care for her nieces and nephews, and the children of close friends, before having her own kids. My dad, who grew up as the middle child of 13 on a mountainside in Puerto Rico, practically raised his last two siblings. His older sister was taken out of school to help raise him. My maternal grandmother helped raise a lot of my mom’s younger cousins. She also helped raise me, and I helped take care of her for a while after she had a stroke when I was in high school. I’ve just carried on the tradition of “adopting” kids and and keeping them safe.

When I finally moved out of my parents’ home, I made sure to find an apartment in the same neighborhood so that I could still visit my nephews and still stop by to visit J and his mom. My nephews are in middle school now and tell me about their crushes and the teachers they like. They come over to my apartment and we sing Bad Bunny lyrics, make snacks, or go hang out on their front steps.

J is a teen now. He’s taller than me, really tan, and has a headful of beautiful curly hair. He likes video games and anime T-shirts.

“Were you my main babysitter?” he asked me a few months ago. “I remember seeing you around all the time.”

We were both sitting on my bed hanging out and catching up.

“I was always there,” I reminded him. I had missed seeing him around thanks to my crazy schedule when I was freelancing and working two jobs.

J watched the Fourth of July fireworks from our rooftop with me and my family this year. We talked about anime series that we both liked, and he told me about school and asked me about freelancing. We compared classic series and he nagged me about not finishing season three of “Attack on Titan.” We walked around after the fireworks and looked at stupid memes on his phone. It felt like hanging around a much younger brother again.

“How’s high school?” I asked him.

He rolled his eyes and then laughed.

“It’s not so bad actually.”

“At least it doesn’t suck as much as middle school,” I told him.

He asked to hang out again, and I told him I’d shoot him a text and that we’d go get lunch soon. We’ve messaged a few times, and if I go for too long without hearing from him, I reach out again or stop by to visit J and his mom. I’m proud that J is growing up and learning how to be comfortable with himself. And I like to think that hearing him out and doing my best to be patient helped him grow up to be the teenager he is today.

I’m still part of J’s village. And he’s part of mine.

[Read one mother’s story on the importance of the [*honorary “auntie.*](https://parenting.nytimes.com/relationships/the-importance-of-the-honorary-auntie)”]

Angely Mercado is a New York-based writer and freelance producer whose work has appeared in The Nation, Teen Vogue, Vice and NPR, among other publications.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY via Angely Mercado FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Coronavirus Briefing: What Happened Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YNR-WYK1-DXY4-X0SJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1552 words

**Byline:** Patrick J. Lyons

**Highlight:** A severe lack of testing capacity is hampering efforts to slow the outbreak and reopen the economy.

**Body**

A severe lack of testing capacity is hampering efforts to slow the outbreak and reopen the economy.

This briefing has ended. Read [*global live updates on the coronavirus here.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) [*Sign up here to get the briefing by email*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).

* American retail sales fell 8.7 percent in March, the [*largest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) drop on record.

1. Leaders around the world [*criticized*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) the Trump administration’s decision to halt U.S. funding for the World Health Organization.
2. [*Relief payments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html)under the $2 trillion stimulus package have started showing up in Americans’ bank accounts.
3. Read the latest updates: [*World*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) | [*U.S.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) | [*New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) | [*Business*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html)

Testing is the key

Have we slowed the spread of the coronavirus? Are we past the peak? When can we safely ease restrictions? How can we head off a second wave of infections?

The answers all depend on swift, accurate, widespread and readily available testing, both for active infections and for [*the antibodies they leave behind*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html). Without it, officials trying to grapple with the pandemic are flying blind.

But a severe lack of testing capacity [*has emerged as a signature failure*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) of the Trump administration’s response to the pandemic, and now threatens to hamper efforts to tamp down the outbreak and to reopen the economy.

Senate Democrats proposed on Wednesday that $30 billion be included in the next stimulus package for a national program to greatly expand testing and tracing of Covid-19 infections. “Each state can’t have its own separate plan,” Senator Chuck Schumer of New York said. “We need a national plan.”

Right now the main bottleneck for diagnostic testing isn’t lab capacity; it’s shortages of swabs and chemicals. Testing volume in the U.S. has been down significantly in recent days because of supply shortages, [*commercial labs say*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).

The F.D.A. has authorized a new type of test [*that uses saliva*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) instead of a nasal swab, and may reduce risk of infection for those who administer it. The test is being [*rolled out in New Jersey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) with help from Rutgers University, where it was developed.

Antibody testing, which reveals whether you may be immune to an infection, is only beginning to ramp up, and is still hard to come by in most places. But the rich, exclusive oceanfront community of Fisher Island, Fla., [*arranged to get every resident a test*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html). And researchers studying the virus’s prevalence across the country are testing [*10,000 employees of Major League Baseball*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) this week.

Worried about liability: Business executives told President Trump [*on a conference call*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) that much wider testing is needed before reopening the economy. They said they were worried about huge lawsuits if workers were called back too soon and became infected on the job.

The Times is providing free access to [*much of our coronavirus coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html), and our [*Coronavirus Briefing newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) — like all of our newsletters — is free. Please consider [*supporting our journalism with a subscription*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).

The closing of the American wallet

U.S. retail sales [*took a historic plunge in March*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html), falling 8.7 percent — another grim marker of the economic devastation caused by the virus.

It was the steepest one-month decline since the federal government started tracking total retail sales, which includes online sales as well as money spent in stores, restaurants, bars and the like. (The previous record came during the 2008 financial crisis, when sales fell nearly 4 percent for two straight months.)

April’s figure is likely to be worse: Most states did not shutter nonessential businesses until a few weeks ago.

With the retail decline, [*sales tax receipts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html), the biggest revenue stream for most states, have fallen drastically. Officials are scrambling for ways to keep public services running.

Though President Trump has predicted a post-crisis economic boom, a survey by the Federal Reserve has found that [*few U.S. businesses expect to bounce back quickly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).

All kinds of industries have been hurt, from automobiles to [*Hollywood*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html). Some producers are considering a pivot: With clothing sales falling sharply, some cotton growers may plant food crops this year instead.

Will students return to college in the fall?

Shutting down campuses for the spring has cost colleges and universities millions of dollars, as they canceled lucrative sports seasons and refunded room and board. The schools are bracing for an [*even bigger hit this fall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).

As colleges confront the possibility that online-only classes will continue into the next school year, they anticipate that many students will decide not to return, or will choose a less expensive option in a time of widespread unemployment. Many international students will stay home because of travel restrictions or fear of studying abroad. A trade group predicts a 15 percent drop in enrollment in the U.S.

Schools like Harvard and Stanford can fall back on large endowments, but many others worry that they may not weather the storm, and are freezing faculty salaries and pausing construction.

Changing admissions tests: Many universities have said they will temporarily [*stop requiring SAT or ACT test scores*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) for admission because of the pandemic. In response, the College Board, which administers the SAT, said on Wednesday that it would offer [*online versions of the test*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) for students to take at home if secondary schools remained closed in the fall.

Some critics said the move could put low-income students at an even greater disadvantage than they already face. “It’s different if you’re taking the test in a one-room apartment with 17 relatives in the background,” said Akil Bello, a senior director at FairTest, an organization that opposes the use of standardized tests in college admissions.

The Aya family shared with The Times the heartbreaking final text messages between a teenage daughter and her mother, who worked in the emergency room at a Brooklyn hospital until she was infected with the coronavirus.

[*Read Madhvi Aya’s story here.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html)

Hot spots

* Belgium now has the [*second-highest death rate in Europe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html), after Spain. At least 4,440 people there have died — around 383 per million residents.

1. The virus has spread rapidly in Detroit, where a large ***working-class*** population cannot afford to self-isolate and many people are still [*commuting shoulder-to-shoulder on public buses*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).
2. In Moscow, where there is more than 14,500 confirmed cases, a new digital pass system meant to control movement [*instead led to chaotic crowds*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html), setting back weeks of social-distancing efforts.
3. Romania, with around 7,200 confirmed cases and around 360 deaths, [*banned exports*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) of agricultural goods to countries outside the European Union. The country is the first member nation to do so.

What you can do

[*Rekindle romance.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) Quarantined with a partner? Here’s how couples can reignite romantic love and grow together, rather than apart.

[*Manage panic attacks.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) A sudden, short-lived feeling of anxiety, shortness of breath and disabling fear can be confused with symptoms of coronavirus.

[*Help those in need.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) Donating cash isn’t the only way. You can help people sign up for relief programs, drop off goods at a food bank or set up an online funding campaign for a struggling business.

[*Armchair travel.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) See the Northern Lights over Greenland, explore the great pyramids of Egypt and spot bald eagles in Hawaii as we take you on virtual visits to all 52 of our places to visit in 2020.

What else we’re following

* Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York said that he would require people [*to wear face coverings in places*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) where they could not keep six feet away from others.

1. Thousands of protesters in cars [*surrounded the State Capitol*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) in Michigan, accusing the governor of going too far with stay-at-home orders.
2. Money for the Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses hurt by the pandemic could run out [*as soon as*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) Wednesday night.
3. Dr. Anthony Fauci speculated that sporting events [*could resume this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) — without fans — if players were tested weekly and isolated in hotels.
4. One place you can still find [*a full sports calendar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html): Nicaragua. Only nine coronavirus cases have been reported in the country, though many people doubt the low toll.
5. A zoo in Berlin has drawn up a grim contingency plan: If food sources run out, it will [*feed some of its animals to others*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html). (The zoo said its prized polar bear, Vitus, would be the last to go.)
6. A 99-year-old World War II veteran set out to raise around $1,250 for Britain’s National Health Service by walking in his garden. As of Wednesday evening, [*he had raised more than $12 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).
7. What day is it? Stripped of life’s usual rhythms by the pandemic, [*people are losing track of time*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html). (It’s Wednesday, by the way.)
8. Eighteen of [*our veteran journalists shared “one bright thing”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html) from these bleak times: learning to cook, folding paper cranes, reconnecting with friends.

What you’re doing

While I usually send our emptied Amazon boxes straight out to the sidewalk for recycling as quickly as possible, I now save the flattened cardboard in my garage so that my 5-year-old has a treasure trove to reach into for daily art projects. He has created a pirate’s chest, a knight’s shield and a robot.

— Tesalia de Saram, Queens

Let us know how you’re dealing with the outbreak. [*Send us a response here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html), and we may feature it in an upcoming newsletter.

[*Sign up here to get the briefing by email*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/coronavirus-news.html).&lt;Unstash this line for the web version

Lara Takenaga and Jonathan Wolfe helped write today’s newsletter.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Rivals Target Sanders in Final Push Toward Iowa Caucuses***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y42-7XG1-JBG3-608V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 1, 2020 Saturday 08:38 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

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**Byline:** Sydney Ember, Reid J. Epstein and Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** The specter of the divisive Democratic battles of 2016 cast a shadow over the final days of the 2020 contest for Iowa as several candidates questioned the ability of Bernie Sanders to unite the party.

**Body**

The specter of the divisive Democratic battles of 2016 cast a shadow over the final days of the 2020 contest for Iowa as several candidates questioned the ability of Bernie Sanders to unite the party.

ANAMOSA, Iowa — The specter of the divisive Democratic battles of 2016 cast a shadow over the final days of the [*2020 contest for Iowa*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/03/podcasts/the-daily/iowa-caucus.html), as several leading presidential candidates questioned the ability of Senator Bernie Sanders to unite the party as its nominee while the Sanders camp sparred with allies of Hillary Clinton, his rival in the race four years ago.

The negativity and doubts aimed at Mr. Sanders on Saturday reflected a widespread belief among the other Democratic campaigns that he has perhaps the most political momentum heading into Monday night’s caucuses, which he narrowly lost in 2016 to Mrs. Clinton. While the political jousting was not ferocious, it echoed private anxieties among some moderate party officials that an Iowa win could propel Mr. Sanders, a staunch liberal, to more primary season victories and make him harder to beat in the long run.

The Sanders campaign was also facing some blowback on Saturday after one of its most high-profile supporters, Representative Rashida Tlaib, urged a crowd to boo Mrs. Clinton on Friday after she was critical of Mr. Sanders[*in a podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/03/podcasts/the-daily/iowa-caucus.html). Ms. Tlaib   [*apologized on Saturday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/03/podcasts/the-daily/iowa-caucus.html), only to receive words of support from Mr. Sanders’s campaign manager, who was then quickly called out by Mrs. Clinton’s spokesman.

Mr. Sanders made no mention of the rumpus during his campaign stops, largely sticking to his standard message and exuding confidence that he would have a strong caucus night. At times, he even seemed to be enjoying himself, sprinkling his remarks with wry jokes.

The rekindling of fights from 2016 — when many Sanders supporters were reluctant to unify around Mrs. Clinton, the party nominee — provided an opening for a line of attack on Saturday from Pete Buttigieg, one of the leading moderate opponents to Mr. Sanders.

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PHOTO: Representative Rashida Tlaib apologized on Saturday for booing Hillary Clinton at a Sanders event in Clive, Iowa, on Friday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WATSON/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** February 3, 2020

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[***Battles of 2016 Resurface as Rivals Make Late Push in Iowa***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y44-B4J1-JBG3-60JV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 2, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1378 words

**Byline:** By Sydney Ember, Reid J. Epstein and Katie Glueck

**Body**

The specter of the divisive Democratic battles of 2016 cast a shadow over the final days of the 2020 contest for Iowa as several candidates questioned the ability of Bernie Sanders to unite the party.

ANAMOSA, Iowa -- The specter of the divisive Democratic battles of 2016 cast a shadow over the final days of the 2020 contest for Iowa, as several leading presidential candidates questioned the ability of Senator Bernie Sanders to unite the party as its nominee while the Sanders camp sparred with allies of Hillary Clinton, his rival in the race four years ago.

The negativity and doubts aimed at Mr. Sanders on Saturday reflected a widespread belief among the other Democratic campaigns that he has perhaps the most political momentum heading into Monday night's caucuses, which he narrowly lost in 2016 to Mrs. Clinton. While the political jousting was not ferocious, it echoed private anxieties among some moderate party officials that an Iowa win could propel Mr. Sanders, a staunch liberal, to more primary season victories and make him harder to beat in the long run.

The Sanders campaign was also facing some blowback on Saturday after one of its most high-profile supporters, Representative Rashida Tlaib, urged a crowd to boo Mrs. Clinton on Friday after she was critical of Mr. Sanders in a podcast. Ms. Tlaib apologized on Saturday, only to receive words of support from Mr. Sanders's campaign manager, who was then quickly called out by Mrs. Clinton's spokesman.

Mr. Sanders made no mention of the rumpus during his campaign stops, largely sticking to his standard message and exuding confidence that he would have a strong caucus night. At times, he even seemed to be enjoying himself, sprinkling his remarks with wry jokes.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/01/us/politics/iowa-caucus-2020.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/01/us/politics/iowa-caucus-2020.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Representative Rashida Tlaib apologized on Saturday for booing Hillary Clinton at a Sanders event in Clive, Iowa, on Friday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WATSON/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** February 2, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Biden Can’t Be F.D.R. He Could Still Be L.B.J.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:617F-9CD1-DXY4-X04G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 6, 2020 Friday 12:43 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; sunday

**Length:** 2224 words

**Byline:** Anand Giridharadas

**Highlight:** He has the power to make transformational progress look like “C’mon Man” common sense. Will he use it?

**Body**

He has the power to make transformational progress look like “C’mon Man” common sense. Will he use it?

Let’s never do that again.

Soon, the worst president in modern American history will resume private life. Everyone who favors the rule of law, decency and truth is exhaling a long-deferred sigh of relief. Millions are upset that the election was as close as it was. Still, however narrowly, Americans have snatched our republic from the jaws of an encroaching autocracy. We deserve the catharsis — whether [*dancing in the streets*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20) or [*joy-scrolling*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20) in quarantine.

Gone from the White House will be an administration whose gaslighting operation was matched only by its hostility and deadly incompetence. Gone will be the necessity for, and our stupid hope in, saviors: Robert Mueller, state attorneys general, Anonymous, “concerned” Senators Susan Collins and Mitt Romney. Gone will be the Muslim bans, the human-rights violations at the southern border, the photo-op Bible shaken like a martini after federal police gassed nonviolent protesters. The parade of disheveled presidential associates under indictment, the Jared and Ivanka leaks, MSNBC’s nightly seminars on Russian oligarchs, the presidential retweets of literal white supremacists — gone.

Given the collective frenzy of these years, President-elect [*Joe Biden*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20) intuited that legions of Americans wanted a return to normal — a restoration, a reversion. The earnest hope in his promise “to restore the soul of America” was that the same country that uplifted Donald Trump and let itself be consumed by internet-fueled culture wars could heed its better angels again, as it did when it elected the nation’s first Black president on a hope-and-change mandate not so long ago.

But if this election is to have lasting meaning, we cannot see a Biden campaign victory as license to cast away politics as a presence in our daily lives. We cannot succumb to the liberal temptation parodied by the comedian Kylie Brakeman to “[*vote for Biden so we can all get back to brunch*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20).”

However effective it might have been at closing this race, this restorationist fantasy would be a terrible governing philosophy. Because the pre-Trump world — in which voting rights were being gutted and 40 percent of Americans [*couldn’t afford a $400 emergency bill*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20) — is no kind of place to go back to. Mr. Biden himself seemed to concede this point by tempering his restoration message with the slogan “Build Back Better.”

II.

On Election Day eve, I spoke with Senator Chuck Schumer of New York — the minority leader, who could, by a razor’s edge, become the majority leader in 2021 if the results of two presumptive runoffs for Senate seats in Georgia go the Democrats’ way. Because, like Mr. Biden, Mr. Schumer is an institutionalist and a moderate, I asked him about this idea of restoration versus transformation. Almost as soon as he heard me say the word “normalcy,” he began, for lack of a better term, to filibuster: “No, no, I don’t buy that.”

“My view,” he told me, “is if we don’t do bold change, we could end up with someone worse than Donald Trump in four years.” What passed for change in the past two decades (including during the Obama years) had not, he acknowledged, been “big enough or bold enough.” When I asked if Democrats bore some responsibility for that, he deflected: “There’s plenty of blame to go around.”

Even if, improbably, the Senate is on Mr. Biden’s side in 2021, he and his advisers will have to pull off a grueling balancing act: pushing federal policy to reflect popular will so that people’s lives can measurably improve, while making fundamental changes to the workings of American democracy and managing to heal rather than inflame the cultural resentments, racial hatred and party polarization that still imperil the Republic (and that the Republican Party thrives on).

Mr. Biden may take the oath of office facing a lattice of crises that make some other tough-times inaugurations look enviable: a health crisis, an economic crisis, a racial-justice crisis, a climate crisis and a crisis of representative democracy revealed and exacerbated by his predecessor. These are problems that snicker at incrementalism.

In one favorable scenario, come January, two Democratic runoff victories in Georgia leave a President Biden facing a 50-50 Senate, with his vice president, Kamala Harris, possessing the crucial tiebreaking vote. Even then, the scope of available policy reforms would still be substantially limited unless Mr. Biden sought to eliminate the filibuster that requires 60 Senate votes to get major legislation enacted. Doing away with this rule would, of course, immediately doom any chance of a constructive working relationship with Republicans.

But it could still be a risk worth taking. If Democrats win the two presumed Georgia runoffs, Senate Democrats will represent [*roughly 41 million more people than the Republican half of the chamber*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20). If Mr. Biden is to meet this moment, he can’t let his cautious temperament and deep hankering for civic comity stop him from making the policy changes families need.

The most immediate problem is the plague. Mr. Trump was so inept at containing it that he couldn’t even keep it from infecting him. But the sanity and science-based competence that Mr. Biden has promised will go only so far. Suppressing the virus and executing a vaccine rollout, while boosting an economic recovery that will have slowed over the winter, would require trillions of dollars in investment and a font of bureaucratic creativity.

For tens of millions, the economic traumas of the pandemic have come on top of decades of stagnation and precariousness. Since 1989, the wealth of the bottom 50 percent of Americans [*has fallen by $900 billion*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20). Before Covid-19, 44 percent of American workers were being paid median annual wages of $18,000. And the evictions now surging are coming in the wake of a housing market that has long been unaffordable. Even if high unemployment were reversed, it would hardly repair our increasingly classist and Uber-ized labor market.

And if Democrats do win the Senate? Senator Schumer told me he envisions a first 100 days filled with a raft of measures on the virus and economic relief, mixed in with policies that address inequality, climate change, student debt, immigration and more. A Biden administration’s early days “ought to look like F.D.R.’s,” he said. “We need big, bold change. America demands it, and we’re going to fight for it.”

Much, however, could still get in the way. First, Mr. Biden’s own instinct toward caution — which can easily end up enabling paralysis at a time when Democrats’ window for proving the promise of an active government could be closing. Any measure of success is likely to be determined by how seriously a Biden administration takes the inevitable calls for fiscal conservatism and austerity (despite historically low interest rates).

And there are early warning signs: Ted Kaufman, who is leading the Biden transition team, recently told The Wall Street Journal that because of Trump-era deficit spending, “when we get in, the pantry is going to be bare.”

A Biden administration could also perceive itself as owing a political debt to the most influential and visible center-right elements of his sweeping, unwieldy alliance of supporters. Young leftists of color from cities in major swing states are arguably more responsible for his win than Republican defectors like former Senator Jeff Flake and the former Republican operatives turned media darlings of the Lincoln Project. But who will have more of a voice in Washington?

On various matters of policy, Mr. Biden could find himself in an awkward fox trot with wealthy donors in liberal power centers like Silicon Valley and Wall Street — the kind of people who may love hanging “Black Lives Matter” signs in their yards more than they love Biden proposals like a Section 8 expansion that would allow more ***working-class*** Black families to live in their midst.

III.

And this, mind you, is the congenial scenario. It is a bit more plausible that Mr. Biden will face a Republican-controlled Senate, in which the majority leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, reprises his record-breaking Obama-era obstructionism to thwart Mr. Biden’s agenda and his re-election chances.

In this case, Mr. Biden could bypass Congress to make forceful changes in people’s lives — changes that would in their own way help address one root cause of the very gridlock those actions would be working around: lack of faith in government.

The growing sense, among both the party’s technocrats and its populists, is that their midterm fate lies in whether voters give Democrats credit for improving their lives — not on the processes used or norms violated to do so.

“A public health and economic crisis is not the time for incremental steps, small ideas or meekness,” Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, a leading Democrat in the House Progressive Caucus, told me. “Joe Biden can deliver on this from Day 1 with [*executive orders*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20) and administrative actions that cancel student debt, lower drug prices, strengthen workers’ rights and cut emissions.” The American Prospect recently published “[*277 Policies for Which Biden Need Not Ask Permission*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20),” based on the results of the Biden-Sanders unity task force.

Mr. Biden has an opportunity to seize on policies that, thanks to the heterodoxy of Trumpism, now have surprising resonance in both parties — but not for the traditional reasons of being milquetoast or appealing to corporatist moderates. [*A wealth tax polls surprisingly well among Republican voters*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20). Using the Department of Justice to crack down on monopolies and threats from China has some bipartisan support. As does actual infrastructure investment and, to a limited extent, raising the minimum wage.

Mr. Biden also does not need Mr. McConnell’s permission to build a down-ballot pipeline. One of the failures of the Obama years was [*the attrition of the Democratic Party beneath the president*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20): By 2017, its Senate seats had dwindled to 48 from 59, and it lost 62 House seats, 12 governorships and a whopping 948 seats in state legislatures.

Amanda Litman, the executive director of Run for Something, a progressive group that grooms candidates for office at all levels, proposes this corrective: “Bring back the 50-state strategy. Invest in all state parties to build grass-roots infrastructure,” she told me. “Set the direction and tone: No office is too small, no community too unimportant. Then raise money for all of it.”

To the extent that, for the next two years, divided government severely limits the sort of public action that progressives dreamed about in their 2020 primaries, Mr. Biden could use his office to create task forces that normalize and build a public consensus for more significant small-d democratic changes to American politics achievable only down the road.

IV.

Despite our divisions, Mr. Biden could use the bully pulpit to bring the country together. He could promote local projects of dialogue and reconciliation, and continue to hold genuinely bipartisan town halls throughout his term.

Joe Biden — simply by being himself and not Donald Trump — can make a monumental difference. His evident basic goodness and empathy being of real use. And yet the Biden way — the smiles, the giving out of his phone number, the backslapping of political foes — tends to elevate personal kindness over systemic justice.

In the end, a basic choice may stalk Mr. Biden: What matters more, the radiation of personal decency or the pursuit of structural fairness?

There are some reasons to hope that he could be a bolder president than anticipated. He is that rare candidate who tacked toward the party base rather than the center in the general election. In certain areas, such as climate change and student debt, he has shown a willingness to have his initial policy view revised by others. He is less motivated by ideology than by the path of least resistance. Whether that path aligns with donors, the Beltway consensus or organized popular movements, he takes it.

The example of Lyndon Johnson — a longtime senator and a vice president less charismatic than the president he served and succeeded who, nevertheless, became more consequential — provides a possible historical analogue. Mr. Biden could turn out to be an improbably deft salesman for progressive priorities, using his disarming, folksy, median-voter-friendly patois, that “C’mon, man” Americana vibe, to make major changes seem like common sense.

“Joe Biden’s magic is that everything he does becomes the new reasonable,” Andrew Yang, once Mr. Biden’s rival for the Democratic nomination, told me. “He has shown the ability to move the mainstream of the Democratic Party on issues before. As president, whatever he does, he will bring the whole center with him.”

(This article has been updated to reflect news developments.)

Mr. Giridharadas, publisher of The.Ink, is the author of “[*Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World.*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20)”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://twitter.com/EllieRushing/status/1324725533595312129?s=20).

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

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2020

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[***The Man Who Fought Homelessness and Won (Sort Of)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64P0-FMV1-DXY4-X2PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 2, 2022 Wednesday 15:49 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 7427 words

**Byline:** Alex Carp

**Highlight:** Steven Banks was the most effective social-services director in New York City history — and when he left office, there were still 45,000 people sleeping in shelters. Is that a success?

**Body**

To hear more audio stories from publications like The New York Times, [*download Audm for iPhone or Android*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp).

A little past midnight one June evening two years ago, Steven Banks, then the commissioner of New York City’s Department of Social Services, arrived at the Coney Island-Stillwell Avenue subway station, in South Brooklyn, to help see passengers off the trains. For the past seven weeks, the subway system had been closing for four hours each night — the first planned overnight shutdown in more than a century. Transit officials had explained the shutdown as a chance for a “deep cleaning” in the face of the pandemic, but at a news conference, [*Gov. Andrew Cuomo admitted that the decision would deny homeless New Yorkers a place to sleep*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp). Banks’s department had received four days’ notice, and it was all hands on deck.

A train arrived on the far side of the tracks. Stillwell is the last station on the F line, known to homeless-outreach workers as one of the more popular lines for people sleeping on the trains overnight. Many people stepping onto the platform walked right past workers asking, or trying to ask, if they had somewhere to go. Banks joined a pair of outreach workers from the Bowery Residents’ Committee, one of the organizations that regularly work with his department. They had stopped to speak with a middle-aged man who stepped off the train a few moments earlier. His head was shaved clean, and he wore a striped dress shirt, open to the chest, and a wood-bead necklace.

The man explained that he was staying at a shelter in Harlem with a work-training program, but when he missed his curfew, the shelter had filled his bed for the night. In one hand, he held a plastic clamshell filled with lettuce and ranch dressing.

“So you need a place to stay?” Banks asked.

“Just tonight, that’s it,” he said. He dipped a finger in the dressing. “They’re picking me up there at 7 for my program.”

Banks turned to Gabriel Pagano, then an overnight coordinator at the B.R.C. “You have something you can give him?”

“We’re calling for it right now,” Pagano said.

Banks directed New York City’s homelessness strategy from 2016 through the end of the de Blasio administration. But for 33 years before joining city government, Banks was a staff lawyer and ultimately attorney in chief at the Legal Aid Society, where he regularly sued the city on behalf of homeless people. His most famous case lasted 25 years. The litigation he led at Legal Aid hammered together, from the outside, much of the shelter-and-services system New York has today. It also made him one of the city government’s most notorious adversaries. As he stood alongside Bill de Blasio at the news conference to announce he’d joined the administration, the mayor was asked if he hired Banks in part to keep him from being able to sue.

Banks made homeless outreach a priority throughout his time as commissioner, and under his watch the number of outreach workers tripled, to more than 600. Department staff members noted that he sometimes broke up workdays by conducting impromptu outreach alone along the half mile in Lower Manhattan between the main offices of the Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration, the two city agencies under the D.S.S. umbrella. “There’s a part of him that almost feels responsible that he hasn’t solved the problem,” Pat Bath, a longtime colleague of Banks’s at Legal Aid, said.

Physically, Banks, 64, can make himself inconspicuous. He is 5 feet 7 inches tall, with small, round eyeglasses and a beard that he keeps just a touch thinner than the hair around the sides of his head. On the platform, he wore jeans and a pullover with a D.S.S. logo, and no one coming off the trains seemed to notice the word “Commissioner” embroidered on the chest in small, white script.

On the mezzanine at Stillwell, a man wearing flip-flops and a floral bathing suit stopped next to Banks. “You good?” Banks asked.

“I need somewhere to stay,” the man said. “I don’t have nowhere to stay.” He started to repeat himself, then trailed off.

“OK, we can get you a place to stay,” Banks said. D.S.S. has a database of New Yorkers who are living on the street, and outreach teams can view their case details — past conversations with outreach workers, the last shelter where they stayed — through an app on their phones. (“Nobody wants to keep answering the same questions over and over again,” Banks says.)

“Where were you last night?” Banks asked.

“Um, last night I stayed — where did I sleep last night?” the man said. “Oh, I was on the train! I had got off, and I started walking. When I came back, there wasn’t anybody at the station. So I waited until like 5, got back on the train.”

“Well, we’re going to get you a place for tonight,” Banks said. He waved Pagano back over.

New York is the only city in the United States with what’s known as a universal “right to shelter,” which means, broadly, that no one is turned away because the shelters are full. The right to shelter is Banks’s most wide-ranging victory — he won it as a lawyer at Legal Aid, in a lawsuit against an agency he was later appointed to lead — but also a reason that the city’s shelter system has become so overburdened.

When Banks left office, at the end of last year, conditions in some shelters remained dreadful, and investigations by journalists and the agency exposed financial irregularities and ethical concerns at some of the nonprofit organizations that partnered with the agency. Forty-five thousand New Yorkers remained in shelters. But under Banks, the average number of people in shelter declined for three years in a row, after rising for decades. Countless thousands were spared homelessness before they lost their housing, and [*New York became the first city in the country to guarantee that every tenant in housing court will have a lawyer.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) The department has been more effective than at any time in its history, yet still not effective enough.

When asked about this, Banks sometimes tells a story about a cross-examination he conducted at Legal Aid, a decade or so into the homelessness litigation. On paper, Banks had already won — the highest court in the state had ruled unanimously that families had a right to emergency shelter and that New York City had an obligation to provide it to them. But the city had families sleeping on the intake-office floor.

The witness testifying was a senior official at the Human Resources Administration. “One day the judge is sitting in court, listening to me ask this official, ‘What would it take to comply with these orders to provide shelter?’” Banks said. “And the judge, who had been presiding over this case for years, basically said, ‘Yeah, I’d really like to know the answer to this question — what would it take to comply with my orders that you’ve been violating all this time?’” Banks was struck by the honesty of the official’s response: “He said you need services to prevent homelessness, you need decent, adequate shelter for people who need it, and you need a way to provide permanent housing.”

Along with outreach, that view is more or less shared by experts across the field. The question of how to end homelessness, in one important way, has been answered for decades.

Banks knew this as a lawyer, and he knew this as commissioner. His career, however, seems to suggest a different question. If the people in charge — mayors, commissioners, Banks himself — have long known how to end homelessness, why haven’t they?

The Covid-19 pandemic has renewed a sense of a nationwide homelessness crisis. Cities that had long treated informal “tent villages” as a public nuisance and a target for removal, especially in residential and business districts, [*began to sanction them as a solution to meet immediate need.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) San Francisco established its first one downtown, a block from City Hall, in spring 2020. In New York, homelessness gained renewed visibility during the pandemic as D.H.S. moved 10,000 people, largely single men, from dorm-style shelters in all corners of the city into empty hotel rooms concentrated largely in Manhattan, at a time when remote work and other Covid disruptions reduced most other kinds of life on the street. The decision worked as a safety measure — the Covid rate in the shelter system was lower than the rate for the city over all — but the increased presence of shelter occupants in neighborhoods where other residents were not used to seeing them gave many the impression of an emergency out of control.

It has also renewed outdated myths about what homelessness looks like. People may become homeless if they are evicted but also if they age out of foster care, leave prison or a nursing home without support or seek to escape domestic violence. Many live precariously for long periods before an unexpected change upsets the balance of their lives: a death in the family, the loss of a job, a new child. Nationally, the age when people face the highest risk of a shelter stay is infancy. At its peak in New York more than two-thirds of the people sleeping in the city’s shelter system were families with children, and one in three families earned income. Homelessness in New York is, in large part, working families who return to a shelter at night.

In the absence of a comprehensive national effort to address homelessness, the responsibility falls to state and local governments. Shelter wait lists and limits on length of stay are not uncommon. Additionally, many shelters have rules that break up families, separating spouses from one another or sometimes a child from a parent. Others open beds only to whoever shows up first each night — securing one can mean standing in a line that begins in the afternoon, rather than working or looking for a job. In California, a recent reform to bring people off the streets has been found to effectively force a choice between forfeiting many of their [*possessions for a shelter stay or keeping their things but facing arrest or citation by the police.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) Some places seem to have shifted their focus from emergency shelter to housing subsidies as a more permanent solution, although the average wait for a subsidy is more than two years.

Almost universally, the resources and authority to address homelessness are spread across different branches of city and state government. Some cities have several departments that provide housing. Others have separate agencies for housing, homelessness and the social services that can keep people in their homes, each with its own political and policy incentives. Very few policymakers with the power to coordinate legislation more broadly — mayors, governors, members of Congress — choose to focus on homelessness over other priorities. Many proposals, especially ones written in the urgency of a crisis, seem designed less to improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness than to provide shortcuts to quell a backlash, move homelessness out of the sight of other constituents or minimize a political cost. One of the simplest ways to describe homelessness is as the failure of every other social system a government can provide.

In 2014, Banks was appointed commissioner of the city’s Human Resources Administration, which manages public benefits, including food stamps, Medicaid and cash assistance. Banks argued that the goal of the agency was, in addition to fighting poverty and income inequality, to prevent homelessness. (“I understand it’s not always the mission that’s been embraced previously,” he said, when pressed by a member of the City Council.) Within two years, he became commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services as well, and soon incorporated the two agencies into the Department of Social Services. Altogether, D.S.S. has about 16,000 employees and a $12 billion budget, which makes it the largest social-services agency in any American city.

New York’s homelessness services and shelter system were built by litigation, rather than legislation, a patchwork of narrow, nearly independent fixes to specific circumstances that it had been forced to address in court. In one of his appearances at the City Council as commissioner, Banks said that government officials acted as if they were faced with a temporary problem. “Modern mass homelessness,” Banks said, “has been an emergency for 40 years.” At D.S.S., he set out to create a total system, with each part aware of the others. It would be, essentially, the city’s first.

The litigation that has defined New York’s response to homelessness began in 1979, when a young lawyer named Robert Hayes filed a lawsuit that would lead to a right to shelter, but for men only. After Hayes won, New York resisted extending the right to shelter to women, and then to families, until it was sued again and again. “Government never responds to human need,” Hayes told me. “Government responds to pressure. And that became our job, to create pressure.”

Around this time, Banks started working at Legal Aid, where he was assigned to the organization’s four-person office on Staten Island. It was a neighborhood office, so the lawyers there handled whatever kinds of cases walked in the door. He has described his early days there as a version of “My Cousin Vinny,” a movie that he and his daughter can recite by heart. “The office was in kind of a run-down building, typical at the time for Legal Aid,” Banks said. “If I was interviewing a tenant on a housing case, I’d have to ask about the conditions in their apartment. I would point to the ceiling and say, ‘Is your ceiling better or worse than this one?’”

One day in 1982, a woman named Yvonne McCain walked into the Legal Aid office serving southern Brooklyn, looking for help with her public benefits. McCain and her four youngest children had been evicted earlier that year and spent two months “doubled up” at her disabled mother’s two-room basement apartment in Harlem before she found what she thought would be a new apartment in Brooklyn, close to where her children went to school. When the apartment fell through, she asked the city for shelter and was eventually placed in the Martinique Hotel, in Midtown Manhattan, one of 11 privately operated “welfare hotels” that New York had begun to use for makeshift emergency housing.

McCain would later describe her first night at the Martinique as “one of the worst nights of my life.” She found the mattresses burned, ripped and stained with urine on both sides, and the windows jammed open; the two rooms she had been assigned were on the 11th floor. “I stayed up all night crying,” she later recalled, “terrified that if I didn’t watch them, one of my children might fall out a window.” There was no heat or refrigeration and sometimes no running water. She put milk on the window ledge to keep it cold and hung a bag of food from a nail in the wall to protect it from mice and rats. She sponged the mattresses with disinfectant and, eventually, took in a stray cat to fight the rodents. Each morning, after accompanying her children on their commute to school in Brooklyn, McCain scoured newspaper listings and looked for affordable housing.

“At the time I didn’t altogether know what the Martinique was like,” Marcella Silverman, the Legal Aid lawyer who helped McCain find emergency housing, said. When she visited McCain’s room she felt that she must be looking at a violation of the law. Soon, lawyers from Legal Aid became regular visitors to hotels and city intake offices, looking for other families in similar circumstances — arbitrarily denied shelter, provided substandard emergency housing or given no notice of city decisions about their cases — who might be willing to join McCain in a class-action lawsuit demanding a right to shelter for families. “This was a practice case,” Silverman said. “We had to prove what the city’s practices were. And the only way to prove a practice is to put before the court more and more people suffering the same harm.”

The right-to-shelter cases built New York City’s shelter-and-services system in ways large and small. The city, essentially overnight, found itself with a legal obligation to house thousands of people and to provide minimum shelter standards that could be enforced by the court system. It tried to convert unused hospitals, schools and armories — buildings that were large, empty and publicly owned. “We just needed volume,” said Bonnie Stone, then an assistant deputy administrator at the Human Resources Administration. “Every day we were on the search for new places.” Shelters were often opened with little notice, under the cover of night.

A family shelter that was opened briefly in an unused Bronx jail had to be closed after inspectors hired by Legal Aid found lead paint. In other shelters, Legal Aid found violations of fire and safety regulations or hired inspectors who found dangerous levels of asbestos, allowing Banks to file motions that forced the city to find safer quarters. The city continually missed deadlines that he had persuaded the court to impose, and court orders mandating a narrow, legalistic solution to one problem could generate scores of others. With each violation, Banks returned to court, seeking enforcement. By the mid-1990s, he was responsible for enforcing the city’s compliance in the cases that Hayes brought as well, bringing every right-to-shelter claim under his purview.

Before long, city officials would make day-to-day decisions with an eye on the courtroom. “The system before asked essentially one contentious question: Are you eligible for shelter or not?” Linda Gibbs, then the D.H.S. commissioner, told reporters in 2004. “Now, instead of hiring investigators, we are hiring staffers with social-services backgrounds. We assume families that come to us have a problem, and we ask, ‘How can we help?’” Agency managers grew reluctant to analyze their own data, [*fearing that reports they produced internally would be subpoenaed by Legal Aid.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) A former D.H.S. commissioner told the public-policy scholar Thomas Main that when he was considering the job, a city lawyer asked him to be sure he really wanted it, “because you’re about to be named in over 70 lawsuits.”

Over the decades that he worked on the right to shelter, Banks came to know the system of shelters and services better than anyone else, in no small part because, directly or indirectly, it was built in response to what he persuaded the court to demand. By the time the McCain case was settled, in 2008, with a final judgment that permanently enshrined the right to shelter, a system that had barely served a few hundred people had become a city within the city, providing emergency housing for 35,000, and a body of law had been built block by block alongside it.

Thomas Crane, New York City’s chief of general litigation, estimates that in nearly four decades as a city lawyer, he has spent more time on homelessness litigation than on anything else. Crane said that “in the bad old days,” they were in court “every week or every other week, and when we weren’t in court, we were writing papers to address the motions that were being made,” he said. In one 18-month stretch, the city submitted more than 300,000 pages to court. “Steve knew what data was out there, and he’d want to get his hands on it,” Crane said. “And we had a lot of dirty laundry.” He added, “They were driving us crazy.”

Six years after reaching the settlement, Crane was in a meeting on other city business when, he recalls, “one of my colleagues who worked with me on homeless litigation burst into this office — just really burst in, with other people here — and said: ‘You won’t [expletive] believe it. Do you know who the new commissioner is?”’

Banks was the rare commissioner who had no previous experience working in government. Certainly no other agency head had made a career working against it. When he was a lawyer, staff members at one of D.H.S.’s intake offices had a running joke about posting Banks’s photo behind the desk, like a food critic’s in a restaurant kitchen, with a note to call management if he showed up. In the courtroom, it was easy to think that city officials’ hardheadedness was all that stood between Banks and the solutions to his clients’ problems.

The responsibility for finding open beds fell to a small office within D.H.S. called Housing Emergency Referral Operations, known inside the agency as HERO. HERO ran 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and may be the place inside D.H.S. that felt the right to shelter most acutely. “The office is working to forecast how much capacity is likely to be needed,” Banks explained. “Is there enough? Who is moving out? Where are they moving out from?” Another D.H.S. staff member who was not authorized to speak on the record described it more bluntly. “They make the math work,” he said. “It was a real thing — it’s not theoretical anymore. They got to show Banks what he had wrought.”

One of the first things Banks learned was that three people had to leave shelter for the city’s count, a number known as the census, to drop by one. This indicated not only an unrelenting demand for housing but also a system in near-constant motion. In 2018, when the annual census reached a record high — an average of 60,000 people per night — more than 132,000 people spent at least one night in shelter over the course of a year, enough for every bed in the system to turn over. The last thing Banks wanted was to be sued for violating the right to shelter, but the numbers were bleak. “He never mentioned it,” a HERO employee who worked closely with Banks at the time but was not authorized to speak on the record, said, “but if it was me, that’s what I’d be thinking, right?”

When Banks started, HERO’s day began at 6 or 7 a.m. with a review of remaining vacancies. HERO staff members then spent business hours making calls and visits to shelters and, often, cold-calling hotels for extra rooms. Early on, they were sometimes thwarted by disorganization elsewhere in the agency: They might hear from a shelter operator that had a pocket of open rooms but needed another D.H.S. office to approve its budget before they could be released. The office is legally mandated to place everyone by 4 a.m. — the next day’s first report on new shelter applications arrives just four hours later — and under Banks, they met their deadline every night, but in his first year sometimes not by much. “There were many days where the outsider looking in would think, Oh, today is going to be the day where we just don’t make it,” the HERO staff member said. “I’m sure many nights the commissioner was humbled by his nerves, watching it play out.”

It became clear to Banks that the shelter system should work locally rather than as a triage operation crisscrossing the city. “If I come from the Bronx and I work in the Bronx or my kids go to school there, or if I have health care needs there, or if my house of worship is there, what can the agency do to say I’m going to be sheltered as close as possible to those anchors of life?” Banks said. Shortly after he became commissioner, D.S.S. began to work with the City Council member Antonio Reynoso to open a pilot shelter that would prioritize people who lived nearby. Over the summer, the agency made plans for others, including one in Maspeth, a ***working-class*** community in western Queens. The neighborhood had long been majority white, but in recent years that majority became thinner and thinner. Maspeth was the first place where the neighbors called a large town-hall meeting to oppose a proposed shelter. They seemed unable to imagine that New York’s homeless residents came from every community district in the city, including theirs.

Residents held a meeting at the gymnasium of a Maspeth high school. The Queens Ledger reported that the gymnasium could hold about 750 people and that turnout surpassed 1,700. Banks stood behind a lectern at one end of the room, facing rows of people sitting in folding chairs. [*He was not received warmly.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp)

“To the people yelling at me in the front row, saying they should go back to East New York, I want to just emphasize again — ”

The crowd interrupted with cheers.

“ — I want to just emphasize again that there are 243 of your neighbors in shelters — ”

The crowd interrupted with boos.

Later that fall, protesters marched in front of Banks’s house four times, and he received a threatening phone call from a woman who declined to identify herself, mentioned his children by name and asked why he hadn’t picked up his newspaper the previous weekend. She said he would be hearing from her again. The Police Department instructed him to stop taking the subway to work. “People ask me, ‘You have a listed phone number?’” Banks said. “I thought that was part of what I was supposed to do, be accessible.” By mid-October, the landlord for the proposed shelter had pulled out.

Banks took two lessons from Maspeth. In neighborhoods that are likely to be hostile to new shelters, the agency no longer provided wide notice until they had a finalized agreement with the landlord. And Banks began to send an annual request to every community board and elected official in the city, asking for promising locations in their districts. “Some of them have been extraordinary partners,” Banks said. “But in other communities it doesn’t happen.” Eric Ulrich, a former City Council member from a district in southern Queens — “He came to a protest at my house,” Banks noted — tried to submit a location in the Bronx. “And when we open a shelter in a community like that, we might hear that there wasn’t any consultation. But we can say, ‘Well, wait a minute, we asked.’” By the end of 2021, more than 50 borough-based shelters had opened.

From the start, Banks began to put together things he hadn’t been able to win as a lawyer. He came into office shortly after the chief judge of New York’s highest court, Jonathan Lippman, convened a task force to [*investigate access to legal services in civil court.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) What it found was so stark — in New York City eviction cases, 99 percent of tenants appeared without a lawyer, while only 4 percent of landlords did — that the city’s housing courts began to gain a reputation as [*a collection-and-eviction service for landlords.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) “Ever since Gideon v. Wainwright, the seminal case on criminal legal representation, if your liberty is at stake, you have a right to a lawyer,” Lippman said. But Gideon applies to criminal cases only, not to civil litigation, like evictions. And if you can’t make your rent, it’s very unlikely you can pay for a lawyer. “Who do you think wins when one side’s got a lawyer and the other side doesn’t?” Banks asked.

Plenty of lawyers have argued for a right to counsel in housing court. Banks himself couldn’t get it to stick while at Legal Aid. But a commissioner who wants to make it a priority, he said, can accomplish things that are much harder to do on the outside. Banks created a pilot program, targeted by ZIP code, that provided counsel in housing court for any person who needed it. Some estimates put the cost of a full program at $200 million a year or more; the funding for Banks’s pilot began at $8 million. The idea of a citywide program had support from a growing group of advocates and members of the City Council, but it was received with less enthusiasm in the executive branch. (A spokesperson for the de Blasio administration said that the mayor and Banks worked closely throughout this project to make sure it had the funding and resources to be effective.) During a City Council committee hearing, Letitia James, then the city’s public advocate, relayed a conversation with someone she suggested was a city representative, who told her the city “should basically only give a right to counsel to individuals who have a likelihood of success.” James left unsaid how the city might evaluate that likelihood.

“Steve was the guy who had to get it across to the administration that you can make this work from a fiscal perspective,” Lippman said. “Little by little, he was able to wear the mayor down.” In 2017, de Blasio signed a law that expanded Banks’s program and imposed a deadline to reach every low-income tenant in the city by mid-2022. Lippman called it “the first really, truly, civil Gideon piece of legislation” in the country. It will likely have the furthest reach of anything Banks has done.

By the arrival of the pandemic, evictions in the city had dropped by more than 40 percent, and the dynamic of the courtroom had changed in other, indirect ways. Some landlords will stop pursuing certain kinds of evictions, Banks said, once they know there’s a lawyer on the other side. “There’s a kind of case that the landlord would never be able to win, because it had no merit,” he said. “But they were able to win with an unrepresented tenant.”

In 2020, the court system decided to hold all hearings virtually, and evictions slowed because of the statewide eviction moratorium. But they never entirely stopped. “So instead of the classic housing court, with thousands of cases on the calendar each day throughout the city, we had a system limited to the number of conferences the 50 judges can do over the internet,” Banks said. “And it turns out you can only do about 10 conferences a day, per judge. We could handle all of those.” As the city began to reopen later that year, the program soon expanded fully. The right to counsel had effectively arrived in housing court two years early.

For decades, the city’s response to homelessness had often been built around the idea, stated or not, that the right to shelter meant the shelter system could only grow and grow, regardless of cost, of the strain on other resources and of the number of qualified service providers. When previous administrations fought Banks, that was the idea of the future they were trying to refute.

Over Banks’s tenure, a series of investigations repeatedly pointed to the work still to be done. Tenants of a Bronx shelter company accused the chief executive of sexual assault or offering better living conditions in exchange for sex, and employees spoke of a pattern of sexual harassment and assault. A Queens-based nonprofit submitted invoices for services that the city could find no evidence it had provided. Another hired a security company founded by one of its executives as its largest subcontractor. (Many of the executives and providers denied wrongdoing.) Police Department data seemed to dispute D.S.S. safety reports. Several reports documented shelters with vermin and mold, and accounts of violence deterred people from leaving the street.

This fall, [*The New York Times published an investigation into CORE Services Group,*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) which operated several city shelters, that provided evidence of widespread financial improprieties. The Times noted that D.S.S. had been aware of many of the violations; it also noted that the agency continued to work with the organization after the violations surfaced. The investigation’s sharpest critique may have been one of its most subtle: Five people, identified only as current or former D.S.S. officials, told the paper that the city was hesitant to closely scrutinize the finances of nonprofit groups because the immense need for shelter and the legal obligation to provide it left the department with virtually nowhere else to turn.

“Among the things that keep me up at night is the concern that the pace of change isn’t fast enough,” Banks told me in October. “If CORE or any other organization does not agree to reforms that we are demanding, we will replace them. But we can’t replace them by just shutting their doors. We have to find alternate providers, and that takes time.” (The city cut ties with CORE the following month; the chief executive denies any wrongdoing and a spokesman for CORE disputes the city’s account of how their contract ended.) “I understand that’s unsatisfying to the public, because there is a sense that action should happen immediately,” Banks said. But the risk of tossing people onto the street is unacceptable.

Despite decades of work to ensure shelter, Banks sees it as necessary but insufficient, an “emergency-room response” to homelessness. “The ultimate tool that D.S.S. has to address homelessness is to provide people stability,” he said, to keep them from becoming homeless in the first place. “Food assistance, legal services, rent arrears — even in a good shelter, clients are going through the trauma of losing their home.”

From the start, he was determined to try to help keep residents in their homes. When Banks began at the Human Resources Administration, the city had stopped providing rental assistance entirely. He restarted it. He worked with the city’s Department of Education to identify students whose families were on the verge of homelessness, living with friends or relatives. He moved crisis-intervention workers into neglected communities. He reduced administrative barriers to other public benefits and made them available online for the first time.

It was not enough. D.S.S. is a social-services agency; the tools it has are social-service tools. Banks combed the city charter to find a passage that would give D.S.S. the legal authority to build housing; he couldn’t find it.

New York has lost roughly 150,000 rent-regulated apartments over the past 25 years, but the city’s affordable housing didn’t simply disappear — it was replaced. “The shelter system seems to me to be part of the housing market in New York City — it’s not like some add-on,” Kim Hopper, an anthropologist and one of New York City’s earliest homelessness advocates, said. “And I don’t see how you get around the problem of affordability without producing affordable housing.”

The city’s housing initiatives are assigned to a separate department, Housing Preservation and Development, with its own directives, its own commissioner and its own politics. It was the lead agency of the city’s housing plan. The agency began many of its projects with a set number of apartments put aside for people leaving shelter, but by the time negotiations between the city and developers were finalized, these units often vanished. In 2017, the agency’s commissioner at the time testified to the City Council that the agency is “often forced to reduce or eliminate homeless set-asides to garner support for our projects.”

After a few years in office, when Banks looked at the shelter census, he saw a number that had stopped rising but that he couldn’t get to drop. Social-service tools could keep more people from needing shelter, but there was hardly anywhere for the people already in shelter to go. Banks began to question why he had come into government. Maybe keeping the census essentially flat was the best D.S.S. could do.

Banks spoke with Lippman, the former chief judge of New York, who had become a kind of mentor and confidant. Banks consulted him before he decided to leave Legal Aid, and Banks approached him again. “He came to me and said maybe I can’t make the kind of change that I want to,” Lippman said. “Maybe I have to get out of here.” The question was whether Banks could hold onto his beliefs while holding onto his job. “And my advice to him,” Lippmann said, “was get the tools you need or get out.”

“He only stayed because the mayor promised him things that would help,” Lippman said. Without drawing much attention, parts of Banks’s social-services agency began to behave like a housing department. D.S.S. pieced together a kind of housing plan outside the city’s official housing plan, focused entirely on homelessness. The agency developed teams to investigate and prosecute landlords who discriminate against tenants paying with city vouchers. Banks demanded that landlords of apartments paid for with city public assistance make repairs or address unacceptable conditions. If they didn’t, he withheld payment to them or threatened to, which was often as effective, making D.S.S. an enforcer of the city’s housing code.

Part of D.S.S.’s portfolio was the “cluster program”: thousands of apartments the city rented in a series of run-down buildings for use as small-scale shelters, despite substandard maintenance and poor access to services. The city relied on the program for decades, but the cluster program had arguably the worst shelters in the system; Banks had always wanted to end it. “When I looked at it, I thought, OK, we want to end the program, we want to get clients into permanent housing and we want to preserve permanent affordability of that housing,” Banks said. “Why isn’t that a public purpose that’s suitable for eminent domain?”

Eminent domain is the ability of the government to take private property, at a fair price, and convert it for public use. “Government, in general, uses eminent domain all the time,” Banks said. “How did they create the railroads? How did they create the subways?” Banks threatened to take the clusters, and the landlords decided they didn’t want to test his argument in court. D.S.S. arranged for nonprofit housing organizations to buy and convert 45 cluster buildings, totaling more than 1,700 apartments, for use as permanent affordable housing. Nearly every transaction, by turning what had been a shelter unit into an affordable apartment, simultaneously reduced the number of people in shelter and increased the city’s affordable-housing stock. In the converted buildings, the private, market-rate units became permanent affordable housing, too.

The threat of eminent domain, especially from a social-services agency, is widely considered an extremely aggressive tactic. A covert housing program assembled outside the direction of the housing agency is essentially unheard-of. In part, Banks found his way to them out of desperation and creativity, and a conclusion that even prevention and shelter together were falling short.

Another reason might be that the city’s affordable-housing plan seemed to largely fail its homeless people. The city typically creates affordable housing in two ways: development and preservation. Development finances the construction of new buildings; preservation ensures that existing affordable housing does not disappear. The de Blasio administration’s flagship plan, called Housing New York, promised 200,000 units of affordable housing by the end of 2021. In December, the city announced that it had reached that goal, [*calling it a signal success*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp). According to Housing Preservation and Development data, however, it can take as long as four years from the time a new building is financed until it is built and occupied. The wait can be even longer for existing housing that the plan preserves: Those apartments are not available to new occupants until the current tenants leave. As of mid-2021, the city listed only one number for units — approximately 16,000 — that it had set aside for people exiting shelter. About half those units are supportive housing, available only to people with specific medical or social-service needs. The agency would not provide a more detailed count of the remaining “homeless set-aside” units, but according to internal agency data obtained by the Coalition for the Homeless, the number of those units “financed” by the spring of 2021 was fewer than 3,000. Even fewer than that, presumably, had been built.

Housing Preservation and Development says it does not have complete data on how many people the department has moved from shelter, though it does track how many units it has filled. As of mid-2021, excluding supportive housing, whose placement is largely determined by D.S.S., that number was 5,133. The agency estimates this to be housing for “nearly 12,000 people.”

D.S.S. was left to fill the gap, without the tools of Housing Preservation and Development. Over the same period, D.S.S. found post-shelter affordable housing for more than 144,000 people. D.S.S. couldn’t build permanent affordable housing to bring New Yorkers out of homelessness, but Banks created more of it than anyone else, including the housing department.

New mayors like to pick their own deputies, and no one wants an adversary for a partner. Last summer, though, after Eric Adams won the Democratic primary, he told the local news channel PIX11 that he was not planning to replace every commissioner and mentioned Banks’s work. When Adams won the election, a person “close to the Adams campaign and transition” told the news organization City Limits that it was a [*“done deal” that Banks would continue in his role.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=steven_banks_homelessness_carp) “Even if you don’t like him, you have to keep him on,” the person said. (The Adams administration and Banks declined to comment.) But Banks decided to get out. In November he announced that he would lead the pro bono practice at the law firm Paul, Weiss, which litigates public-interest cases nationwide. Adams promoted the administrator of the Human Resources Administration, Gary Jenkins, who had worked for Banks.

The mayors that Banks fought at Legal Aid would argue that they couldn’t end homelessness without a state and federal government willing to help. They may have been right in a very narrow sense, but they were wrong where it counted. “If you want to end homelessness, you need the other two levels of government working with you rather than against you,” Banks said. “But that doesn’t let the city off the hook.” The de Blasio administration was the first in 40 years to have fewer people in shelter on its last day than on its first. “We’ve shown what the city can do with a social-service response,” Banks said. He has also shown, he says, how beholden the Department of Social Services is to other systems that create the need for shelter. The cost of their failures appear in the shelter budget.

“When we brought McCain,” Banks said, referring to the right-to-shelter case he argued for nearly three decades, “we couldn’t make a claim for permanent housing because all of the case law said there wasn’t a right to permanent housing.” The right to shelter was the limit to what the law would allow. The language in the state constitution that anchors it is vague — it says little more than that “the aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns, and shall be provided by the state” — and had lay dormant for nearly 50 years. “What brought it to life,” Banks said, “was modern mass homelessness.” New Yorkers were freezing to death in the streets or losing limbs to hypothermia, and Banks and his colleagues thought that the social circumstances should change the way that the courts interpreted the law. Their work, eventually, showed that they were right.

Over the past two years, our social circumstances have been reordered again. A pandemic still not under control has been shown to spread more rapidly in overcrowded housing. “Is that not a ‘public concern’?” Banks asked. Additionally, he said, “federal law already provides a right to housing assistance — if you own your home.” There are tax deductions available to mortgage holders and a suite of subsidies open to homeowners. The path to prosperity in America — to the kind of wealth that can be passed from one generation to the next — runs through housing, and for the bulk of the last century, it also ran through discriminatory policies, like redlining and segregation, that governed homeownership. This means it has also been a way for intergenerational wealth to be denied. Yet the tax code continues to reward homeowners and ignore renters. “We’re at a moment of racial reckoning,” Banks said. “Isn’t there an argument to be made that now is the time to undo the impact of current law that provides a right to housing assistance if you own your home, but not if you don’t?”

The moral argument for a right to housing, cynics might say, remains naïve; it has always been too idealistic to catch on widely. But the grounds for a legal argument may have just taken shape, and Banks has made a career of moral arguments spoken through the language of the law.

“Let me put it this way,” Banks said. “I look forward to returning to the practice of law, and it would be a great case to bring.”

Alex Carp is a research editor for the magazine. He has written for The New Yorker, The New York Review of Books online and The Believer. Ahmed Gaber is a photographer who works to capture stories of everyday people and experiences. Originally working in his homeland, Egypt, he now lives and works in New York.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (MM40-MM41); STEVEN BANKS DURING AN OVERNIGHT OUTREACH PROGRAM ON THE SUBWAY IN DECEMBER. (MM42-MM43); TROY MILLS, 54, AT A SINGLE-ADULTS SHELTER IN THE BRONX WHERE HE HAS BEEN LIVING FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AHMED GABER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM44-MM45)

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[***Affirmative Action: The Uniquely American Experiment; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y3H-B5B1-DXY4-X4MD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1531 words

**Byline:** Orlando Patterson

**Highlight:** In “The Affirmative Action Puzzle,” Melvin I. Urofsky looks at over a century of efforts to combat racial injustice in America.

**Body**

THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PUZZLE

A Living History From Reconstruction to Today

By Melvin I. Urofsky

For two and a half centuries America enslaved its black population, whose labor was a critical source of the country’s capitalist modernization and prosperity. Upon the abolition of legal, interpersonal slavery, the exploitation and degradation of blacks continued in the neoslavery system of Jim Crow, a domestic terrorist regime fully sanctioned by the state and courts of the nation, and including Nazi-like instruments of ritualized human slaughter. Black harms and losses accrued to all whites, both to those directly exploiting them, and indirectly to all enjoying the enhanced prosperity their social exclusion and depressed earnings made possible. When white affirmative action was first developed on a large scale in the New Deal welfare and social programs, and later in the huge state subsidization of suburban housing — a major source of present white wealth — blacks, as [*the Columbia political scientist Ira Katznelson has shown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email), were systematically excluded, to the benefit of the millions of whites whose entitlements would have been less, or whose housing slots would have been given to blacks in any fairly administered system. In this unrelenting history of deprivation, not even the comforting cultural productions of black artists were spared: From   [*Thomas “Daddy” Rice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email) in the early 19th century right down to Elvis Presley, everything of value and beauty that blacks created was promptly appropriated, repackaged and sold to white audiences for the exclusive economic benefit and prestige of white performers, who often added to the injury of cultural confiscation the insult of blackface mockery.

It is this inherited pattern of racial injustice, and its persisting inequities, that the American state and corporate system began to tackle, in a sustained manner, in the middle of the last century. The ambitious aim of Melvin I. Urofsky’s “The Affirmative Action Puzzle: A Living History From Reconstruction to Today” is a comprehensive account of the nonwhite version of affirmative action. This is a complex and challenging historical task, given that “no other issue divides Americans more.” But Urofsky, by and large, has executed it well. Following the United States Commission on Civil Rights, he defines affirmative action as a program that provides remedy for the historical and continuing discrimination suffered by certain groups; that seeks to bring about equal opportunity; and that specifies which groups are to be protected. Urofsky explores nearly all aspects of the program — its legal, educational, economic, electoral and gender dimensions, from its untitled beginnings during Reconstruction to the present. The one major missing part of the puzzle in his otherwise thorough account is the military, which is unfortunate since, as [*the military sociologist Charles Moskos pointed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email) out, “nowhere else in American society has racial integration gone as far or has black achievement been so pronounced.” This deserved a long chapter.

Urofsky claims not to make the case for or against affirmative action but admits to being “conflicted” on the matter. He distinguishes between what he calls soft and hard affirmative action, the first aimed at removing barriers only, the second attempting positive action that results in the observable betterment of the excluded group. He repeatedly says that he favors soft affirmative action. But, to his credit, the “facts on the ground” that he assiduously marshals indicate that merely providing equal opportunity does not work, for reasons eloquently spelled out by President Lyndon Johnson in his [*celebrated 1965 commencement address*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email) at Howard University: “It is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates.”

Urofsky reveals that many presidents, administrators and activists, while proclaiming soft affirmative action, have struggled to make it work. Some, like John F. Kennedy, and especially Johnson, as well as Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, have publicly voiced their support for colorblind, anti-quota, equal opportunity only, and individualistic rather than group-based approaches, while quietly allowing their administrators to craft pragmatic programs that did just the opposite, to the benefit of the disadvantaged. Some, like Ronald Reagan and the elder George Bush, have openly attempted to abolish the program but failed. Richard Nixon (who else?) made it the centerpiece of arguably the most Machiavellian strategy in modern American political history: His [*Philadelphia Plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email), with its blatant minority business set-asides and insistence on craft unions’ acceptance of blacks, was the most extreme hard version of the program ever undertaken, resulting in major improvements for blacks at all levels of the economy, to the applause of nearly every black leader. But it was also, deliberately, a key element in his   [*notorious Southern strategy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email), successfully shattering the traditional bond between white ***working-class*** union members and the Democratic Party, and paving the way for the Reagan Democrats and the modern Republican ascendancy.

The nation’s jurists have been just as divided in their approaches, and Urofsky deploys his legal expertise to great effect in analyzing the numerous cases that have been argued over the policy. The irony of this struggle is that the courts have reached a compromise, saving the program by completely redefining its rationale from the original aim of remedying centuries of black disadvantage to that of promoting diversity, which, one might argue, could be achieved in the complete absence of blacks. Urofsky’s analysis of the [*DeFunis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email),   [*Bakke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email) and   [*Weber*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email) cases of the 1970s is a gem. It not only clarifies for the layman the cases’ legal niceties but also concludes, instructively, that the less celebrated Weber case of 1979, in which it was decided that Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act “did not foreclose private race-conscious affirmative action plans,” may have been the most consequential. It gave the private sector far more flexibility than government and academia in designing affirmative action programs.

It is in academia that affirmative action battles have been most ferociously fought, and Urofsky devotes two chapters to this. The first focuses on the turmoil of the ’70s, especially the City University of New York’s botched open enrollment program and the problem of minority faculty recruitment; the second deals with the current situation, and the shift from compensation to diversity as affirmative action’s main justification. The curious feature of this entire debate is that it is largely a praetorian squabble about who has the right to attend the nation’s most elite colleges and to join the nation’s elite. Urofsky agrees with Derek Bok and William Bowen (“The Shape of the River,” 1998) that it is a question of “principle versus principle, not principle versus expediency.” In fact, the issue is of relatively small consequence to the 75 percent of the nation’s colleges, many of them first-rate, that teach the vast majority of American students and accept nearly all applicants.

“The Affirmative Action Puzzle” deserves a better closing chapter. Urofsky claims that no coherent picture emerges from his painstaking study. To the question of whether disadvantaged minorities have benefited from the program, he answers, “Yes … and No.” It is questionable, however, whether affirmative action could have solved all or even most of the problems of blacks, women and other disadvantaged groups. That surely must await more fundamental structural and political changes that might address America’s chronic postindustrial inequality and labor precariousness. The remarkable thing is that affirmative action is now an integral part of the moral, cultural, military, political and economic fabric of the nation. Its businesses, educational system and political directorate have largely embraced it and the court undoes it at the cost of its own legitimacy. Even Donald Trump claims that “I’m fine with affirmative action. We’ve lived with it for a long time.” It has profoundly transformed the lives and opportunities of a substantial number of black people and the public honor of all of them.

The great merit of this meticulously researched, honestly crafted work is that it allows readers to draw their own conclusions about the value of this uniquely American experiment, quite independent of the author’s own conflicted views about it.

Orlando Patterson’s “Slavery and Social Death” was recently reissued. His latest book is “The Confounding Island: Jamaica and the Postcolonial Predicament.” THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PUZZLE A Living History From Reconstruction to Today By Melvin I. Urofsky Illustrated. 570 pp. Pantheon Books. $35.

PHOTO: Demonstrators march in Washington in support of affirmative action, 1977. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS) (B20)

**Related Articles**

* [*Making Affirmative Action White Again*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email)

1. [*‘Dissent and the Supreme Court,’ by Melvin I. Urofsky*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email)
2. [*How Brandeis, Revered or Hated, Became a Giant of the Supreme Court*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/books/review/when-affirmative-action-was-white-uncivil-rights.html?auth=login-email&amp;login=email)

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[***Fliers and Fanfare May Come Too Late as Latinos Shun the Census***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60JD-NBB1-DXY4-X0F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Miriam Jordan

**Body**

Many Latinos in low-income communities say they are hearing a message about the 2020 census: Your participation is not wanted.

PERRIS, Calif. -- For one day at least, as a 10-car parade of vehicles with honking horns, pompoms and signs reading ''Get Counted'' crawled through this predominantly Latino agricultural town about 70 miles east of Los Angeles on Friday, it was hard to forget that the 2020 census was going on and that it mattered.

Daniel Cordero, 63, a Mexican immigrant who shares a home with 15 people, including his wife, children and grandchildren, was just the kind of person that the event, billed as ''Get Out the Count,'' was intended to reach.

But as he stepped out of his kitchenware store on D Street in downtown Perris on Friday to observe the parade, he wasn't quite sold. ''We're working so hard, we don't have time to be filling out questionnaires,'' he said.

''I haven't filled it out,'' he added. ''I have never filled it out.'' He took a flier from one of the volunteers, examining it like one of his customers contemplating his wares, and said that he might consider it. ''It'd be the first time,'' he said without much enthusiasm, before returning to work in his store stocked with pots, pans, brooms and other household items.

It has always been a challenge to get an accurate count of people in places like this dusty ***working-class*** town of 80,000 people, where about three quarters of the population is Hispanic, many of them immigrants. Throw in a pandemic and a cascade of messages from President Trump making many Latinos wary of the census, and the challenge grows exponentially.

But when the Census Bureau on Monday said it would lop off four weeks from the 10 it had allocated for a door-to-door count of the hardest to reach communities, the move added a new sense of urgency to efforts to reach farmworkers and undocumented immigrants in Perris as well as other communities with different challenges around the country. The situation is likely to be even worse in communities and states where there is less government involvement in the census and fewer organizations on the ground to press for participation.

''We have to keep dodging bullets to reach our community, and now we have limited time,'' said Luz Gallegos, the director of TODEC Legal Center, an immigrant services provider that operates in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. ''We are going to continue to push until the deadline.''

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The Census Bureau announced on Monday that it will halt counting on Sept. 30, four weeks earlier than planned, cutting short door-knocking, which begins nationwide on Aug. 11, and the time people have to submit responses online, over the phone and by mail.

In March, the Census Bureau sent out invitations by mail to people across the country asking them to respond to the 2020 census. Next week, after a delay in outreach because of the coronavirus, census workers will start knocking on doors of homes whose residents have not yet participated.

The numbers are enormously important, especially in a poor community in need of all available federal resources. The count is used to reapportion all 435 House seats and thousands of state and local districts, as well as to divvy up trillions of dollars in federal grants and aid.

Census officials say they can still do an accurate count with the new deadline. ''We will be hiring more people to knock on those doors so we can get to all of the households that haven't responded yet,'' a Census Bureau spokeswoman said. ''Our recruiting pool, which is very large, puts us in a good position to do this.''

But experts are skeptical.

''We will have a flawed census that will be fatal to certain groups,'' said Paul Ong, a researcher at U.C.L.A.'s Luskin School of Public Affairs who studies census participation and has served as an adviser to the Census Bureau.

Despite an unprecedented $187 million investment in outreach by the state and nonprofits in California, residents of Latino communities have been responding at lower rates than in 2010. Nationally, the trend is the same.

In some census tracts in far-flung areas of Riverside County, the response rate is hovering between 40 and 50 percent, about 10 percentage points behind the response rate a decade ago.

Even before the coronavirus hit, the census faced extraordinary challenges.

The Constitution requires a count of all residents, regardless of nationality or immigration status. California is home to almost 11 million immigrants, including about two million who are undocumented.

But President Trump pushed for 19 months, starting in 2018, to include a citizenship question on the decennial census, despite widespread criticism that it would dramatically depress responses, particularly from Latino immigrants. After the Supreme Court opposed the plan last year, Mr. Trump backed down.

Then last month he directed the government not to count undocumented immigrants for the purposes of reapportioning congressional seats. His policy memorandum would have the Census Bureau remove the immigrants from each state's count using data estimates. While the move is being challenged in court, it has sown confusion anew in immigrant communities.

For many immigrants, documented and undocumented, his repeated insistence on not counting undocumented people has sent what seemed like a clear message: Your participation is not wanted.

Liz and Daniel Rivera, undocumented Mexicans who have lived in Riverside County for 18 years, were too nervous to fill out the 2010 census, they said. But this year, after attending workshops at TODEC, they were persuaded to fill out the form.

''We understood that it was safe and that it was important to participate if we want funding to improve our schools, parks and roads,'' said Ms. Rivera, who said that she shared the information with friends and family.

But the couple delayed completing the online form after they, their two children and Ms. Rivera's father, who is living with them, fell ill with Covid-19. While at home, they heard about Mr. Trump's new presidential order to exclude undocumented immigrants from the count.

''We were so confused. We thought we weren't supposed to participate anymore,'' Ms. Rivera recalled.

She decided to call TODEC to inquire, just to be sure, and a staff member assured her that the Rivera household still had every right to take part. The couple plan to fill out the form next week.

Maria and Ramon Garcia, who have lived in the United States for two decades, said they had intended to complete the census until Mr. Trump's recent announcement. Now they fear that participating could land them in the cross hairs of immigration enforcement.

''We were told that we should be counted,'' said Mrs. Garcia, 50. ''But then, just recently, we heard that the president doesn't want us to be counted, and we're worried that we could be deported if we participate.''

The Garcias called TODEC's hotline on Friday to seek the legal center's advice but could not be convinced that participating was safe.

''We came here from Mexico many years ago. We pay taxes, we work hard and we don't want to put that in jeopardy,'' said Mr. Garcia, 57, who has a gardening business with his wife. ''I don't think we should participate in the census.''

Adán Chávez, deputy director of the national census program at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, said that reaction was widespread.

''We have had to contend with challenge after challenge, attack after attack that threatens our census work,'' he said.

The group has responded by intensifying its ''¡Hagase Contar!'' (''Be Counted'') campaign, working with Spanish-language television to promote participation and calls to a hotline that answers questions and helps people complete the census in Spanish.

''Our lift was already much heavier in the middle of a pandemic,'' Mr. Chávez said. ''Now we're having to tell people that everyone gets counted, it's your right. Don't worry.''

According to an analysis of census data to be released next week by Mr. Ong's team, the estimated median response rate for Hispanics nationwide was 50 percent by August, down by nearly 13 percentage points from 2010. Among non-Hispanic whites, the estimated response rate was 69 percent, compared with 71 percent a decade ago.

States with large undocumented populations -- California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey and Illinois -- stand to lose the most from an undercount.

TODEC volunteers began last year to go door-to-door in hard-to-count neighborhoods, in the rural reaches of Riverside County, to educate immigrants about the census. They erected booths at health fairs and hosted information sessions to educate people about the census.

But like other groups working in the field, it was forced to shift strategy -- to phone banking, social media and Zoom info sessions in March, when the coronavirus began coursing through California.

On a Zoom call last Thursday titled, ''The Census and My Community,'' which was also streamed on Facebook, TODEC staff and a Census Bureau representative spent a full hour trying to motivate Latinos to participate.

''If we respond, our community will get money. But if we aren't counted, it's as if we don't exist,'' said Lupe Camacho, the bureau's representative.

She appealed to their commonality as immigrants. ''I'm from Mexico,'' said Ms. Camacho, who spoke in Spanish throughout the session. ''I'm a naturalized citizen. But citizenship has nothing to do with this.''

During the session, she described the census as ''pure statistics,'' ''completely confidential'' and ''posing no danger,'' all but pleading for participation.

''We don't pass on any information about anyone -- not to the DMV, not to ICE, not to any city, state or federal authority,'' she said, referring to the department of motor vehicles and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

In Perris, there were bright moments as well as cautionary ones.

Maria Estela Perez Gomez, 55, emerged from her beige house at the sight of the caravan. ''We filled out our census form,'' she said excitedly, doing a little dance as a Mexican band that was part of the parade and procession played.

The hurdles have also motivated some people.

Montserrat Gomez, a 19-year-old college student, said the decision to curtail the count was one reason she joined the group of young adults, mostly children of immigrants, who marched through downtown Perris on Friday waving signs and distributing fliers.

''We need to convince them that they need to be counted so that the community receives the political representation and financial resources that it deserves,'' she said. ''And now we have less time to do it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/09/us/california-census-deadline-immigrants.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/09/us/california-census-deadline-immigrants.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Vehicles and a band paraded through Perris, Calif., a mostly Latino agricultural town, on Friday to raise awareness for the census. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN MONTERROSA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***In California, It Will Take More Than a Parade to Save an Imperiled Census***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60JD-MH11-JBG3-63S5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Many Latinos in low-income communities say they are hearing a message about the 2020 census: Your participation is not wanted.

**Body**

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But as he stepped out of his kitchenware store on D Street in downtown Perris on Friday to observe the parade, he wasn’t quite sold. “We’re working so hard, we don’t have time to be filling out questionnaires,” he said.

“I haven’t filled it out,” he added. “I have never filled it out.” He took a flier from one of the volunteers, examining it like one of his customers contemplating his wares, and said that he might consider it. “It’d be the first time,” he said without much enthusiasm, before returning to work in his store stocked with pots, pans, brooms and other household items.

It has always been a challenge to get an accurate count of people in places like this dusty ***working-class*** town of 80,000 people, where about three quarters of the population is Hispanic, many of them immigrants. Throw in a pandemic and a cascade of messages from President Trump making many Latinos wary of the census, and the challenge grows exponentially.

But when the Census Bureau on Monday said it would lop off four weeks from the 10 it had allocated for a door-to-door count of the hardest to reach communities, the move added a new sense of urgency to efforts to reach farmworkers and undocumented immigrants in Perris as well as other communities with different challenges around the country. The situation is likely to be even worse in communities and states where there is less government involvement in the census and fewer organizations on the ground to press for participation.

“We have to keep dodging bullets to reach our community, and now we have limited time,” said Luz Gallegos, the director of TODEC Legal Center, an immigrant services provider that operates in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. “We are going to continue to push until the deadline.”

[Sign up [*for California Today*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/california-today), our daily newsletter from the Golden State.]

The Census Bureau announced on Monday that it will halt counting on Sept. 30, four weeks earlier than planned, cutting short door-knocking, which begins nationwide on Aug. 11, and the time people have to submit responses online, over the phone and by mail.

In March, the Census Bureau sent out invitations by mail to people across the country asking them to respond to the 2020 census. Next week, after a delay in outreach because of the coronavirus, census workers will start knocking on doors of homes whose residents have not yet participated.

The numbers are enormously important, especially in a poor community in need of all available federal resources. The count is used to reapportion all 435 House seats and thousands of state and local districts, as well as to divvy up trillions of dollars in federal grants and aid.

Census officials say they can still do an accurate count with the new deadline. “We will be hiring more people to knock on those doors so we can get to all of the households that haven’t responded yet,” a Census Bureau spokeswoman said. “Our recruiting pool, which is very large, puts us in a good position to do this.”

But experts are skeptical.

“We will have a flawed census that will be fatal to certain groups,” said Paul Ong, a researcher at U.C.L.A.’s Luskin School of Public Affairs who studies census participation and has served as an adviser to the Census Bureau.

Despite an unprecedented $187 million investment in outreach by the state and nonprofits in [*California*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/california-today), residents of Latino communities have been responding at lower rates than in 2010. Nationally, the trend is the same.

In some census tracts in far-flung areas of Riverside County, the response rate is hovering between 40 and 50 percent, about 10 percentage points behind the response rate a decade ago.

Even before the coronavirus hit, the census faced extraordinary challenges.

The Constitution requires a count of all residents, regardless of nationality or immigration status. California is home to almost 11 million immigrants, including about two million who are undocumented.

But President Trump pushed for 19 months, starting in 2018, to include a citizenship question on the decennial census, despite widespread criticism that it would dramatically depress responses, particularly from Latino immigrants. After the Supreme Court opposed the plan last year, Mr. Trump backed down.

Then last month he directed the government not to count undocumented immigrants for the purposes of reapportioning congressional seats. His policy memorandum would have the Census Bureau remove the immigrants from each state’s count using data estimates. While the move is being challenged in court, it has sown confusion anew in immigrant communities.

For many immigrants, documented and undocumented, his repeated insistence on not counting undocumented people has sent what seemed like a clear message: Your participation is not wanted.

Liz and Daniel Rivera, undocumented Mexicans who have lived in Riverside County for 18 years, were too nervous to fill out the 2010 census, they said. But this year, after attending workshops at TODEC, they were persuaded to fill out the form.

“We understood that it was safe and that it was important to participate if we want funding to improve our schools, parks and roads,” said Ms. Rivera, who said that she shared the information with friends and family.

But the couple delayed completing the online form after they, their two children and Ms. Rivera’s father, who is living with them, fell ill with Covid-19. While at home, they heard about Mr. Trump’s new presidential order to exclude undocumented immigrants from the count.

“We were so confused. We thought we weren’t supposed to participate anymore,” Ms. Rivera recalled.

She decided to call TODEC to inquire, just to be sure, and a staff member assured her that the Rivera household still had every right to take part. The couple plan to fill out the form next week.

Maria and Ramon Garcia, who have lived in the United States for two decades, said they had intended to complete the census until Mr. Trump’s recent announcement. Now they fear that participating could land them in the cross hairs of immigration enforcement.

“We were told that we should be counted,” said Mrs. Garcia, 50. “But then, just recently, we heard that the president doesn’t want us to be counted, and we’re worried that we could be deported if we participate.”

The Garcias called TODEC’s hotline on Friday to seek the legal center’s advice but could not be convinced that participating was safe.

“We came here from Mexico many years ago. We pay taxes, we work hard and we don’t want to put that in jeopardy,” said Mr. Garcia, 57, who has a gardening business with his wife. “I don’t think we should participate in the census.”

Adán Chávez, deputy director of the national census program at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, said that reaction was widespread.

“We have had to contend with challenge after challenge, attack after attack that threatens our census work,” he said.

The group has responded by intensifying its “¡Hagase Contar!” (“Be Counted”) campaign, working with Spanish-language television to promote participation and calls to a hotline that answers questions and helps people complete the census in Spanish.

“Our lift was already much heavier in the middle of a pandemic,” Mr. Chávez said. “Now we’re having to tell people that everyone gets counted, it’s your right. Don’t worry.”

According to an analysis of census data to be released next week by Mr. Ong’s team, the estimated median response rate for Hispanics nationwide was 50 percent by August, down by nearly 13 percentage points from 2010. Among non-Hispanic whites, the estimated response rate was 69 percent, compared with 71 percent a decade ago.

States with large undocumented populations — California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey and Illinois — stand to lose the most from an undercount.

TODEC volunteers began last year to go door-to-door in hard-to-count neighborhoods, in the rural reaches of Riverside County, to educate immigrants about the census. They erected booths at health fairs and hosted information sessions to educate people about the census.

But like other groups working in the field, it was forced to shift strategy — to phone banking, social media and Zoom info sessions in March, when the coronavirus began coursing through California.

On a Zoom call last Thursday titled, “The Census and My Community,“ which was also streamed on Facebook, TODEC staff and a Census Bureau representative spent a full hour trying to motivate Latinos to participate.

“If we respond, our community will get money. But if we aren’t counted, it’s as if we don’t exist,” said Lupe Camacho, the bureau’s representative.

She appealed to their commonality as immigrants. “I’m from Mexico,” said Ms. Camacho, who spoke in Spanish throughout the session. “I’m a naturalized citizen. But citizenship has nothing to do with this.”

During the session, she described the census as “pure statistics,” “completely confidential” and “posing no danger,” all but pleading for participation.

“We don’t pass on any information about anyone — not to the DMV, not to ICE, not to any city, state or federal authority,” she said, referring to the department of motor vehicles and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

In Perris, there were bright moments as well as cautionary ones.

Maria Estela Perez Gomez, 55, emerged from her beige house at the sight of the caravan. “We filled out our census form,” she said excitedly, doing a little dance as a Mexican band that was part of the parade and procession played.

The hurdles have also motivated some people.

Montserrat Gomez, a 19-year-old college student, said the decision to curtail the count was one reason she joined the group of young adults, mostly children of immigrants, who marched through downtown Perris on Friday waving signs and distributing fliers.

“We need to convince them that they need to be counted so that the community receives the political representation and financial resources that it deserves,” she said. “And now we have less time to do it.”

PHOTO: Vehicles and a band paraded through Perris, Calif., a mostly Latino agricultural town, on Friday to raise awareness for the census. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN MONTERROSA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Supporters Fear Gaps in Biden's Ground Game***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y3F-HRN1-DXY4-X2TC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 30, 2020 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

Democratic officials and some activists for the candidate say Joe Biden's Iowa organization is weak in some areas, which could hurt him on caucus night. Biden aides say they have plenty of boots on the ground.

DUBUQUE, Iowa -- This city on the bluffs of the Mississippi River, which rose as a hub of furniture-making and brewing, ought to be a stronghold for Joseph R. Biden Jr. It is a blue-collar enclave with a Catholic heritage, aligning with his ***working class*** pitch to voters. Its 31-year-old, labor-connected congresswoman, Abby Finkenauer, has endorsed Mr. Biden.

But as Dan Corken, one of Mr. Biden's most fervent volunteers, knocks on doors here, he is dubious about the candidate's prospects just days out from Monday's caucuses.

''If you want to look at the Biden community in Dubuque, the average age is probably about 72,'' he said. ''I'm having difficulties imagining some of the people I'm talking to door-knocking getting out on February 3 in the cold to go caucus.''

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Caucuses are low-turnout affairs, making grass-roots organizing an essential factor for doing well in Iowa. Well-tooled campaigns depend on a paid field staff and armies of volunteers to identify supporters, ensure they turn out and provide leadership in the many school cafeterias and churches that serve as caucus rooms.

But according to nearly a dozen county Democratic chairs and Biden activists around the state, Mr. Biden's ground game has weak spots that threaten him with underperforming his polling in Iowa, where he has consistently been at or near the top.

With center-left Democrats increasingly alarmed about Mr. Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, becoming the nominee, an effort to coalesce around the strongest moderate alternative -- widely seen as Mr. Biden -- could suffer a blow if the former vice president finishes in third or fourth place, and emerges from Iowa in a weak position.

The age of many Biden supporters could also prove detrimental: In 2016 only 28 percent of caucusgoers were over 65, according to entrance polls. Close to four in 10 were under 45 and they strongly favored the insurgent outsider, Mr. Sanders.

Besides having supporters who skew older, the Biden campaign has fewer activists like Mr. Corken, according to Iowa Democrats. His campaign also appears to have recruited fewer precinct captains -- the team leaders in each of more than 1,600 caucus sites -- who play a key role wooing undecided voters.

Ann Fields, the Democratic chairwoman of Marion County, said that the campaigns of Senator Elizabeth Warren and of Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., had recruited caucus captains for all 17 precincts in her county southeast of Des Moines. Not so the Biden team. ''I would say if they're half full they're lucky,'' she said last week.

In Des Moines County in eastern Iowa, Tom Courtney, the Democratic co-chairman, said last week he knew of ''only a few'' Biden precinct captains in his 16 precincts. Asked about the likelihood that a candidate's supporters would materialize on their own without an organizing staff, Mr. Courtney said, ''I've not seen it before.''

His wife, Nancy Courtney, who is a Biden activist, said there was a ''slim chance'' Mr. Biden wouldn't reach viability in some caucuses, meaning his support would fall below a 15 percent threshold needed to earn delegates.

''A lot of the campaigns have really good staffers and we only have one staffer in Des Moines County,'' she said. ''That worries me.''

Pete Kavanaugh, Mr. Biden's deputy campaign manager, said the candidate had plenty of staff members, both paid and volunteer, to turn out supporters.

''From the moment Vice President Biden announced his campaign, organizers and volunteers have been engaging Iowans in every corner of the state -- building a robust, grass-roots organization that will turn out our committed supporters on caucus night,'' he said. ''We will have an Iowan as a precinct leader representing the campaign and making the case for Joe Biden in all of Iowa's 1,678 precincts.''

Organizing is the secret sauce in a caucus election, though it usually gets little attention as each new poll is seized upon as a sign of who is winning the horse race. Experienced Iowa strategists say a good ground game lifts a candidate's support by two to three percentage points on caucus night.

While that may not sound like a lot, it helps explain some past caucus surprises, most recently in the 2016 race: Donald Trump, who led in Iowa polls by an average of 4.7 percentage points on caucus day, had a poor ground game and wound up second behind Ted Cruz, who had an extensive organizing effort.

A New York Times/Siena College poll last week showed Mr. Sanders at 25 percent of likely Democratic caucusgoers, with Mr. Buttigieg at 18, Mr. Biden at 17 and Ms. Warren at 15. Mr. Biden won among voters 65 and over, but Mr. Sanders was the favorite of those under 65.

A Monmouth University poll on Wednesday showed a different order for the same top four: Mr. Biden at 23 percent, followed by Mr. Sanders, 21; Mr. Buttigieg, 16; and Ms. Warren, 15. Senator Amy Klobuchar broke into double digits at 10 percent.

One of the crucial jobs of precinct captains is to win over backers of candidates who don't reach the 15 percent viability threshold, and who can realign for a second and final head-count behind candidates who are viable. That's a scenario that could be particularly crucial for Mr. Biden; if Ms. Klobuchar, for instance, doesn't reach 15 percent, Mr. Biden would seem to have a good chance to pick up caucusgoers looking for another centrist to support.

But if a candidate lacks a precinct captain in a given caucus, that process is immeasurably harder.

Mr. Corken, the Biden volunteer, will serve as a precinct captain in Dubuque, where he said 41 of the 45 precincts had Biden captains. A former high school and college basketball coach, Mr. Corken, 69, had never volunteered for a political campaign before Mr. Trump's election. His prod to activism was ''born out of fear or maybe just anger,'' he said. He did not want to sit back and watch ''what Trump was doing to the country, and now to the Constitution.''

But as he walked between single-story houses on the city's west side, he confided his worry that candidates promising a revolution, like Mr. Sanders, are more likely to turn people out than a mainstream politician like Mr. Biden.

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''Is Biden a possibility?'' Mr. Corken asked.

''Could be,'' Ms. Beacher said.

''May I just say, I think he can govern the country,'' Mr. Corken told her. ''This is no time for amateurs. He'd walk in the first day and make the government work.''

''All righty, thank you,'' said Ms. Beacher, who appeared eager to close the door.

Mr. Corken, who has canvassed Dubuque almost daily since the spring, said most Biden volunteers preferred to make phone calls, not trudge the city's hills. ''I know we don't have as many door knockers as the other campaigns,'' he said. ''Whatever the caucus results are, they're not going to be reflective of what the support for Biden is in this town.''

Near the end of his route, he hit pay dirt. Tom Lange, who answered the door with his toddler son, said he was ''pretty firmly entrenched with Biden'' and would certainly attend his caucus.

Another Iowan, Sue Smith, a retiree, also said she was likely to support Mr. Biden. ''He's been there, done some of it,'' she said.

Asked if she would caucus, Ms. Smith said, ''Oh I don't know. When is it?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/29/us/politics/joe-biden-iowa-caucus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/29/us/politics/joe-biden-iowa-caucus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Dan Corken walked through neighborhoods in Dubuque, Iowa, to canvass for the Biden campaign.

Some Democrats worry that the Biden organization has weak spots across Iowa that could hurt his chances on caucus night. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 30, 2020

**End of Document**



[***As Biden Makes Push in Iowa, His Ground Game May Have Some Gaps***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y39-VRN1-JBG3-60H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 29, 2020 Wednesday 13:31 EST

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**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** Democratic officials and some activists for the candidate say Joe Biden’s Iowa organization is weak in some areas, which could hurt him on caucus night. Biden aides say they have plenty of boots on the ground.

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But as Dan Corken, one of Mr. Biden’s most fervent volunteers, knocks on doors here, he is dubious about the candidate’s prospects just days out from Monday’s caucuses.

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But according to nearly a dozen county Democratic chairs and Biden activists around the state, Mr. Biden’s ground game has weak spots that threaten him with underperforming his polling in Iowa, where he has consistently been at or near the top.

With center-left Democrats increasingly alarmed about Mr. Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, becoming the nominee, an effort to coalesce around the strongest moderate alternative — widely seen as Mr. Biden — could suffer a blow if the former vice president finishes in third or fourth place, and emerges from Iowa in a weak position.

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PHOTOS: Dan Corken walked through neighborhoods in Dubuque, Iowa, to canvass for the Biden campaign.; Some Democrats worry that the Biden organization has weak spots across Iowa that could hurt his chances on caucus night. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 7, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Biden’s Running Mate? Party Leaders Favor Female Ex-Rivals***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YG0-CYC1-JBG3-64WX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Reid J. Epstein and Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** Discussions with 60 Democratic officials found that three former candidates — Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar — were their leading choices, followed by Stacey Abrams.

**Body**

Discussions with 60 Democratic officials found that three former candidates — Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar — were their leading choices, followed by Stacey Abrams.

WASHINGTON — With former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. now holding an [*all but insurmountable lead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) over Senator Bernie Sanders in the presidential primary contest, many Democrats have shifted their attention to a favorite quadrennial parlor game: the vice-presidential search.

Mr. Biden has shown his hand in a big and unusual way for a front-runner, saying he would pick a woman as a running mate. That has opened the path for Democratic officials to start picking favorites — from a socially safe distance.

In discussions with The Times since Mr. Biden’s [*big primary victories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) on Tuesday, 60 Democratic National Committee members and congressional and party leaders most frequently proposed three former rivals of Mr. Biden as his running mate — [*Senator Kamala Harris*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) of California, [*Senator Elizabeth Warren*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) of Massachusetts and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. Next up was Stacey Abrams, a former state House leader [*whose defeat in 2018 Georgia governor’s race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) remains disputed by many in the party.

Other popular suggestions included Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada and Representative Val Demings of Florida. The Democrats interviewed also proposed seven other women, including Govs. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico.

While de facto presidential nominees typically keep their list of potential running mates closely held, Mr. Biden has helped fuel speculation by eagerly rattling off names for months — nearly all of them women. Even his wife, Jill, offered her take in a private fund-raiser earlier this month, praising Ms. Klobuchar and criticizing [*Ms. Harris’s debate stage attack on her husband*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) last summer.

Mr. Biden, at various points, has suggested he might choose Ms. Abrams, Ms. Klobuchar, Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire or Sally Q. Yates, the former assistant attorney general [*whom President Trump fired*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) three years ago.

A female vice president would be historic: Only two women — [*Representative Geraldine Ferraro of New York in 1984*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) and [*Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) in 2008 — have been nominated, and none have ever served in the White House. That barrier-breaking appeal could give Mr. Biden’s candidacy a shot of energy, an acknowledgment of the role women have played in boosting the party during the Trump era.

Prominent Democratic activists, officials and leaders [*have been vocal with their desires*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) that the ticket include a woman, after the demise of the last major female candidate, [*Ms. Warren, who ended her campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html) two weeks ago.

“I’ve been predicting a woman on the ticket since 2017 and demanding it since Warren dropped out,” said Christine Pelosi, a D.N.C. member from San Francisco who is the daughter of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. “It’s really important to have the ability to lead America in the depression we will enter if we don’t flatten the curve and find a cure. The best pick is the woman Joe or Bernie trusts the most to be president and commander-in-chief.”

Some of the party’s most liberal members and supporters of Mr. Sanders suggested that choosing Ms. Warren, a fellow liberal, would help Mr. Biden appeal to the progressive and young voters who have backed the Vermont senator in the primary. Choosing a moderate like Ms. Klobuchar, they say, would dampen general election enthusiasm.

“Whoever ends up the nominee should pick Senator Warren,” said Tefere Gebre, a D.N.C. member from Maryland who is executive vice president of the AFL-CIO. “I would be less enthusiastic if it’s the senator from Minnesota.”

Yet, with the coronavirus upending every part of American society, including the presidential campaign, Mr. Biden may be forced to deviate from the standard playbook.

Mr. Biden’s running mate pick will be viewed through the lens of a public health and economic crisis, perhaps raising the stock of candidates who have more experience, or pushing him to consider someone from outside of government.

“You could imagine some highly successful person from a different walk of life being considered, and that could expand the list a lot,” said John Podesta, who as Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman was involved in her vice-presidential search. “A college president or a medical professional, somebody who would send a pretty powerful signal that what you care about is strength, performance, a commitment to facts and sound decision-making.”

Mr. Biden’s campaign said it was beginning to build a team to conduct a “vigorous vetting process.” Some close to the campaign say the team is in the early stages of compiling a list of potential running mates and then will vet them. Beyond his own experience as Barack Obama’s vice president, Mr. Biden has a deep bench of aides to consult. One of his closest advisers, Ron Klain, helped do vice-presidential vetting for Al Gore in 2000.

Mitt Romney cut his campaign’s list of about 80 potential running mates to 20 in early April 2012. By late July, the list had been narrowed to five men, after the one woman under serious consideration, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, declined the campaign’s invitation to be vetted. (Mr. Romney eventually chose Representative Paul Ryan.)

Donald Trump’s 2016 vetting process was less streamlined, but [*among those he interviewed during his search was Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html).

Mrs. Clinton started with a list of 40 possible candidates, which was narrowed to nine who underwent a process of serious vetting, an interview and a campaign appearance with the candidate. While she considered a number of women to be vice president, only Ms. Warren advanced to the final stages of the process.

For Mr. Biden, 77, a much younger woman could assuage concerns about his age and critiques about a primary process that started with the most diverse field in history and ended with two white men.

Mr. Biden’s campaign hopes the early announcement that he would select a woman will give his operation a shot of enthusiasm from voters, even as the presidential election heads into a deep freeze because of the coronavirus. On Thursday, his campaign sent a fund-raising appeal asking supporters to “commit to standing with” Mr. Biden and his future female running mate.

By announcing he will pick a woman, Mr. Biden is aiming to give his ticket a modern-day balance in a party focused on issues of racial and gender representation. Past nominees have chosen running mates who provided geographic diversity (Lloyd Bentsen in 1988) or offered the promise of winning a key state (Mr. Ryan, from Wisconsin, in 2012). Mr. Obama, just four years into his Senate term, chose Mr. Biden in 2008 to ease concerns about his own relative lack of experience and help appeal to white ***working-class*** voters.

Choosing Ms. Harris, 55, would not only provide a gender balance but also would add a black woman to the ticket after black voters helped revive Mr. Biden’s campaign in February. But as Jill Biden’s recent criticism indicated, the memory of Ms. Harris’s debate stage attack may hinder her chances.

“I have to tell you that I’m a little torn in terms of my choices,” said Alma Gonzalez, a D.N.C. member from Florida. “If it were me and if I was Joe Biden, I would say to Senator Harris, ‘Do you want to be on the Supreme Court or be my vice president?’”

Presidential candidates rarely place public restrictions on their pick, preferring to keep options open so they can pivot their selection to suit the shifting dynamics of the campaign. Veterans of past vice-presidential searches said the most important elements have been how comfortable the nominees are with their would-be partners.

And while past campaigns spent months vetting candidates and agonizing over running-mate strategy, there’s very little academic research suggesting that the vice-presidential pick has a huge impact on winning the general election.

“The first and most important criteria is, can this person help you win in November and will they at least not hurt you in November,” said Mr. Podesta.

For Mrs. Clinton, that meant ruling out candidates from states with Republican governors, like Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio. If she won, her team feared that Mr. Brown could be replaced in the Senate by a Republican and shift the balance of the chamber away from her future administration.

Unlike any nominee since Mr. Gore, Mr. Biden has a unique view into the selection process, having gone through it himself. While Mr. Obama started with a list of 20 candidates, he faced pressure to select Mrs. Clinton as his running mate and create a “unity ticket.” After Mr. Obama rejected that idea, the choice came down to a “[*coin toss*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html)” between Mr. Biden and Senator Evan Bayh of Indiana. Mr. Biden was more energetic and enthusiastic in his interview, [*according to aides*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html).

In an [*interview earlier this month*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/upshot/bernie-sanders-delegates-analysis.html), Mr. Biden cited his close relationship with Mr. Obama as a model for his selection process, saying the president was able to trust him with key pieces of his agenda.

“For me, the most important thing in choosing a vice president is whether or not the person is simpatico with me in terms of where I want to take the country,” he said. “It’s really important that the next president is able to do what Barack was able to do with me.”

PHOTOS: Some of Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s former Democratic rivals are now among those in the mix to be his running mate, including Senator Kamala Harris of California, top, and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES; ALYSSA SCHUKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Why Trump Is Still Their Guy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62GS-NBN1-DXY4-X01F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2980 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** You don’t hear his name as much. But as far as the G.O.P. is concerned, the former president rules.

**Body**

You don’t hear his name as much. But as far as the G.O.P. is concerned, the former president rules.

His exile in Mar-a-Lago notwithstanding, Donald Trump’s authority over the Republican Party remains vast. You can see it in Republican reluctance to back a bipartisan inquiry into the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, in the widespread denunciation of party members who refused to overturn election results and who voted for Trump’s second impeachment, and in poll data showing continuing repudiation among loyal Republicans of the 2020 election results.

Trump’s centrality guarantees that large numbers of resentful, truth-denying, conspiracy-minded, anti-democratic, overwhelmingly white voters will continue to find aid and comfort in the Republican Party.

Ed Rogers, a top political aide in the Reagan White House who describes himself as “a committed Republican,” responded by email to my query about the degree of Trump’s command: “Trump is the most powerful person in the Republican Party — his endorsement can make the difference in a lot of primaries and sometimes in a general election.”

Trump, Rogers continued, “would win the Republican nomination for president if the race were today. He looks unstoppable in the G.O.P. I don’t know who could challenge him.” Anyone opposing Trump for the nomination “would be mocked, mimicked and generally harassed for months. Who needs that?”

Rogers captured his party’s current predicament: “For the G.O.P., Trump is like a fire, too close and you get burned, too far away and you are out in the cold.”

Nikki Haley, a former South Carolina governor and Trump appointee as ambassador to the United Nations, recently proved Rogers’s point.

After the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol, Haley was sharply critical of Trump, [*telling Tim Alberta*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) of Politico:

We need to acknowledge he let us down. He went down a path he shouldn’t have, and we shouldn’t have followed him, and we shouldn’t have listened to him. And we can’t let that ever happen again.

Haley went on:

Never did I think he would spiral out like this. … I don’t feel like I know who he is anymore. … The person that I worked with is not the person that I have watched since the election.

But Haley, ambitious herself to be president, quickly backtracked. And just last week, at a [*news conference*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) on April 12 in Orangeburg, S.C., she was asked if she would support Trump if he ran in 2024. “Yes,” she said, before pointedly adding, “I would not run if President Trump ran.”

A key pillar of Trump’s strength is his success in [*turning*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) the Republican Party into the [*explicit defender*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) of white hegemony.

As my news side colleague Peter Baker [*wrote*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) in September 2020:

After a summer when hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets protesting racial injustice against Black Americans, President Trump has made it clear over the last few days that, in his view, the country’s real race problem is bias against white Americans.

Not in generations, Baker continued, “has a sitting president so overtly declared himself the candidate of white America.”

The result, as William Saletan of Slate [*wrote*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) earlier in April this year, is that “three months after the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, the Republican Party still won’t fully renounce it.”

In recent weeks, Saletan continued:

Republican lawmakers have [*belittled*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) the attack, [*defended*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) the mob that precipitated it (Sen. Ron Johnson called them “[*people that love this country*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/)”), [*voted against a resolution condemning it*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), or accused liberals of [*overreacting*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) to it. In February, at the Conservative Political Action Conference, speakers blamed a “[*rigged election*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/)” for provoking the rioters. But the sickness goes deeper. The Republican base is thoroughly infected with sympathies for the insurrection.

The depth of party loyalty to Trump and to the men and women who have his back has even found expression in the flow of campaign contributions.

As Luke Broadwater, Catie Edmondson and Rachel Shorey of The Times [*reported*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) on April 17:

Republicans who were the most vocal in urging their followers to come to Washington on Jan. 6 to try to reverse President Donald J. Trump’s loss, pushing to overturn the election and stoking the grievances that prompted the deadly Capitol riot, have profited handsomely in its aftermath.

[*Marjorie Taylor Greene*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), the first-term Georgia representative, perhaps the most extreme of Trump’s allies, has raised $3.2 million, they wrote, “more than the individual campaign of Representative Kevin McCarthy, the minority leader, and nearly every other member of House leadership.”

What are the sources of Trump’s continued ability to not only maintain the loyalty of millions of voters, but to keep them persuaded of the conspiratorial notion that the 2020 presidential election was rigged?

There is an ongoing debate among scholars and political analysts regarding the bond between Trump and his loyalists, his preternatural ability to mobilize white resentment into grievance-based social-movement action. Where does it come from?

Before we delve into competing interpretations, Johanna Ray Vollhardt, a professor of psychology at Clark University, makes a crucial point:

The psychology of collective victimhood among groups that were objectively targeted and harmed by collective violence and historical oppression is quite different from the psychology of grievance or imagined victimhood among dominant group members, who are driven by a sense of status loss and entitlement as well as resentment of minority groups that are viewed as a threat.

Because of this difference, Vollhardt wrote by email, she would not use the word “victims” to describe Trump supporters: “I would perhaps simply say ‘grievances’ or ‘imagined victimhood’ to refer to the kinds of ideas that have fueled Trump’s and other right-wing White Americans’ rhetoric and appeals.”

This distinction is explicit in “Resentment and Redemption: On the Mobilization of Dominant Group Victimhood,” by Stephen Reicher and Yasemin Ulusahin, both at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, in a chapter of “[*The Social Psychology of Collective Victimhood*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/).”

Reicher and Ulusahin contend that “dominant group victimhood” emerges when groups experience a feeling

of actual or potential loss of dominance, a sense of resentment at this loss which is bound up with issues of entitlement — the undeserving are taking what we deserve — and hence provides a moral dimension to restitutive actions, and finally the prospect of redemption — of restoring the rightful order of things — through action.

These feelings of “undeserved” displacement, the authors write, “are not unmediated perceptions of reality. Rather, they are narratives offered by leaders with the aim of mobilizing people around the leader as representative and savior of the group.”

To conclude, the two authors write,

Our argument is not simply about victimhood as it applies to “objectively” privileged groups. It is ultimately about the toxicity of a particular construction of victimhood: One which transforms eliminationist violence into the restitution of a rightful moral order. For it is when we believe ourselves to be acting for the moral good that the most appalling acts can be committed.

Other scholars point to the political manipulation of the emotions of shame and humiliation.

In their March 2021 article “[*Populism and the Affective Politics of Humiliation Narratives*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/),” Alexandra Homolar and Georg Löfflmann, members of the politics and international studies department at the University of Warwick in Britain, make the case that Trump is a master of “populist humiliation discourse.”

In this political and rhetorical strategy,

The country of the present is described as a fundamentally weakened nation, systematically disadvantaged through “bad deals” negotiated by the establishment and exploited by allies and enemies alike. Treasured pasts of national greatness are represented through romanticized images that reduce the present to a demeaning experience.

Members of the target audience, Homolar and Löfflmann continue, “are constructed as an idealized community of shared origin and destiny, the ‘pure people,’ who have been betrayed and humiliated because what is represented as their way of life and righteous place in the world has been lost.”

In September 2016, Hillary Clinton’s infamous characterization of Trump voters was an open invitation to Trump’s counterattack:

You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump’s supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right? The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic — you name it. And unfortunately there are people like that. And he has lifted them up.

In a Sept. 12, 2016 [*speech in Baltimore*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), Trump shot back:

Hillary Clinton made these comments at one of her high-dollar fund-raisers in Wall Street. She and her wealthy donors all had a good laugh. They were laughing at the very people who pave the roads she drives on, paint the buildings she speaks in, and keep the lights on in her auditorium.

In a direct play on the humiliation theme, Trump declared:

She spoke with contempt for the people who thanklessly follow the rules, pay their taxes, and scratch out a living for their families. She revealed herself to be a person who looks down on the proud citizens of our country as subjects for her to rule over.

In a separate article, “[*The power of Trump-speak*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/): populist crisis narratives and ontological security,” Homolar and [*Ronny Scholz*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), a project manager at the University of Warwick’s center for applied linguistics, argued that Trump’s “leadership legitimation claims rest significantly upon ‘crisis talk’ that puts his audience in a loss frame with nothing to lose.” These stories serve a twofold purpose, instilling “insecurity among the American public” while simultaneously transforming “their anxiety into confidence that the narrator’s policy agendas are the route back to ‘normality.’”

The authors studied Trump’s 2016 campaign speeches to identify the words he used most often, and then grouped them “together with the words with which they predominantly co-occur.” They demonstrate that the word clusters Trump habitually deployed “surrounding ‘American’ and ‘country’ centrally featured the interrelated themes of crime and violence, killing jobs, and poverty, as well as illegal immigration and drugs, Islamic terrorism, trade and infrastructure.”

At the heart of what the authors call “Trump-speak” is a

politics of reassurance, which relies upon a threefold rhetorical strategy: it tells audiences what is wrong with the current state of affairs; it identifies the political agents that are responsible for putting individuals and the country in a state of loss and crisis; and it offers an abstract pathway through which people can restore past greatness by opting for a high-risk outsider candidate.

Once an audience is under Trump’s spell, Homolar and Scholz write:

Rational arguments or detailed policy proposals pale in comparison with the emotive pull and self-affirmation of an us-versus-them crisis narrative, which creates a cognitive feedback loop between individuals’ ontological insecurity, their preferences for restorative policy, and strongmen candidate options. In short, “Trumpspeak” relies on creating the very ontological insecurity that it promises to eradicate for political gain.

The authors describe “ontological security” as “having a sense of presence in the world, describing such a person as a ‘real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person,’” citing R.D. Laing, the author of “[*The Divided Self*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/).” Being ontologically secure, they continue, “allows us to ‘encounter all the hazards of life, social, ethical, spiritual, biological’ with a firm sense of both our own and others’ reality and identity. However, ontological security only prevails in the absence of anxiety and danger.”

[*Miles T. Armaly*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) and [*Adam M. Enders*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), political scientists at the University of Mississippi and the University of Louisville, argue that Trump appeals to voters experiencing what they call “egocentric victimhood” as opposed to those who see themselves as “systemic” victims.

In their January 2021 [*paper*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), “‘Why Me?’ The Role of Perceived Victimhood in American Politics,” Armaly and Enders argue that:

A systemic victim looks externally to understand her individual victimhood. Egocentric victimhood, on the other hand, is less outwardly focused. Egocentric victims feel that they never get what they deserve in life, never get an extra break, and are always settling for less. Neither the ‘oppressor,’ nor the attribution of blame, are very specific. Both expressions of victimhood require some level of entitlement, but egocentric victims feel particularly strongly that they, personally, have a harder go at life than others.

There were substantial differences between the way these two groups voted, according to Armaly and Enders:

Those exhibiting higher levels of egocentric victimhood are more likely to have voted for, and continue to support, Donald Trump. However, those who exhibit systemic victimhood are less supportive and were less likely to vote for Trump.

The same pattern emerged in the case of racial resentment and support for or opposition to government aid to African-Americans, for building a wall on the Mexican border and for political correctness: egocentric victims, the authors report, tilted strongly in a conservative direction, systemic victims in a liberal direction.

In an effort to better understand how competing left and right strategies differ, I asked [*Kevin Arceneaux*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), a political scientist at Temple, a series of questions. The first was:

How would you describe the differences between the mobilizing strategies of the civil rights movement and Trump’s appeals to discontented whites? Arceneaux’s answer:

The civil rights movement was about mobilizing an oppressed minority to fight for their rights, against the likelihood of state-sanctioned violence, while Trump’s appeals are about harnessing the power of the state to maintain white dominance. Trump’s appeals to discontented whites are reactionary in nature. They promise to go back to a time when whites were unquestionably at the top of the social hierarchy. These appeals are about keying into anger and fear, as opposed to hope, and they are about moving backward and not forward.

What role has the sense of victimhood played in the delusional character of so many Trump supporters who continue to believe the election was stolen? Arceneaux again:

Their sense of victimhood motivates the very idea that some evil force could be so powerful that it can successfully collude to steal an election. It fits the narrative that everyone is out to get them.

Looking toward the elections of 2022 and 2024, Trump not only remains at the heart of the Republican Party but also embodies the party’s predicament: Candidates running for the House and Senate need him to turn out the party’s populist base, but his presence at the top of the ticket could put Congress and the White House out of reach.

Still, Arceneaux argues that without Trump, “I do believe that the Republicans will struggle to turn out non-college-educated whites at the same rate.”

[*Ed Goeas*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), a Republican pollster, observes that turning out ***working-class*** voters in 2024 will most likely not be enough for Trump to win: “There are a large number of Republican voters (around 40 percent), who were either reluctant Trump voters or non-supportive voters, who make a Trump win in the general election look very undoable.”

Ed Rogers, the Republican lobbyist I mentioned at the beginning of this column, argues that if Trump runs in 2024 — despite the clout he wields today — he is liable to take the party down in defeat:

I don’t think Trump can win a two-person race in a general election. He can’t get a majority. He pulled a rabbit out of the hat in 2016 and he got beat bad by an uninspiring candidate in 2020. 2024 is a long way away but I don’t know what might happen to make Trump have broader appeal or more advantages than he did in 2020.

[*Stuart Stevens*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), a Republican media consultant who is a harsh critic of Trump, emailed me to say that “Trump is the Republican Party” and as a result:

We are in uncharted waters. For the first time since 1860, a major American political party doesn’t believe America is a democracy. No Republican will win a contested primary in 2022 or 2024 who will assert that Biden is a legal president. The effect of this is profound and difficult to predict. But millions of Americans believe the American experiment is ending.

What is driving the Republican Party? Stevens’s answer is that it is the threat of a nonwhite majority:

The coordinated effort to reduce voter access for those who are nonwhite is because Republicans know they are racing the demographic clock. The degree to which they are successful will determine if a Republican has a shot to win. It’s all about white grievance.

[*Paul Begala*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), a Democratic consultant, described what may be Trump’s most lasting imprint on his party: He said many prospective presidential candidates, including Josh Hawley, Kristi Noem, Ted Cruz and Ron DeSantis, “seem to me to be embracing the growing nativist, anti-immigrant, anti-diversity fire Trump lit.”

In the 28 years since the 1992 election, Begala continued by email, there has been “more diminution in white voting power than in the previous 208 years” dating back to the nation’s first presidential election.

For the Republican Party, Begala wrote, “as white power diminishes, white supremacy intensifies.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Damon Winter/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Needle Update: What to Expect on Election Night***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616K-CGV1-DXY4-X2W9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 2085 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn, Josh Katz, Matthew Conlen, Andrew Fischer, Alice Park, Ben Smithgall, Charlie Smart and Miles Watkins

**Highlight:** We’ll have live estimates for Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.

**Body**

We’ll have live estimates for Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.

For many Times readers, the memory of [*election*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) night in 2016 is inseparable from the image of a semicircular chart that has [*since*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) become known — affectionately or not — as “the needle.”

The needle analyzes incomplete results to show who is on track to win an election.

On Tuesday night, [*the needle will be back*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) — sort of.

We will have needles for three battleground states, but unlike in 2016, we will not offer a single needle to tell you the overall likelihood of who will win the presidency. Why? The short version: mail voting.

Because of the pandemic, we expect more mail-in votes [*than ever before*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump). These are often not representative of the final vote totals — this year, we expect them to skew more Democratic than votes cast in person on Election Day. But to interpret results responsibly, we need to understand what has been counted. Unfortunately for the needle, most counties and precincts don’t reliably report their vote by vote method.

Our three “needle” battleground states will be [*Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump), [*Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) and [*North Carolina*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump), for a simple reason: These states give us the kind of data we need to offer accurate estimates of the final vote. They report the results in unmatched detail, so our estimates might even be better than usual in these states.

Better still, these states count their votes relatively quickly. They have experience with absentee voting, and they close their polls early in the night. Much of the vote in North Carolina and Florida is expected to be counted by 8 p.m. Eastern.

These states won’t by themselves tell us who will win the election, but they should tell us a lot about where it’s headed.

Here’s an easy way to think about it:

If Joe Biden wins even one of these states, he is a solid favorite to win the presidency. If President Trump wins all three, both candidates have realistic paths to the presidency.

If the results in these states are unclear, or if Mr. Trump wins them all, we will have to wait for ballots in some states like [*Arizona*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump), [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump), [*Wisconsin*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) and [*Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump). And that could take days.

More questions about the 2020 NYT Needle, answered

Why do it?

The needle is a way to tell readers what we know about the results so far.

The core issue is that [*election results*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) early in the evening are usually not representative of the final vote. Sometimes, only one kind of vote — like mail-in ballots or Election Day votes — has been counted. Other times, reported results are from only one part of a state. You would need to be a bit of an expert to figure out whether a 20-point Trump lead in the early Virginia results is a) to be expected; b) a sign of a Trump landslide; c) actually a sign of an unexpectedly large Biden win.

The needle will let you know when the results suggest that someone is on track to win the election. And when the needle doesn’t know, it will tell you that, too.

Specifically, why can’t you do a national needle?

A lot of it boils down to mail voting.

The needle we published [*in 2016*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) was fundamentally simple: It looked at the reported vote to make inferences about the remaining vote, based on the demographic characteristics of each county.

This works well if geography is the primary reason partial results might be unrepresentative. Let’s say, for instance, that rural Virginia has counted its votes but that Northern Virginia hasn’t. Northern Virginia’s more urban and Democratic-leaning Washington suburbs have been among the slowest to report in many recent elections. In that case, the needle would say “aha!” and realize that the rest of the vote would be very Democratic. It might predict the Democrat to be in a better position, even though the Republican led in the tabulated count.

This year, an additional reason the results will be unrepresentative is the method of vote count. Our needle needs to know not only where votes remain uncounted, but also whether they were cast mainly on Election Day, early in-person or via mail. For most states, we just won’t have that data in real time.

There are other challenges, like how we’re supposed to know whether all of the votes are counted, especially in states that accept late-arriving postmarked ballots. But the additional problem of not knowing the vote by vote type is the single biggest issue we face this year.

So why Florida, North Carolina and Georgia?

They give us the results broken down by vote method. Problem solved. We’ll have a very good estimate of what kinds of votes are left, in addition to where. Other states just don’t release the data in the level of detail that we need.

Better still, all three states release copious data to let us make these estimates particularly well. They will release the results not only by method, but also by precinct — a much finer level of geographic detail than we’ve typically had. This means that we’ll have a good idea whether the remaining Election Day vote in Miami-Dade County is in a Democratic or Republican part of the county.

These states also release detailed information on exactly who voted early. We can use that, along with our Times/Siena surveys, to have a very good sense of how the results will break down by method.

What are you expecting in these three states?

All three seem like close races, according to [*pre-election polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump). Mr. Biden may have a modest edge in all three, but Mr. Trump won all three in 2016.

Florida counts its votes blazingly fast because election officials are permitted to tabulate the state’s millions of early and mail ballots before Election Day. We might get most of those votes by 7:45 p.m., and we expect Mr. Biden to jump to an early lead. After that, we’ll have to wait to see whether Mr. Trump will do well enough among Election Day voters to mount a comeback. Our hope is that the needle can quickly figure out whether this is happening.

North Carolina officials [*expect to report*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) their early votes between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. They expect to report Election Day votes from around 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. So, same story — we’ll expect Mr. Biden to jump out to a lead, and then Mr. Trump to start to gain ground. Here again, the needle has a chance to quickly figure out how Mr. Trump is doing on Election Day. But if it’s a narrow race, a final determination could take a while: The state accepts mail ballots that it receives by Nov. 12.

If the result is fairly clear, the networks may call both North Carolina and Florida by midnight. That’s probably not going to happen in Georgia. It has had a slower count in recent elections, especially in the Atlanta area. But the needle will know what kinds of votes — and approximately how many of them — are still outstanding.

Will you have Senate needles? Two of these states have interesting Senate races, too.

Unfortunately, no. We’re focusing our needle attention on the presidential race. We don’t get many opportunities to test this stuff, and we’re reducing the number of moving pieces to maximize our chance of success.

Can the needle make race calls?

No. The needle does not make [*race calls*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) or offer definitive statements. As always, race calls or projections will be made by organizations like The Associated Press, CNN and Fox News.

Does 70 percent mean 100 percent? Does 90 percent mean 100 percent?

No. While most of us have a tendency to round probabilities up or down, 70 percent really means 70 percent. When the National Weather Service says the chance of rain is 30 percent, you still might bring an umbrella with you when you leave the house.

How does it work?

We start the night with a weak expectation of the final result for every precinct, by vote method. An average precinct in one of these states may have around 2,000 voters. If you’re in one of these three states, we have an estimate for how absentee, early and Election Day votes will break down in your neighborhood.

How do we make these estimates? We use our Times/Siena polls to estimate how each registered voter in these states will vote, based on demographic characteristics and whether that person voted early, according to state records. We adjust these estimates to match the pre-election polling, and then we aggregate our estimates up to the precinct, by vote method.

Next, the results. Some of our colleagues will be gathering and validating precinct results from hundreds of web pages across these states, in real time. We’ll pass those results off to the needle, which will compare the results with our pre-election expectations. If one candidate is doing better than we expect, our expectations for the remaining votes will shift accordingly. The same concept applies to turnout. If the Election Day vote is higher than expected, the needle will expect higher Election Day turnout elsewhere.

As the night goes on, the needle will start to make even more specific inferences. It might be able to glean, for instance, that Election Day turnout is higher in Black precincts than we expected, but not in white ones. Or it might figure out that Mr. Trump is doing better in mostly white ***working-class*** rural areas, but not elsewhere.

The last step is simple arithmetic: Add together the counted result and our best guess of the remaining vote to get our estimate for the final vote.

How can it go wrong?

One simple way: if we don’t get precinct data. That happened [*in 2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) during a special election in Pennsylvania’s 18th Congressional District. We had to turn the needle off. That could certainly happen on Tuesday.

Florida, North Carolina and Georgia have a good track record of reporting these results reliably, but smooth delivery of precinct data is not a sure thing. There are more than 11,000 precincts across 326 counties in these three states, and they are relatively decentralized. In the end, each county’s elections officials are in charge of compiling and releasing election results to state officials or to the public.

We think we’re prepared to handle it if something goes wrong, like if a county’s website breaks. But there are no guarantees: A lot of this is out of our control, and we don’t get a true-to-life test. Things can go wrong. We’ll have to fix bugs on the fly.

And that’s before you start thinking about the needle itself, which is far from perfect. One thing that might happen somewhere: A candidate beats our projection in the absentee vote, causing the needle to drift his way, and then the other candidate beats our projection for the Election Day vote, causing it to snap back. We’ll be cautious until we’ve seen at least some results across all vote methods.

The needle can also miss in other ways. For example, the last precincts to report could have totally different results from the ones that report first, in ways we can’t explain with demographics. This is especially true if we miss a variable — if, say, we forget that Cuban-Americans have different voting patterns than other Hispanics in Florida. (Don’t worry, we’ll remember that.)

Or, the needle can simply get unlucky. If, by random chance, a candidate’s very best or worst precincts are the first ones to report, the needle may be misleading. That problem[*briefly confused the needle*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/07/us/biden-trump) in the 2017 Alabama Senate race between Doug Jones and Roy Moore.

For a few minutes, the needle projected Republican turnout to be abysmal — but this was because the first counties to complete their count included some of the weakest Republican turnout of the night. The magnitude of our error at that point was huge — nearly seven percentage points. But our model quickly realized that Republican turnout was going to be higher in other counties.

We could also get turnout wrong. We could think precincts are done counting or very close to it, when there are ballots left we’re not expecting. Or, we might think there are votes left when there actually aren’t.

How can it go right?

When the needle works well, The Times can give you a more accurate picture of what’s happening than perhaps any other outlet, faster than perhaps any other outlet.

The 2014 version showed Senator Mark Warner, Democrat of Virginia, on track to win for hours before the reported totals did, even though Mr. Warner trailed in the reported vote count until 99 percent of precincts had reported. The 2016 version picked up some of the first signals in election night data that Mr. Trump was on track to win. Multiple needles indicated that Mr. Biden was on track to have a strong showing on Super Tuesday in March.

We hope to begin making estimates around 7 p.m. Eastern. And we hope you’ll join us.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2020

**End of Document**



[***The Wild Story of Creem, Once ‘America’s Only Rock ’n’ Roll Magazine’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60H5-3C41-JBG3-6216-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Mike Rubin

**Highlight:** A new documentary traces the rise and fall of the irreverent, boundary-smashing music publication where Lester Bangs did some of his most famous work.

**Body**

A new documentary traces the rise and fall of the irreverent, boundary-smashing music publication where Lester Bangs did some of his most famous work.

On Jaan Uhelszki’s first day at Creem magazine in October 1970, she met a fellow new hire: Lester Bangs, a freelance writer freshly arrived from California to fill the post of record reviews editor. His plaid three-piece suit made him look like an awkward substitute teacher, she thought, and certainly out of place among the hippies and would-be revolutionaries using the publication’s decrepit Detroit office as a crash pad.

Uhelszki, still a teenager, was majoring in journalism at nearby Wayne State University, and had been sent to the fledgling rock magazine by editors at the student newspaper. “They said with a sneer, ‘We can’t publish you, you don’t have any clips, but Creem will publish anybody, why don’t you go walk down the street,’” Uhelszki said in a phone interview. “So my first clips were Creem. I started at the top.”

She’d arrived at the headquarters of “America’s Only Rock ’n’ Roll Magazine,” as Creem’s front covers would soon proclaim. What began as an underground newspaper soon evolved under Bangs, the editor Dave Marsh and the publisher Barry Kramer into a boisterous, irreverent, boundary-smashing monthly that was equal parts profound and profane. During his half-decade at Creem, Bangs would publish many of the pharmaceutically fueled exegeses that made him “America’s greatest rock critic” — including his epic three-part interview with his hero/nemesis Lou Reed. By 1976, it had a circulation of over 210,000, second only to Rolling Stone.

The magazine’s roller-coaster arc and its lasting impact on the culture is the subject of a spirited new documentary directed by Scott Crawford, [*“Creem: America’s Only Rock ’n’ Roll Magazine,”*](https://www.creemmag.com/pages/documentary) which Uhelszki co-wrote and helped produce. The film opens Friday for virtual cinema and limited theatrical release, and comes to VOD on Aug. 28.

As a teenager, Crawford bought old issues of Creem from used bookstores near his home outside Washington, D.C. His first film was “Salad Days,” a 2014 documentary about the city’s hardcore punk scene.

“I was aware of the personalities involved,” he said of the Creem crew. “I’d heard stories over the years of their fights, literal fistfights, so I knew that this would make for a hell of a film because in addition to how much they contributed to music journalism, a lot of the writers were just as interesting as the artists that they covered.”

The documentary traces how Creem’s high-intensity environment mirrored that of the late 1960s Detroit rock scene, which was centered around the heavy guitar assault of bands like the MC5, the Stooges and Alice Cooper. Barry Kramer, a ***working-class*** Jewish kid with a chip on his shoulder and a volatile temper, was a key local figure: He owned the record store-cum-head shops Mixed Media and Full Circle.

“I liked Barry a great deal, and in fact I wanted him to manage the MC5,” the band’s guitarist Wayne Kramer, who is not a relation, said in a phone interview. (He also handled original music for the film.) “He had a vision and saw ways that this emerging counterculture could be monetized.”

The original idea for Creem came from a clerk at Mixed Media, Tony Reay, who persuaded Barry Kramer to put $1,200 into the venture, which began in March 1969. When the cartoonist Robert Crumb wandered into Mixed Media in need of cash, Reay offered him $50 to draw the cover of issue No. 2. Crumb’s illustration included an anthropomorphized bottle of cream exclaiming “Boy Howdy!,” which became the magazine’s mascot and catchphrase.

Reay soon departed over creative differences, and the magazine briefly took on a more political flavor, thanks to Marsh, a 19-year-old Wayne State student. The arrival of Bangs in 1970 was explosive.

“They both had different ideas of what Creem should be,” Uhelszki said. “Lester just saw us as bozo provocateurs, and David wanted it to be a more political magazine and saw us as foot soldiers of the counterculture.”

In 1971, a robbery at the Cass Corridor offices spurred Barry Kramer to move the magazine to a 120-acre farm in the rural suburb Walled Lake. The staff lived there communally for two years: sharing three rooms and one bathroom, working and socializing around the clock amid a menagerie of dogs, cats and horses. In the film, Uhelszki reveals that a trip to the bathroom in the middle of the night meant possibly encountering Kramer and getting a lecture about copy while half-awake, and that Marsh once deposited wayward excrement from Bangs’s dog onto Bangs’s typewriter.

“We had rolled out into the driveway,” Marsh recalls of the ensuing fistfight, “and I got my head smacked into an open car door. That’s OK, he wasn’t trying to hurt me, he was just trying to win.”

In 1973, the commune experiment ended and Creem relocated into a proper office in Birmingham, one of Detroit’s toniest suburbs. Still, the city’s scrappy, underdog spirit remained a crucial element of the magazine’s aesthetic. “I don’t think it could have existed anywhere else,” Alice Cooper said in a phone interview. “In New York it would have been more sophisticated; in L.A. it would have been a lot slicker. Detroit was the perfect place for it, because it was somewhere between a teen magazine and Mad magazine and a hard rock magazine.”

Rolling Stone felt comparatively stuffy, preoccupied with movies and politics and reluctant to cover loud and snotty subcultural movements like punk and metal, whereas Creem’s pages first coined those genre’s names: “punk rock” by Marsh, about ? and the Mysterians, and “heavy metal” by Mike Saunders, about Sir Lord Baltimore, both in the May 1971 issue.

The reader mail page provided a ribald frisson between the writers and their audience. The most infamous exchange came in 1977, after the writer Rick Johnson opened his review of the second Runaways album, “Queens of Noise,” by declaring “These bitches suck. That’s all there is to it.” An infuriated Joan Jett visited the Creem office to confront him; when told Johnson wasn’t there, she settled the score in the letters column.

Musicians were not only the subject of the publication, they were often its authors; Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye became contributors. And Creem writers sometimes scaled the fourth wall themselves. The J. Geils Band singer Peter Wolf invited Bangs to “play” his typewriter onstage; Uhelszki was gussied up by Kiss in full “Hotter Than Hell” makeup and played (unplugged) guitar onstage for her August 1975 story [*“I Dreamed I Was Onstage With Kiss in My Maidenform Bra.”*](https://www.creemmag.com/pages/documentary)

Subversive humor was the Creem lingua franca. Snarky photo captions and regular features like the Creem Dreems (tongue-in-cheek pinups of artists like Debbie Harry and Bebe Buell) were clearly intended for — and driven by — adolescent hormones, but the magazine provided opportunities for women writers like Roberta Cruger, Cynthia Dagnal, Lisa Robinson and Penny Valentine at a time when the music industry was intensely misogynist. “We had so many women who were empowered and were editors at the time,” Susan Whitall says in the film. “When I came in, Jaan mentored me, and then I mentored other women.”

Still, seen through today’s eyes, some of the old Creem content can seem puerile, even offensive. The casual sexism and homophobia is sadly typical of its time, and racial sensitivity was nonexistent. Yet its anarchic attitude and early embrace of new wave and punk inspired future musicians like Sonic Youth’s Thurston Moore, Pearl Jam’s Jeff Ament and Metallica’s Kirk Hammett, who all appear in the film. In one scene, R.E.M.’s Michael Stipe recalls the first time he ever saw a copy of Creem, during detention in high school, and being mesmerized by a photo of Patti Smith.

“From that moment forward my entire life shifted and changed dramatically,” Stipe says. “I was like, what world is this? Most people want to fit in somewhere. Because of my otherness, because of my queerness, I was trying to find that gang. I wasn’t going to find it in my high school. I found it in Creem magazine.”

Uhelszki said making the documentary revealed that musicians devoted to the magazine were empowered by what they read. “The people who made the magazine, we thought we were equals to the bands in the early years,” she said. “Rock stars were just like us but they had better clothes than we did.”

As the 1970s expired, all the hard partying took a toll. Bangs, who had departed Detroit and Creem in 1976 for New York, died of an accidental painkiller overdose in 1982. After a long spiral of drinking and drugging, Barry Kramer overdosed on nitrous oxide in 1981. He left the magazine to his 4-year-old son, JJ, who was listed on the masthead as the chairman of the board.

With the magazine heavily in debt, Barry Kramer’s former wife, Connie, sold Creem to an investor in 1986 who moved it to Los Angeles. The company changed ownership several times before the magazine finally ceased publication in 1989. Considerable litigation lingered into the 2000s, until the Creem brand was acquired by JJ Kramer’s company in 2017.

For JJ Kramer, also one of the movie’s producers, the documentary project was more than a film; it was an opportunity to discover the father he never knew. “Before we did the movie, I think I can remember actually hearing his voice maybe once or twice,” he said in a phone interview. “That’s why the film was such an incredible experience for me, just getting to know who he was as a person — the good, the bad, the ugly and the crazy — which in turn taught me a lot about myself as well.”

An intellectual-property lawyer, JJ Kramer spent 20 years gathering the rights to the old material, and is eager to make the magazine’s archive available for a new generation. To coincide with the film’s release, a limited-edition best-of-Creem issue will be available on newsstands on Nov. 1, and additional print editions are being considered, as well as a TV show.

“I view the documentary as very much the beginning, not the end,” he said. “We’re all looking for something to capture our attention and our passion, so to me that feels like a really strong signal that the world might need Creem more than ever.”

PHOTOS: Top, employees in 1969 at Creem magazine, the subject of a new documentary about its roller-coaster run. Above left, the Creem writer Jaan Uhelszki with Paul Stanley from Kiss while working on her hands-on story in 1975. Above right, the critic Lester Bangs, who was known for tangling with musicians and brawling with his colleagues. Below, the publisher Barry Kramer, left, and Bangs in 1976. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHARLES AURINGER; BARRY LEVINE; JOHN COLLIER) (C6)

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Why Bernie Sanders Is Tough to Beat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XV6-1BF1-DXY4-X1GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Sydney Ember

**Highlight:** His supporters are loyal, and in Iowa they don’t really have eyes for anyone else.

**Body**

His supporters are loyal, and in Iowa they don’t really have eyes for anyone else.

[Read more: [*Bernie Sanders drops out of 2020 democratic presidential race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html).]

GARNER, Iowa — Dawn Smallfoot put up a Bernie Sanders sign in her yard after hearing him speak in spring 2015. It’s been there ever since.

“Why take it down?” she said on a recent Monday evening, during a break from making calls to potential Sanders supporters. “I was waiting for his return.”

His campaign is counting on that kind of devotion.

With less than six weeks until voting begins, the loyalty Mr. Sanders commands has turned him into a formidable contender in the 2020 race. Despite having a heart attack in October that threatened to derail his second quest for the Democratic nomination, he remains at or near the top of polls in Iowa and other early states, lifted by his near ubiquitous name recognition and an enviable bank account.

His anti-establishment message hasn’t changed for 50 years, and it resonates with ***working-class*** voters and young people who agree the system is corrupt and it will take a revolution to fix it.

The scenario seemed unlikely just months earlier. As Mr. Sanders, 78, lay recovering in a hospital in Las Vegas, two new stents in one of his arteries, some of his staff members were unsure if he would continue his campaign. With Mr. Sanders, Vermont’s junior senator, already slumping in the polls, even some allies thought he should drop out and throw his support behind Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, a fellow progressive who was surging.

But then he secured the coveted endorsement of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York, giving his campaign a much-needed shot of energy. In the debates, he was steady, loose and largely unscathed. On the trail, he began to display a newfound joy and humor. And Ms. Warren slipped from the top of the field, reopening the progressive lane for him.

Mr. Sanders’s revival has reshuffled the Democratic primary race, providing a counterweight to the shift toward centrism in recent months that has elevated Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., and kept former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. atop the national polls. And if it lasts, it would add to the likelihood of an extended primary battle, with Mr. Sanders splitting delegates in the early states with several other candidates.

He still faces a difficult path to the nomination. Ms. Warren has siphoned off some of his support, and his entire campaign rests on the conviction that he can pull in voters who might otherwise not show up at the ballot box.

In addition, he has a strained relationship with the Democratic establishment, which remains bitter over the division he and his supporters sowed after the 2016 primaries, and chafes at his refusal to engage with the traditional party apparatus.

Yet in Iowa, and elsewhere, the tension with the party has served only to re-energize Mr. Sanders and his loyalists, who are faithful to him in a way that no other candidate’s supporters are: While backers of other Democrats often list three or four contenders when asked to name their top choice, Mr. Sanders’s fans are unwavering.

A recent poll [*from The Des Moines Register*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) showed that, among likely Democratic caucusgoers who said Mr. Sanders was their top choice, 57 percent said their minds were made up; according to The Register, no other candidate registered above 30 percent.

Those figures alone could portend a strong showing for Mr. Sanders at the caucuses, where candidates must receive at least 15 percent support at a caucus site to collect that site’s share of state delegates.

“Bernie Sanders is definitely being underestimated in Iowa,” said John Grennan, the Democratic chairman in Poweshiek County, Iowa.

“Part of his durability is that he has 15 to 20 percent of the caucus who are absolutely committed to voting for him no matter what,” he said. “In a field that’s split between at least 10 major candidates, that 15 to 20 percent counts for a whole heck of a lot.”

There are other factors that have helped Mr. Sanders in Iowa. Because his backers are so loyal, opponents have been unable to penetrate his base, if they have tried to at all. Part of the reason is that Mr. Sanders’s strategy revolves around engaging people who typically don’t participate in the political process, a highly difficult group to target; even the Sanders campaign acknowledges it is a risky strategy. Another factor is sheer resignation: His rivals just don’t see the point in trying to pick off supporters who probably won’t budge.

Mr. Sanders has also mostly escaped aggressive attacks from his rivals. Other candidates have focused more on trying to stop Ms. Warren, whom they viewed as a bigger threat. On the airwaves, Mr. Buttigieg, another front-runner, has run television ads that attack Mr. Sanders’s proposals like “Medicare for all” and tuition-free public college but do not name him directly.

Ms. Warren herself has rarely criticized Mr. Sanders. Asked at a recent stop in the blue-collar town of Ottumwa what made her a “better candidate” than Mr. Sanders, she responded tepidly that they had been “friends for a long, long time.”

And though Mr. Sanders’s detractors see a numbing repetition in his message, his supporters see his constancy as one of his biggest assets: Mr. Sanders, for instance, has absorbed much less criticism on Medicare for all because he has championed it for decades. Ms. Warren’s evolving position on how to pay for it has hurt her with some voters.

During a recent rally in Burlington, a town along the Mississippi River in southeastern Iowa, Mr. Sanders played his greatest hits. Standing behind a podium, he railed against income inequality. He trumpeted health care as a human right.

“What this campaign is about is trying to talk about issues, and bring about ideas that address the pain of working families in this country,” he said. The audience nodded along. Many had heard it before. Many had come to hear it again.

“I do like that he has fought for people the same his entire Senate career and even before,” said Angel Edwards, 41, of Burlington. “It makes you hopeful that he won’t flip-flop while in office.”

Since his heart attack, Mr. Sanders has often seemed lighter and more relaxed, a change from the gruff intensity that for years marked his public appearances. His campaign frequently posts videos of him shooting hoops, and he recently took a few pitches of batting practice at an event at an indoor sports facility in Burlington.

At the same time, there is little indication, in Iowa and elsewhere, that Mr. Sanders is attracting more supporters beyond those who backed him in 2016 and young people who were not old enough to vote then. In interviews with dozens of people at his campaign events in recent months, nearly all said their support dated to his first presidential run, or earlier; at events for other candidates, hardly anyone mentions Mr. Sanders as a top choice.

“From my conversations, it appears that people are not ambivalent about Sanders,” said Jeff Fager, the Democratic chairman in Henry County, where Mr. Sanders battled Hillary Clinton to a tie in 2016. “They are either behind him, or he is not on their list of potential candidates.”

That steady support could be enough in Iowa, whose complex caucus system favors on-the-ground enthusiasm, especially if excitement for other candidates wavers. The challenge, however, is that Mr. Sanders is effectively gambling that those who do not usually vote will now show up on a cold Monday night in February to participate in what could be an hourslong, sometimes disorganized process.

Kurt Meyer, the Democratic chairman in Mitchell County, in northern Iowa, said he saw signs that Mr. Sanders’s organization might have trouble turning out potential caucus attendees in his rural region.

“The Sanders organization in the predominantly rural counties I am most familiar with is not particularly strong,” he said. While he suggested that it might be easy to underestimate the totality of Mr. Sanders’s support, he also said it was far from clear that the voters Mr. Sanders was counting on would show up on caucus day.

Aides to Mr. Sanders provide few details on how they are wooing supporters, but they express confidence that their strategy is working. The campaign said in late October that it already had more commit-to-caucus cards, a loose measure of support, than it did in January 2016.

Just as it did that year, Mr. Sanders’s team is trying to connect with people in new ways. His campaign canvasses at farmers’ markets and outside drugstores. One field organizer, Conrad Bascom, has started holding phone banks at a Casey’s General Store in rural Garner largely because the location was a convenient meeting place and the Wi-Fi was reliable.

“It happened pretty organically,” Mr. Bascom said, during one such phone-bank event in early December. “It very quickly became a habit.”

PHOTOS: A rally last month in Council Bluffs, Iowa, featured Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, whose endorsement gave his campaign a burst of vitality. Left, Senator Sanders greeting supporters Dec. 7 in Cedar Rapids. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMY KONTRAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10)

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Detroit Rock Crit: Creem Totally Defined It***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60H9-XB61-DXY4-X1DK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Body**

A new documentary traces the rise and fall of the irreverent, boundary-smashing music publication where Lester Bangs did some of his most famous work.

On Jaan Uhelszki's first day at Creem magazine in October 1970, she met a fellow new hire: Lester Bangs, a freelance writer freshly arrived from California to fill the post of record reviews editor. His plaid three-piece suit made him look like an awkward substitute teacher, she thought, and certainly out of place among the hippies and would-be revolutionaries using the publication's decrepit Detroit office as a crash pad.

Uhelszki, still a teenager, was majoring in journalism at nearby Wayne State University, and had been sent to the fledgling rock magazine by editors at the student newspaper. ''They said with a sneer, 'We can't publish you, you don't have any clips, but Creem will publish anybody, why don't you go walk down the street,''' Uhelszki said in a phone interview. ''So my first clips were Creem. I started at the top.''

She'd arrived at the headquarters of ''America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine,'' as Creem's front covers would soon proclaim. What began as an underground newspaper soon evolved under Bangs, the editor Dave Marsh and the publisher Barry Kramer into a boisterous, irreverent, boundary-smashing monthly that was equal parts profound and profane. During his half-decade at Creem, Bangs would publish many of the pharmaceutically fueled exegeses that made him ''America's greatest rock critic'' -- including his epic three-part interview with his hero/nemesis Lou Reed. By 1976, it had a circulation of over 210,000, second only to Rolling Stone.

The magazine's roller-coaster arc and its lasting impact on the culture is the subject of a spirited new documentary directed by Scott Crawford, ''Creem: America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine,'' which Uhelszki co-wrote and helped produce. The film opens Friday for virtual cinema and limited theatrical release, and comes to VOD on Aug. 28.

As a teenager, Crawford bought old issues of Creem from used bookstores near his home outside Washington, D.C. His first film was ''Salad Days,'' a 2014 documentary about the city's hardcore punk scene.

''I was aware of the personalities involved,'' he said of the Creem crew. ''I'd heard stories over the years of their fights, literal fistfights, so I knew that this would make for a hell of a film because in addition to how much they contributed to music journalism, a lot of the writers were just as interesting as the artists that they covered.''

The documentary traces how Creem's high-intensity environment mirrored that of the late 1960s Detroit rock scene, which was centered around the heavy guitar assault of bands like the MC5, the Stooges and Alice Cooper. Barry Kramer, a ***working-class*** Jewish kid with a chip on his shoulder and a volatile temper, was a key local figure: He owned the record store-cum-head shops Mixed Media and Full Circle.

''I liked Barry a great deal, and in fact I wanted him to manage the MC5,'' the band's guitarist Wayne Kramer, who is not a relation, said in a phone interview. (He also handled original music for the film.) ''He had a vision and saw ways that this emerging counterculture could be monetized.''

The original idea for Creem came from a clerk at Mixed Media, Tony Reay, who persuaded Barry Kramer to put $1,200 into the venture, which began in March 1969. When the cartoonist Robert Crumb wandered into Mixed Media in need of cash, Reay offered him $50 to draw the cover of issue No. 2. Crumb's illustration included an anthropomorphized bottle of cream exclaiming ''Boy Howdy!,'' which became the magazine's mascot and catchphrase.

Reay soon departed over creative differences, and the magazine briefly took on a more political flavor, thanks to Marsh, a 19-year-old Wayne State student. The arrival of Bangs in 1970 was explosive.

''They both had different ideas of what Creem should be,'' Uhelszki said. ''Lester just saw us as bozo provocateurs, and David wanted it to be a more political magazine and saw us as foot soldiers of the counterculture.''

In 1971, a robbery at the Cass Corridor offices spurred Barry Kramer to move the magazine to a 120-acre farm in the rural suburb Walled Lake. The staff lived there communally for two years: sharing three rooms and one bathroom, working and socializing around the clock amid a menagerie of dogs, cats and horses. In the film, Uhelszki reveals that a trip to the bathroom in the middle of the night meant possibly encountering Kramer and getting a lecture about copy while half-awake, and that Marsh once deposited wayward excrement from Bangs's dog onto Bangs's typewriter.

''We had rolled out into the driveway,'' Marsh recalls of the ensuing fistfight, ''and I got my head smacked into an open car door. That's OK, he wasn't trying to hurt me, he was just trying to win.''

In 1973, the commune experiment ended and Creem relocated into a proper office in Birmingham, one of Detroit's toniest suburbs. Still, the city's scrappy, underdog spirit remained a crucial element of the magazine's aesthetic. ''I don't think it could have existed anywhere else,'' Alice Cooper said in a phone interview. ''In New York it would have been more sophisticated; in L.A. it would have been a lot slicker. Detroit was the perfect place for it, because it was somewhere between a teen magazine and Mad magazine and a hard rock magazine.''

Rolling Stone felt comparatively stuffy, preoccupied with movies and politics and reluctant to cover loud and snotty subcultural movements like punk and metal, whereas Creem's pages first coined those genre's names: ''punk rock'' by Marsh, about ? and the Mysterians, and ''heavy metal'' by Mike Saunders, about Sir Lord Baltimore, both in the May 1971 issue.

The reader mail page provided a ribald frisson between the writers and their audience. The most infamous exchange came in 1977, after the writer Rick Johnson opened his review of the second Runaways album, ''Queens of Noise,'' by declaring ''These bitches suck. That's all there is to it.'' An infuriated Joan Jett visited the Creem office to confront him; when told Johnson wasn't there, she settled the score in the letters column.

Musicians were not only the subject of the publication, they were often its authors; Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye became contributors. And Creem writers sometimes scaled the fourth wall themselves. The J. Geils Band singer Peter Wolf invited Bangs to ''play'' his typewriter onstage; Uhelszki was gussied up by Kiss in full ''Hotter Than Hell'' makeup and played (unplugged) guitar onstage for her August 1975 story ''I Dreamed I Was Onstage With Kiss in My Maidenform Bra.''

Subversive humor was the Creem lingua franca. Snarky photo captions and regular features like the Creem Dreems (tongue-in-cheek pinups of artists like Debbie Harry and Bebe Buell) were clearly intended for -- and driven by -- adolescent hormones, but the magazine provided opportunities for women writers like Roberta Cruger, Cynthia Dagnal, Lisa Robinson and Penny Valentine at a time when the music industry was intensely misogynist. ''We had so many women who were empowered and were editors at the time,'' Susan Whitall says in the film. ''When I came in, Jaan mentored me, and then I mentored other women.''

Still, seen through today's eyes, some of the old Creem content can seem puerile, even offensive. The casual sexism and homophobia is sadly typical of its time, and racial sensitivity was nonexistent. Yet its anarchic attitude and early embrace of new wave and punk inspired future musicians like Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore, Pearl Jam's Jeff Ament and Metallica's Kirk Hammett, who all appear in the film. In one scene, R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe recalls the first time he ever saw a copy of Creem, during detention in high school, and being mesmerized by a photo of Patti Smith.

''From that moment forward my entire life shifted and changed dramatically,'' Stipe says. ''I was like, what world is this? Most people want to fit in somewhere. Because of my otherness, because of my queerness, I was trying to find that gang. I wasn't going to find it in my high school. I found it in Creem magazine.''

Uhelszki said making the documentary revealed that musicians devoted to the magazine were empowered by what they read. ''The people who made the magazine, we thought we were equals to the bands in the early years,'' she said. ''Rock stars were just like us but they had better clothes than we did.''

As the 1970s expired, all the hard partying took a toll. Bangs, who had departed Detroit and Creem in 1976 for New York, died of an accidental painkiller overdose in 1982. After a long spiral of drinking and drugging, Barry Kramer overdosed on nitrous oxide in 1981. He left the magazine to his 4-year-old son, JJ, who was listed on the masthead as the chairman of the board.

With the magazine heavily in debt, Barry Kramer's former wife, Connie, sold Creem to an investor in 1986 who moved it to Los Angeles. The company changed ownership several times before the magazine finally ceased publication in 1989. Considerable litigation lingered into the 2000s, until the Creem brand was acquired by JJ Kramer's company in 2017.

For JJ Kramer, also one of the movie's producers, the documentary project was more than a film; it was an opportunity to discover the father he never knew. ''Before we did the movie, I think I can remember actually hearing his voice maybe once or twice,'' he said in a phone interview. ''That's why the film was such an incredible experience for me, just getting to know who he was as a person -- the good, the bad, the ugly and the crazy -- which in turn taught me a lot about myself as well.''

An intellectual-property lawyer, JJ Kramer spent 20 years gathering the rights to the old material, and is eager to make the magazine's archive available for a new generation. To coincide with the film's release, a limited-edition best-of-Creem issue will be available on newsstands on Nov. 1, and additional print editions are being considered, as well as a TV show.

''I view the documentary as very much the beginning, not the end,'' he said. ''We're all looking for something to capture our attention and our passion, so to me that feels like a really strong signal that the world might need Creem more than ever.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/arts/music/creem-magazine-documentary.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/arts/music/creem-magazine-documentary.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, employees in 1969 at Creem magazine, the subject of a new documentary about its roller-coaster run. Above left, the Creem writer Jaan Uhelszki with Paul Stanley from Kiss while working on her hands-on story in 1975. Above right, the critic Lester Bangs, who was known for tangling with musicians and brawling with his colleagues. Below, the publisher Barry Kramer, left, and Bangs in 1976. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHARLES AURINGER

BARRY LEVINE

JOHN COLLIER) (C6)

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2020

**End of Document**



[***The Lost Embryos***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62G5-9K51-JBG3-64DV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2815 words

**Byline:** By Katherine Rosman

**Body**

When the first letter from Women & Infants Hospital arrived in the mail in July 2017, Elaine Meyer thought perhaps it was a fund-raising solicitation or clerical error. The letter, which included a billing invoice, addressed her as ''Dear Patient,'' but she had not been a patient at the hospital for nearly two decades. That's when she and her husband, Barry Prizant, had completed their infertility treatment there.

After three miscarriages, they had gone through several rounds of IVF at Women & Infants in Providence, R.I., near their home in Cranston, resulting in the creation of at least 18 test-tube embryos. One of those had become their son, Noah, born in December of 1996, and along with joy there had been a lot of mourning and reckoning with the reality that this would be the sole realization of their efforts.

Dr. Meyer mentioned the letter to her husband and stashed it in a filing cabinet of her home office.

But then another came the next month. ''If you would like WIH to continue to store your embryos/oocytes,'' the letter said, ''please return a copy of this letter, signed and notarized, along with a check in the amount of $500.''

Dr. Meyer, a longtime psychologist at Boston Children's Hospital and associate professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, read it with confusion and a growing sense of alarm. Without the payment, the hospital would consider embryos ''legally abandoned'' and may discard them.

''I thought, 'This can't be right,''' she said. ''We know we went back for all of our embryos.''

Those frozen embryos, still in the hospital's possession, are now at the center of a lawsuit that Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant have filed in Rhode Island's Superior Court, alleging breach of contract, negligence, bailment and intentional infliction of emotional distress -- all of which Women & Infants denies in its response.

In a statement, a spokeswoman there declined to comment on the case, citing patient confidentiality and federal privacy laws.

When the letters arrived, Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant, a speech and language pathologist and visiting scholar at Brown University, were then fulfilled empty nesters. Noah was in college, a successful student and happy young man that Dr. Meyer, now 63, calls ''the light of our lives.''

She was ensconced in her work educating students and health care professionals how to have difficult conversations with patients, upholding what she calls an ''emotional standard of care.''

Dr. Prizant, 69, who specializes in children and adults on the autism spectrum, was training other practitioners and churning out papers and podcasts. He is the author of ''Uniquely Human,'' a book written with Tom Fields-Meyer. He plays drums in a band and is proud of his roots in the stickball streets of Brooklyn. ''Basically, I don't like to take crap,'' he said.

He and his wife, a former 4H club member raised in a large ***working-class*** family in small-town Connecticut, met in 1985 while attending a conference at a psychiatric hospital. Married two years later, they wanted children but felt it was important for her to finish graduate school first. Dr. Meyer got pregnant at 34, then had a miscarriage. Two more miscarriages followed.

The couple first sought treatment from Dr. Gary Frishman at Women & Infants, which is affiliated with Brown's medical school, in 1995. Dr. Prizant gave his wife daily shots before her eggs were harvested at the clinic and mixed in a petri dish with his sperm to create embryos, some of which were then transferred to Dr. Meyer's uterus. The first two cycles didn't work.

''It takes something that is supposed to be so private and so intimate and so tender and makes it a whole different affair,'' Dr. Meyer said, recalling the experience. ''You're vulnerable and you're completely dependent on other people. There are so many injections and appointments and disappointments, you put your trust in what the doctors tell you because you are desperate for the process to work.''

During a third cycle, Dr. Meyer became pregnant with Noah. After his birth, she and her husband were optimistic they could have another child. There were nine embryos left over from the three cycles, and they signed agreements with the hospital to ''cryopreserve'' them for transfer in the future.

Dr. Meyer felt an acute attachment to the embryos, calling each ''a spark of life.'' She would drive out of her way to pass by the hospital, stopping in the parking lot to sing lullabies to them while in her car. ''We were always coming back for our embryos,'' she said. ''That was always the plan.''

After Noah started preschool, the couple began anew at Women & Infants in August of 2000 with shots and doctor appointments. The hospital would thaw the nine embryos, and those that survived this process would be transferred to Dr. Meyer's uterus, in the hopes that at least one would develop into a pregnancy.

The couple said they were told all the embryos were thawed; they believe three survived the thaw and were transferred. But weeks later, they were called in for ''the failure conversation'' -- what Dr. Meyer called the meetings with doctors to discuss an unsuccessful procedure and possible next steps.

This one was with Dr. David Keefe, then the director of the hospital's division of reproductive medicine. He advised Dr. Meyer that at 43, her and her husband's most reasonable path to additional children was donor eggs or adoption.

Dr. Prizant was done, emotionally exhausted. ''It sets you in a constant state of grief,'' he said of infertility treatment.

Dr. Meyer, a devoted Quaker, needed a little more time and spiritual consultation, but also made peace, grateful for Noah. ''We both decided,'' Dr. Prizant said, ''to look at having just one child as an opportunity to have more resources to serve many more children through our work.''

A Crack in the Glass

Reading the second letter, which like the first one asked for $500, filled Dr. Meyer with dread. She left a voice mail message at the hospital. Days later, she spoke to a person who turned out to be a clerk in the billing department.

''I am telling you, there are no embryos,'' Dr. Meyer said, asking her to contact the lab itself.

For weeks, she waited for a call back. Nothing. She called the clerk again. ''I've confirmed with the lab, there are two frozen embryos,'' the clerk said.

Dr. Meyer was stunned, silent. Then she spoke. ''Do you understand how serious this is?'' she said.

A few days later, she was driving back from the family cottage in South Kingstown, when Dr. Ruben Alvero, then the director of the fertility center at Women & Infants, called to confirm. ''We have two of your embryos,'' he said.

She pulled her car to the side of the road.

The embryos, Dr. Alvero said, had been found in a glass vial at the bottom of the tank. The vial has a crack in it, he told her, which meant that the embryos had been exposed, possibly for a decade, to the nitrogen cooling agent. They most likely are not viable, he told her, and apologized.

Dr. Meyer told Dr. Alvero this was too much to take in from the side of the road. A meeting was arranged for December of that year, between Dr. Meyer, her husband, Dr. Alvero and Richard Hackett, who helped to create and manages the I.V.F. lab at Women & Infants. Dr. Frishman, who had been Dr. Meyer's main doctor and is still on the staff at Women & Infants, did not attend.

The four gathered in a conference room, with Dr. Prizant and his wife on one side, Dr. Alvero and Mr. Hackett on the other.

According to the legal complaint, the men representing the hospital apologized for the circumstances that had brought them together and explained to the couple again what had happened. Two of Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant's embryos had disappeared sometime before Dr. Meyer's procedure in 2000, Dr. Meyer said they told her and her husband. The embryos were located in 2010 when the tank was emptied for cleaning or maintenance and re-entered into the inventory. The vial, as Dr. Alvero had told Dr. Meyer earlier in the fall, had been damaged. When the clinic implemented a new storage fee policy in 2017, the couple received the bills.

She asked if the cells of the embryo still physically existed. They did, the men told her. Though likely compromised, the embryos are still intact, in their glass vial with her name on it.

''Those are ours!'' Dr. Meyer blurted out, and said that she didn't want the embryos discarded. Dr. Alvero told her that the hospital would continue to store them and that he would waive the $500 fee. He and Mr. Hackett apologized and flipped through pages in her huge medical file, which the men had brought to the meeting. Mr. Hackett stopped on one page, she said, and began tapping his fingers on it: a handwritten note that said ''2 missing.''

''You knew they were missing'' and didn't tell us, Dr. Meyer asked?

No one ever tried to find the embryos, or thought to alert us when they were found years later, Dr. Prizant asked?

Perhaps the couple forgot that they had been told that the embryos were missing, they said Dr. Alvero suggested.

Dr. Prizant and Dr. Meyer were sure no one had ever told them anything was missing. Why would they have discussed adoption and egg donation if they had known two embryos were lost in the hospital? ''That would have set us on a different course of action,'' he said.

Dr. Keefe, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology and a fertility specialist at New York University Langone Fertility Center, remembered his patients, and expressed surprise to learn of the two long-lost embryos. ''Yikes,'' he said. ''I feel so terribly for this couple.''

Dr. Keefe said that he would have only known if embryos were missing if someone from the lab had notified him, and in this case they had not. In the rare instances when embryos are lost or misplaced, he added, the protocol is to notify the patient immediately, apologize and explain in detail what might have happened. ''Transparency is the foundation of trust and the essential element of the doctor-patient relationship,'' he said.

''These are not two cans of peaches on the shelf at a Stop & Shop,'' he went on, speaking of the embryos. ''They are much more like two kids on a playground. When you're responsible for them and they're lost, you notify the people who care about them the most and tell them all you can.''

Dr. Meyer, who has devoted a career to speaking up for patients and more recently to studying and writing about bioethics, scoffs at the idea that she would have quietly accepted the news in 2000 that her embryos had been lost. ''There is no way on God's green earth,'' she said.

Dr. Alvero, now the director of reproductive endocrinology and infertility at the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University and the president of the Society for Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, referred questions to the public relations department of Women & Infants. The hospital's spokeswoman said Dr. Frishman and Mr. Hackett were not available for comment.

'My Line in the Sand'

At the meeting in December 2017, Dr. Prizant and Dr. Meyer said, Dr. Alvero asked what might help them feel resolved about the situation.

The couple said they wanted to find something meaningful to come from the careless treatment of their embryos. Perhaps it could provide a learning opportunity, they suggested -- proposing, among other ideas, that Dr. Meyer could help train fertility staff at the hospital to interact more compassionately with and informatively to patients in the thicket of family planning.

Dr. Alvero and Mr. Hackett said they would consult with the hospital administration and get back in touch after the holidays. But by May 2018, after five months of silence, Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant wrote a letter to Dr. Alvero, copying the hospital's interim president and chief executive, the Rhode Island attorney general and the head of the state's department of health.

''As parents who cherished children, we would NOT have forgotten that our embryos were missing,'' they wrote. ''We would not have rested until they were found and cared for.''

Soon after mailing the letter, they got a phone call from Katherine Wills, the hospital's director of risk management. '''This happened a long time ago,''' Dr. Meyer recalled Ms. Wills telling her. Dr. Meyer felt the message was, ''Get over it.''

Dr. Meyer explained to Ms. Wills that embryos discovered in the bottom of the tank represented to her and her husband potential human beings: children, her and her husband's children. ''I was horrified,'' Dr. Meyer said.

That conversation, she said, ''was my line in the sand.'' Hesitant at first, Dr. Meyer and her husband decided to take legal action. ''As a woman who had suffered miscarriages and infertility, all the powerful feelings of sadness, shame and grief came crashing back and the knot in my stomach was real.''

They are seeking a jury trial and punitive, compensatory, consequential damages. But Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant said the real point of the lawsuit is to compel the hospital, and perhaps other infertility treatment providers, to commit to reliable and accountable storage management and patient care practices. (They want to urge vigilance on the increasing number of people freezing eggs and embryos.)

In a legal filing, the hospital alleged that Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant ''were guilty of comparative negligence'' but provided no further detail. Angela L. Carr, the hospital's lawyer, declined to comment.

''I would not be true to myself if I let this be swept under the rug,'' Dr. Meyer said. ''It is our job as parents to give our children, and in this case embryos, every opportunity for life and for dignity. We were denied our right to fulfill our role as parents.''

'You Assume There is Oversight'

Dr. Prizant and Dr. Meyer's saga is ''an interesting story not because it's unique but because it's probably not unique,'' said Jeffrey Kahn, the director of the Berman Institute of Bioethics at Johns Hopkins University. (He does not know the couple and is not involved in their case.) ''There is so little regulation and no accounting of how many embryos there are in storage,'' he said.

The fertility industry is a lucrative business but operates largely unchecked by regulators, Dr. Kahn said, for several reasons, including federal policies in place since the mid-1980s. The policies bar federal dollars from being used for research that involves the harm or destruction of human embryos.

Federal regulation tends to follow federal funding, often leaving privately funded I.V.F. facilities without oversight. Also, most of what takes place in an I.V.F. laboratory falls outside the purview of the Food and Drug Administration. ''You assume there is oversight, as there is with most doctors and procedures, but when it comes to infertility, that turns out not to be true,'' he said.

A study published in 2020 in the journal Fertility & Sterility found that 133 lawsuits were filed in the previous decade over lost, discarded or damaged frozen embryos. That number reflects lawsuits filed, which is likely a fraction of actual occurrences, said Dov Fox, the director of the Center for Health Law Policy and Bioethics at University of San Diego and one of the study's authors. Dr. Fox also noted that most of these types of suits settled out of court, with undisclosed terms and nondisclosure agreements, making it difficult to know the outcomes.

Three lawsuits have been filed against Women & Infants Hospital related to lost embryos, including two in the mid-1990s, when Dr. Meyer was a patient. In 2019, a woman named Marisa Cloutier-Bristol described receiving in 2017 a bill from Women & Infants similar to the ones that Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant received, which notified Ms. Cloutier-Bristol that the hospital had a frozen embryo belonging to her and her late husband, despite having been told in 2003 that her I.V.F. cycle had not produced any viable embryos.

''I felt like I was now grieving a child I didn't even know existed, a child I could have had,'' she told ''Good Morning America'' in 2019. She sued the hospital. (The case has since been dismissed. Through her lawyer, Ms. Cloutier-Bristol declined to comment.)

As Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant's case winds its way through the pandemic-delayed civil courts system, the couple is also thinking about what to do with their embryos.

After seeking spiritual support and guidance at their temple and their Quaker meeting, the couple is leaning toward repossessing their embryos and burying them in the backyard in Cranston, where her mother's ashes, and the remains of the family dog, are buried. They also have talked to a rabbi about a cemetery burial.

''We need to allow our embryos to finally have some peace and rest,'' Dr. Meyer said. ''And we need to find some peace and rest ourselves.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/16/style/freezing-eggs-and-embryos.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/16/style/freezing-eggs-and-embryos.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Dr. Elaine Meyer and Dr. Barry Prizant, her husband, have one son. They said they hoped for more children, but it was not to be. (ST1)

From top: Dr. Elaine Meyer and Dr. Barry Prizant, who are suing the hospital where they underwent infertility treatment years ago

Dr. Meyer with the petri dish containing embryos that were transferred to her uterus in 2000

a photograph of the couple's wedding day

and family photos and a card made by the couple's son, Noah. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MALHOTRA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST7)

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2021

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[***Departing: Two Brothers, Their Cat and Part of a City's Soul***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y20-YFY1-JBG3-63T9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1387 words

**Byline:** By Liz Alderman

**Body**

An influx of luxury stores is driving out local businesses in the Marais, the historic Jewish and L.G.B.T. center of Paris. Among the casualties is a minimart, run for more than 35 years by two Moroccan brothers.

PARIS -- On a recent evening, Amar Sitayeb squeezed behind a tiny counter at the minimart that he and his older brother Ali have run for more than 35 years in the Marais district of central Paris. A plump gray tabby cat prowled the floor, and faded photos of neighborhood babies, many now grown-ups, were taped to an old cash register.

A stream of regulars filed in, grabbing potato chips, gum and soda, and lingering to exchange gossip and pleasantries. One neighbor with the sniffles bought honey and tea. Mr. Sitayeb fished mint for her from a refrigerator. ''This should help,'' he said.

Ten minutes later, she returned and asked for rum. ''That'll attack the cold quicker!'' he laughed, pulling a bottle from the shelf.

The purchases were mainly an excuse to spend precious moments bantering with the Sitayeb brothers, known to residents around the rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie, a boutique-studded Marais street, as the eyes, ears and unofficial mayors of the area.

For soon, the unthinkable is set to happen: On Jan. 31, their store, Au Marché du Marais, will close, swept away in a tide of moneyed gentrification, like nearly every other independent shop and cafe around them.

''We know everyone here, we've lived our lives with them and we're sad to leave,'' said Ali Sitayeb, a fatherly figure who recently turned 70, but exuded a much younger energy. In place of the daily necessities that his store offers, like toilet paper and freshly squeezed orange juice, he announced, a Princesse Tam Tam lingerie chain would be installed.

When I first heard the news, I was stunned. I had settled near the épicerie after moving to Paris in 2000. Since then, an incursion of designer boutiques had accelerated, turning the area into an outdoor shopping arena that draws thousands of visitors.

The brothers, who originally came from Morocco, remained steady fixtures throughout, greeting me on my way to work, dispensing witticisms and advice, and peppering me with questions about a succession of American presidents.

My neighbors were in mourning. The épicerie was a rare gathering spot, and the brothers, with alert eyes and sunny mustachioed faces, kept vigil over everyone. They held people's keys and knew all the latest news on marriages, divorces, children, thefts, rivalries, real estate deals -- the list goes on.

Theirs, however, is a tale of a rapidly changing Paris. And the closing of their shop, on a street where boutiques now sell 585 euro designer sneakers, has sparked angst among residents who see a warning in how big money-backed luxury brands aimed at wealthy tourists are consuming neighborhoods and eroding cultural identity.

''This changes everything,'' said Eva Beau, a doctor who has lived near the shop for 20 years. ''I feel like breaking all of this -- it's too sad,'' Dr. Beau added, her eyes brimming with tears as she scrutinized the luxury storefronts.

Dr. Beau used to lower a basket with a rope from her fourth-floor apartment, into which the brothers would place coffee and other orders. ''The neighborhood doesn't need more boutiques,'' she said. ''We need the human contact of people like Ali and Amar.''

The brothers had long debated when to retire. When an electrical fire ravaged the shop five years ago, support from neighbors was so strong that they decided to keep going. But then the lingerie chain, run by Fast Retailing, a Japanese retail giant that owns Uniqlo, Theory and Comptoir des Cotonniers, made an advantageous offer for the space.

The pattern is playing out in cities across France. From Aix-en-Provence to Reims, Tours and Strasbourg, bakeries, cafes and shops are increasingly being taken over by retail conglomerates with vast financial resources. The stores look like quaint boutiques, yet the money behind them is formidable.

Near the Sitayebs' shop, the Sandro, Maje and Claudie Pierlot clothing chains expanded under the ownership of the American private equity firm KKR before being taken over by the Chinese textile giant Shandong Ruyi.

Lacoste and Kooples, which replaced a bakery and bookstore, belong to Maus Frères, Switzerland's largest privately held retail group. Chanel and LVMH Moët Hennessy opened perfume and makeup stores, intensifying a surge in Marais real estate prices.

Adding to the pressure is the rise of late-night convenience stores backed by the supermarket giants Casino Groupe and Carrefour. The increased competition has shuttered scores of corner shops in Paris, many run by immigrants from North Africa.

''It's money that makes the laws,'' said Ali Sitayeb's son, Tariq, 34, who helps run the épicerie but no longer counts on taking over.

The Sitayebs left Morocco in the 1970s as teenagers to earn a living as waiters and dishwashers in Parisian restaurants. But they found they could prosper more by operating a convenience mart well past the traditional 7 p.m. closing time of French retailers.

When the brothers opened the shop in 1984, François Mitterrand was president, prices were in French francs and the Marais, the historic Jewish quarter of Paris, was evolving from a gritty ***working-class*** textile and metal factory district. Butchers and boulangeries honeycombed the area. Yiddish was heard everywhere along the rue des Rosiers.

As cafes, bars and artisanal boutiques moved in, the Marais became the center for Paris's L.G.B.T. community, drawing more visitors and prompting an ever more vibrant makeover.

While the Marais had already developed when I arrived, the influx of luxury storefronts has exploded since Europe's economic and debt crisis ended in 2012, squeezing out residential and L.G.B.T. commerce, and taking over the historic Jewish center.

''This used to be a real neighborhood, with families and kids,'' Amar Sitayeb said, as crowds of tourists strolled past on a recent weekend. ''Now, all that's disappeared.''

Jean Luc Rouillard, 67, a denizen since 1980, chimed in.

''The Marais has lost its soul,'' he declared.

''That's closing,'' Mr. Rouillard said, pointing to a 45-year-old antique shop being dismantled for a luxury hotel. ''And that's closing,'' he added, eyeing Au Rendez-Vous des Amis, a neighborhood cafe that had just shuttered to make way for a hamburger joint.

''That too,'' he continued, nodding to Les Mots à la Bouche, the oldest L.G.B.T. bookseller in the Marais, rumored to be converted soon to a Doc Martens shoe store after the lease became unaffordable. ''It's dramatic,'' he said.

As locals contemplated the end of an era, they arranged a surprise party for the brothers on a recent weekday at Le Point Virgule, a small comedy theater next to the shop.

Neighbors filed in silently: Dr. Beau and her daughter Manon, 21; Vincent Douget, a former chef at the cafe; Henriette Delyfer, an art boutique owner who knew the brothers since she was a child; local police officers who had dropped in regularly to chat over orange juice.

At last the brothers arrived. They were speechless at the surprise. Tears misted their eyes. While they were looking forward to spending time with their families, ''it's very hard for us to go,'' Amar Sitayeb said.

''They were the heart of this area,'' said George Fischer, a retiree who has lived next to the shop for two decades.

Back at the épicerie, Tariq Sitayeb had prepared a potent rum punch and Moroccan pastries to welcome a growing crowd.

Ariel Weil, the mayor of Paris's 4th arrondissement, appeared and shook Ali Sitayeb's hand. A circle formed as neighbors lamented the Marais' latest transformation.

''It's just clothes, clothes, clothes,'' Mr. Fischer said. ''How is a bra going to replace my orange juice?''

''On a personal level I'm sad,'' Mr. Weil said. ''And as mayor, I'm worried that we can't find a solution to keep small businesses from leaving.''

Ali Sitayeb looked at his watch and sighed. It was his brother's turn to man the register, and he had to get home to rest. Tomorrow, they would continue the sobering task of winding down the store.

''People don't want things to change,'' said Tariq Sitayeb, as his father faded into the dark night.

''But a page is turning.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/22/world/europe/france-paris-marais-gentrification.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/22/world/europe/france-paris-marais-gentrification.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, Ali Sitayeb, left, and his brother Amar in front of their store, Au Marché de Paris, on the rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie. Left, the influx of retail conglomerates with vast financial resources across France. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Boardwalk's End***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63CH-VG01-DXY4-X1WD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

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From a satellite's point of view, New Jersey's barrier islands barely register, like fine white bones pulled from a body of green, separated by a vascular tissue of wetlands and shallow bays. Twenty thousand years ago, when the Laurentide ice sheet covered much of Canada and the northern United States, the coast of what would be New Jersey reached to the edge of the continental shelf, nearly 100 miles east of the present shoreline. For the next 10,000 years, as the last ice age came to an end and the sea level rose by more than 300 feet, the New Jersey coastline moved steadily west.

This alluvial coastal plain is stratified with quartz and glauconite sands, silt, clay and at least eight different aquifers going down beyond 6,000 feet before there is any semblance of solid earth -- a slab of bedrock formed between 550 million and 300 million years ago. Geologists like to say that New Jersey's coastal plain sits ''unconformably'' atop this Paleozoic base. Most unstable are the handful of delicate barrier islands at its edge, which shift naturally with the push of waves and tides, currents and winds. Henry Hudson passed these ribbons of land in August 1609, days before meeting the river that would bear his name. Johannes de Laet, who chronicled Hudson's voyage several years later, dismissed the coast as ''white sandy beach and drowned land within.'' Walt Whitman, a frequent visitor to New Jersey's coast, was awed by the way shorelines breathe. He called them a ''curious, lurking something.''

This article was supported by the Pulitzer Center's Connected Coastlines reporting initiative.

For millenniums before being driven out by the Dutch and English, the Jersey Shore's original human inhabitants, known today as the Delaware, ventured from the mainland in the spring, along the creeks and thoroughfares of the back bays and onto spots like what is now called Seven Mile Island, in New Jersey's southernmost county, Cape May. They set up their summer camps within dunes blanketed with beach grass and sand pea, amid thickets of bayberry, oak and red cedar. They spent their days harvesting fish and oysters, some of which they smoked to preserve for the winter months. The Delaware knew better than to permanently settle on such terrain. When fall arrived, they broke down their camps and retreated, traveling a north-south trail that some historians have suggested is the rough footprint of U.S. 9, now a designated coastal-evacuation route.

The barrier islands today display ample evidence of their battle with human development: failing bulkheads bowing against the corrosive press of water; lumpy and cracked streets, the result of the earth's constant settling beneath them; high tide bubbling from sidewalk seams; beaches wiped away by a single anonymous storm. In winters, without the crush of tourism -- the roughly $24 billion seasonal economic engine of four shore counties -- the only traffic comes from contractors demolishing old homes to erect bigger ones, raised on stilts to cartoonish heights. Whole blocks are cordoned off as armies of workers elevate roads and replace old, overwhelmed storm-water plumbing with higher-capacity systems.

The enemy, of course, is the water. Early development on the islands was concentrated toward the oceanfront, but the static nature of infrastructure was in conflict with the shoreline's need to breathe. Boardwalks, homes and roads and the jetties, sea walls and bulkheads constructed to protect them did little more than accelerate erosion. So, in the late 1980s, New Jersey began entering into 50-year agreements with the Army Corps of Engineers, in which the federal government pays for much of the regular replenishment of the state's beaches and dunes. The projects, which have already pumped 134 million cubic yards of sand across 130 miles of Atlantic coast, at a cost of more than $2 billion, has been effective at protecting beachfront property. But until recently it largely missed a simple fact of geography: From ocean to bay, barrier islands naturally slope from thick to razor-thin.

At Avalon, located on Seven Mile Island, the ocean did an unexpected thing during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. When it hit one of the most carefully managed beachfronts -- and stable dune systems -- the nearly 10 feet of storm surge was simply redirected from the shore to, and through, the island's two inlets, where the water faced little impediment from the low-slung bulkheads of back-bay homes. While the ocean famously breached several locations farther up the coast, here the floodwaters mostly came from behind. This flooding caused by Sandy obliterated any notion that beach replenishment would be enough to protect the barrier islands as the sea level there begins what a Rutgers study predicts will be a rise of at least a foot over the course of a century. The next Sandy is a grave concern, but such devastating weather events are still rare. What most worries these communities is ''nuisance flooding,'' the quiet inundation that can amount to a few inches or several feet of standing water and that is getting worse.

In many places on the barrier islands, nuisance flooding now accompanies practically every full-moon high tide, heavy downpour or strong shoreward wind. These events rarely show up in the news, but in their persistent submerging of lawns and roads for hours at a time, they represent the primary existential threat to the beating heart of the Jersey Shore.

In 1981, a coastal scientist named Stewart Farrell began the work that would become the Stockton University Coastal Research Center, now located on the mainland just north of Atlantic City; the center's ''beach profile'' surveys have served as blueprints for many replenishment projects along the shore. But he has come to question the islands' ability to keep back the highest tides in coming decades. ''On the oceanfront, where the sand dunes are 10 to 12 feet, maybe two feet of sea-level rise is no big deal,'' he says, ''but on the back bay, two feet means you have to splash through water twice a day, every day, just to get to your house. That's not going to do property values a whole lot of good.''

Over the last century, the sea level at the Jersey Shore has risen twice as fast as the global average, because the land here is also sinking. The water's upward climb -- 18 inches in New Jersey -- has increased nuisance flooding up and down the coast, just as it has in low-lying communities around the world. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which maintains about 100 gauges to measure nuisance flooding throughout the United States, has found that episodes of nuisance flooding have doubled since 2000. Last year, 14 locations on the Southeast Atlantic and Gulf coasts experienced record numbers of flooding events, thanks in part to a historic hurricane season. By 2030, NOAA predicts, the national median rate of nuisance flooding will be two to three times greater than it is currently; the rate will be five to 15 times greater by 2050. ''The acceleration has begun,'' William Sweet, a NOAA oceanographer who leads a team that writes an annual report on the phenomenon, told me. ''And inches matter, now more than ever.''

You could be forgiven for thinking the Jersey Shore's local governments are not terribly concerned by such warnings. According to a report from Climate Central and Zillow, some 4,500 homes, worth $4.6 billion, were built in New Jersey between 2010 and 2016 in areas where, even if global greenhouse gas emissions decrease moderately, there will be a risk of flooding once per decade, at a minimum, starting in 2050. The report also notes that no state has built new homes in a risk zone at a faster pace -- not even Florida, with far more shoreline. And that was before the pandemic and the resulting urban exodus and real estate boom. Houses built 15 years ago are being torn down and replaced with bigger ones that occupy as much square footage as zoning rules allow, Martin Pagliughi, Avalon's eight-term mayor, told me. In the last two years, the median price of the homes sold in the borough climbed by $700,000. The era of the quaint fishing cottage is dead.

Pagliughi's full-time job is coordinator of Cape May County's Office of Emergency Management. A septuagenarian who moved to the shore during college -- when it ''was the Wild West,'' he says -- Pagliughi has lasted so long as mayor in large part because he understood earlier than most that being able to quantify the losses from disasters, like the amount of sand displaced by a hurricane, means more government aid. Avalon was Farrell's first client; the town hired him in 1981 to survey the borough's rapidly disappearing oceanfront, and Pagliughi has kept Coastal Research Center beach surveys in the budget under his leadership. In the early 2000s, Avalon installed the county's first pumping stations for bayside flooding -- electric-powered underground pumps that can move tens of thousands of gallons of water per minute from the streets, through pipes that drain into the back bays. Despite the increase in flooding, Pagliughi says he doesn't ''buy into'' the Rutgers forecast that sees a 17 percent chance that the sea-level will rise by more than six feet during this century. ''We'll address the hazards as they come,'' he told me. ''But a hundred years from now? I don't know, I won't be here to worry about it.''

Pagliughi, along with another mayor nearby, became the first to hire C.R.C. to map local nuisance-flooding risks. In a multiyear project that began in 2017, C.R.C. collected millions of data points from cigar-size sensors called HOBOs, which are zip-tied to the undersides of storm drains, where the water creeps in first. The data quickly began to produce incredibly granular pictures of nuisance-flooding risk, certainly far more detailed than NOAA's tide-gauge analyses. The two approaches are very different: Whereas NOAA's median threshold for an official nuisance-flooding event in New Jersey last year was 1.85 feet, the HOBOs record increases greater than a tenth of an inch. But, as Sweet notes, both ''speak to exposure.'' A handful of other barrier island towns soon followed Avalon's lead.

Around the time Farrell delivered the first results of the nuisance-flooding project to Avalon, in August 2019, I visited him at C.R.C., which is housed inside a drab single-story building plunked six miles from the university's main campus, not far from Atlantic City. He wore an old T-shirt tucked into denim carpenter's shorts, rumpled white knee socks and worn black Skechers. Farrell stopped teaching years ago after the C.R.C. work for shore towns, the state and the Army Corps of Engineers became a full-time job.

Farrell said that even for him the monitoring data were ''striking.'' Over the course of a year and a half in Avalon, C.R.C.'s sensors recorded 151 nuisance-flooding events across 13 locations. ''These events don't matter much now,'' Farrell later told me, ''except for the fact that if you don't pay attention to them, and sea-level rise hits the expected three-to-four feet by 2100, a normal high tide is going to be at the level of the worst of these events every day, twice a day. Your home's an island at high tide.''

The tiny borough of Beach Haven, on Long Beach Island, also took part in C.R.C.'s nuisance-flooding monitoring. Last year, I went there to meet with its mayor at the time, Nancy Taggart Davis. By then, I had talked to dozens of Jersey Shore mayors, engineers and other municipal officials about the billions it will cost just in the short term to fight the water. None of them had seriously considered curbing development to reduce risk to life and property. But Davis, who is in her 70s and is an emeritus professor of pathology at Stockton, was different. Despite her commitment to investing in pumping stations and higher bulkheads, she nevertheless acknowledged a near future when homes would have to be bought out and real estate surrendered. She wished she could put on ''blinders,'' she said. ''It really saddens me.'' Then she added, ''But somebody's going to have to face it.'' Beach Haven's construction official, Sean MacCotter, who took part in our conversation, nodded. ''Eventually,'' he said, ''the water will win.''

For the last five years, the Army corps has been conducting its own New Jersey back-bays study, as part of the agency's long-term strategy for managing the risk of coastal flooding. It estimates that the state's 950-square-mile back-bay areas and oceanfront will soon be sustaining $1.57 billion in annual damages over a 50-year period if no new flood-mitigation measures are implemented. One of the study's visions for the future imagines a coast armored with concrete and steel. But the scale of that sort of work dwarfs the projects currently underway on the barrier islands: Storm-surge barriers alone would cost more than $16 billion. The study's authors concede that ''in some cases, just as ecosystems migrate and change functions, human systems may have to relocate in a responsible manner.''

No town is more vulnerable than Atlantic City, the Jersey Shore's largest and poorest municipality. Beginning in 2030, according to the corps study, the city will start incurring more than $300 million annually in flood-related damages over the same half-century; by 2050, NOAA estimates that Atlantic City will have 65 to 155 nuisance-flooding events yearly.

What began, in 1854, as a vision of a resort where urbanites could experience the healing powers of the Atlantic's salt air has, over the course of a century and a half, mushroomed into a carnival by the sea. By the mid-20th century, about 16 million visitors were coming to Atlantic City during the summer months, overrunning its beach and boardwalk and amusement piers. City officials hastily filled the surrounding salt marshes with mud and sand to make room for a year-round population that peaked at 69,000 in 1947. When state and federal laws in the 1970s put an end to the indiscriminate filling of wetlands, it was already too late: Miles of housing -- disproportionately occupied by ***working-class*** immigrants and African Americans, as a result of redlining -- sat on sinking land.

When Farrell arrived in South Jersey in 1971, as a freshly credentialed 29-year-old Ph.D., Stockton's main campus had yet to be completed, so he taught his geology and marine-science classes in the bottom-floor suites of a failing hotel near Atlantic City's boardwalk. The city was at the tail end of a long decline, thanks in part to the development of nearby shore towns that were far less crowded. In the 1980s, the city tried to reinvent itself as a gambling mecca; at the water's edge, real estate tycoons like Steve Wynn, Carl C. Icahn and Donald Trump built expansive casinos. But small businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods withered, and the city went into a second decline. Sandy brought collapse. The poverty rate has soared to nearly 40 percent, the highest in New Jersey, and Atlantic City's dire flooding problems have effectively been ignored. ''There was no interest,'' Farrell told me.

One morning in February 2020, I visited Atlantic City's new director of planning, Barbara Woolley-Dillon, whose first days on the job had been consumed by the urgent need to slow down the flooding. Woolley-Dillon's office downtown occupies a palatial corner of City Hall, a harsh cube of concrete and black glass. Since 2016, the city's imperiled finances had been under state oversight, and in that time the planning-and-development department temporarily dwindled to two people. The view through the huge windows took in the city's northeastern flank, where the rebranded Hard Rock and Ocean hotel-casinos loomed over rowhouses and apartment complexes. The view, said Woolley-Dillon, who is in her 50s, ''is my inspiration for having to do better for the residents.''

In its back-bays study, the corps imagines protecting Absecon Island, which is divvied up between Atlantic City and three other towns, with a storm-surge barrier and a cross-bay barrier along with connections to levees and flood walls. The projected costs could surpass $6 billion. Woolley-Dillon was a former planner for another barrier-island town, Mantoloking, which was leveled by Sandy just before she started there; she is a seasoned veteran in matters of disaster recovery. But when I asked her about the corps' plan, she sighed. She echoed a comparison I'd heard other shore experts make many times. ''Do you know what happened with Katrina?'' she said. ''They didn't anticipate the worst-case scenario. Once the levees breached, you were stuck, you were in a swimming pool with your house not bobbing. We don't want to be in that same position.''

I noted that the corps's study also mentioned retreat. Woolley-Dillon said that if homeowners wanted to sell their homes to a buyout program run by the state, she couldn't stop them. But she preferred to focus on the city's official position -- that it was resolved to adapt in the face of climate change rather than withdraw. She talked about what they were building: a medical center; a resilient microgrid; and an expansion of Stockton's Atlantic City campus that would include an institute focused on coastal resilience. Since we met, the city has positioned itself to be the jobs hub for New Jersey's burgeoning offshore wind industry, with a training facility, conferences and research center. ''We're doing a lot of things toward resiliency,'' she said. ''But when you are on a barrier island, it is very difficult. How much more can you do?''

Not long after our conversation, Woolley-Dillon and other city officials met with New Jersey's home-buyout program, Blue Acres, which acquires clusters of repeatedly flooded properties from willing sellers and demolishes them. Once homes are razed, the land is preserved as open space, a buffer zone for nuisance flooding. Blue Acres' chief, Fawn McGee, informed Woolley-Dillon that a ''list of families'' in Atlantic City had submitted applications for buyouts. The program had emerged as a national model -- since Sandy alone, more than 700 properties had been purchased. But all were in low- to middle-income communities on the mainland. Not a single home had been acquired on the barrier islands, where new construction was a constant. Atlantic City, however, seemed poised to be the exception. In the city's wounds of neglect, managed retreat finally appeared to be finding a foothold on the oceanfront

Last summer, I met an artist named Michael Cagno in Ducktown, an Atlantic City neighborhood. Cagno, who is 48 and runs the Noyes Arts Garage, a gallery and workshop for local artists, wore mirrored sunglasses and a blue short-sleeved polo that revealed faded tattoos. He has spent his life on South Jersey's bay and ocean shorelines, drawn to the juxtaposition of the built and natural worlds. His paintings depict marshlands, water, mud and grasses reclaiming the landscape, overwhelming the man-made.

Early in the 20th century, Italian immigrants -- who raised waterfowl in this slice of Atlantic City -- lived and worked in compact, redbrick rowhouses and small shops along the neighborhood's narrow, tree-lined avenues. Today, Ducktown's 2,500 mostly Latino and Asian American residents, about 70 percent of whom are renters, live and work in those same buildings. It is one of Atlantic City's most historic neighborhoods, and one of its poorest, with a poverty rate that exceeds 40 percent. It is also one of the most flood-prone. Virtually all of Ducktown's bay front is unprotected: High tides constantly breach its decades-old, disintegrating bulkheads. In 2020, the state stepped in with $20 million, transferred from Blue Acres, to help the city with a series of flood-mitigation projects, including the replacement of Ducktown's bulkheads. It was an odd twist, perhaps -- Cagno had heard that a dozen or so Ducktown homeowners had given up and submitted buyout applications to the program. (Blue Acres does not comment on applications.)

As we walked along one quiet, shaded avenue, Cagno estimated that more than 100 properties in the neighborhood had been abandoned. Some were still damaged from Sandy. He had only just learned about the potential buyouts. He couldn't blame anyone for wanting to retreat, though he hoped that some of the Blue Acres applicants were not absentee property owners with tenants who had no interest in leaving. Cagno was part of a community group that had recently put together a ''Revitalize Ducktown'' plan, a first among Atlantic City's 11 neighborhoods. Part of the plan was to advocate a transfer of ownership of Ducktown's abandoned properties to developers interested in rehabilitating them. Demolition was not something the group envisioned.

We lingered for a while at the end of Turnpike Road, where a rotting bulkhead and strip of gravel shoreline barely separated asphalt and water. From the windows of some nearby homes, you could cast a fishing line into the bay. Cagno swept a hand to the east. At the ocean's edge, the Bally's, Caesars and Harrah's casinos thumbed the blue sky; in the foreground, a line of multicolored rowhouses leaned into one another like crooked teeth. There was a white picket fence around one yard, and across the street the bay glimmered in the early summer light.

This scene was one of several Cagno wanted to paint. If the Ducktown he knew couldn't be saved physically, then it ought to be preserved in oil on canvas. The houses were more than just structures; they were also the story of a community. ''These are real people,'' he said. ''Real lives.''

Andrew S. Lewis is a contributing writer for Outside magazine and covers environmental issues on New Jersey's Atlantic and Delaware Bay coasts for N.J. Spotlight News. Devin Oktar Yalkin is a photographer based in New York who has covered a diverse range of subjects for the magazine, including Joe Biden, dirt-track racing, live music and basketball on Montana's Flathead Indian reservation.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/12/magazine/new-jersey-shore.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/12/magazine/new-jersey-shore.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Atlantic City boardwalk. (MM42-MM43)

Bayfront homes in Ocean City, N.J. (MM44-MM45)

Left: The scientist Stewart Farrell, founder of the Stockton University Coastal Research Center. Opposite: Bulkheads on the bay inlet at Venice Park, Atlantic City. (MM46)

A storm-water drainage pipe in Avalon, on the fragile barrier island called Seven Mile Island. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEVIN OKTAR YALKIN) (MM47-MM49)

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2021

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[***‘The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.,’ by Peniel E. Joseph: An Excerpt***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YKT-6W41-JBG3-60WF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1678 words

**Highlight:** An excerpt from “The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.,” by Peniel E. Joseph

**Body**

Malcolm X inherited the legacy of his parents, Earl Little and Louise Norton Little, proud disciples of the legendary Jamaican organizer Marcus Garvey. Malcolm grew up in a home that celebrated black pride, boldly proclaimed black dignity, and brandished political activism as practically a familial birthright. The members of the Little family were pioneer black nationalists who endeavored to follow Garvey’s dictum of establishing black political power across urban and rural American landscapes. Garvey tapped into deep currents of black political radicalism swirling in a newly reconfigured urban American landscape, one populated by black southern migrants and Caribbean immigrants. The Great Migration, which started between the world wars and crested in the immediate years after blacks won the right to vote, dispersed millions of southern migrants across the nation’s vast expanse, in the process creating archipelagoes of black cultural and political power in small and large cities. Inspired by the bootstrap racial uplift politics of Booker T. Washington and intrigued by anti-colonial rhetoric, Garvey promoted a philosophy of black nationalism that he offered, like Promethean fire, to any black person courageous enough to take it.

Millions passionately embraced black nationalism, turning “Garveyism” into a global movement for self-determination. As a political philosophy, black nationalism promoted racial solidarity, the recognition of black history, culture, and beauty, and the right for black people to define solutions to their own problems as the keys to individual freedom, collective liberation, and political and economic power. Garvey’s personal stature grew until his 1924 arrest on charges of mail fraud related to his efforts to establish a Black Star Line of ships. The shipping line was to be funded by stock certificates purchased by the black community and facilitate the trade of black-owned goods between North America, the Caribbean, and Africa. The project faltered, hampered by mismanagement, corruption, and negligence on the part of Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association officials. J. Edgar Hoover, the youthfully dynamic head of the Bureau of Investigations, the forerunner of the FBI, orchestrated the investigation into Garvey, which reinterpreted his financial mismanagement as outright fraud. Federal officials used the charge to imprison and later deport him. Garvey’s exit from the American political stage dimmed but did not extinguish the burning embers of the movement he helped found.

[ Return to the review of [*“The Sword and the Shield.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/books/review/the-sword-and-the-shield-martin-luther-king-jr-malcolm-x-peniel-e-joseph.html)]

Following Garvey’s deportation, Garveyism did not so much decline as transform into diminished versions of his movement, scattered around the nation. Malcolm Little grew up the child of racial-justice pioneers daring enough to promote the radical philosophy of black self-determination in the far reaches of the Midwest: first, in Omaha, Nebraska, where Malcolm arrived on May 19, 1925, and then in Lansing, Michigan. There, the Little family formed a tiny star in the constellation of racial uplift that stretched from major cities swelled by black migration to more distant outposts in southern rural hamlets. Earl Little was a dark-skinned, barrelchested carpenter from Georgia who had moved to Montreal, where he met Louise Norton, who traced her roots to Grenada and was light enough to pass for white. Earl Little became an organizer for the Garvey movement, bolstered by Louise’s support.

Earl and Louise’s shared love for social justice bound them in pursuit of an itinerant existence made predictable only by the frequency of childbirth and relocation. Black political activism in parts of the Midwest attracted white attention, disapproval, and threats that frequently escalated into physical violence and terror. Earl’s passionate commitment to racial justice triggered a backlash in Nebraska that forced the family to flee under threat from local Klansmen. Following brief stints in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and East Chicago, Indiana, the Littles settled in Lansing, Michigan, where Earl resumed his efforts to recruit local blacks into the UNIA. The Little household’s financial and emotional hardships were exacerbated by Earl’s violent behavior toward his wife and children, which Malcolm largely escaped; Malcolm remembered his dark-skinned father favoring him because of his light complexion. Earl Little established himself as one of the leaders of the fifteen UNIA chapters scattered across Michigan. He frequently led Garveyite caravans to Detroit, the city that a teenage Malcolm would derive his nickname from. Although he was only five or six years old at the time, Malcolm later vividly remembered his father leading UNIA meetings where members chanted the group’s slogan, derived from Garvey himself: “Up, you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will!”

Earl’s political tutelage of young Malcolm ended abruptly on September 8, 1931. That evening, Earl left the house to pick up money from the sale of some chickens. He never returned. The police arrived with the news late at night that Earl lay in a hospital, severely injured in what authorities described as a streetcar accident. Police surmised that Earl had slipped and fallen beneath a moving streetcar’s back wheels. The family immediately suspected racist violence by the Black Legion, the area’s version of the Ku Klux Klan. Malcolm believed so too. Over thirty years later, he could still visualize it: “The house filled up with people crying, saying bitterly that the white Black Legion had finally gotten him.”4 For the remainder of his life, Malcolm would try to re-create the familial structure shattered by Earl’s death. Malcolm’s mother, Louise, found herself a widow taking care of seven children, including three-month-old infant Wesley. Louise’s commitment to Kalamazoo State Hospital in 1938 for mental illness, just after the birth of Malcolm’s half brother Robert, further disrupted Malcolm’s childhood. Louise remained institutionalized for the next twenty-four years. For three years after his mother was committed, Malcolm shuttled between foster care and juvenile facilities. In later life, he would find a replacement father figure in Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad. But even then, Earl Little’s unapologetic commitment to racial justice and political organizing—even at the expense of spending time with his wife and children—would frame Malcolm’s behavior. Memories of Earl presiding over sparsely attended but vigorously energetic UNIA meetings resonated deeply with Malcolm, and he held up Earl as his political hero. Malcolm had attended political meetings with his father, read black newspapers at home as a child, and listened to his father teach the entire family about the importance of faraway happenings in Africa and the Caribbean. He fervently admired Earl’s rugged political determination in the face of white racism. Earl cast a shadow in death better than he had alive, bequeathing his young son with a model of itinerant political organizing that Malcolm would adopt for the rest of his life.

Earl’s death hastened Malcolm’s departure from a Michigan public school system he found to be incorrigibly racist. Malcolm recalled his time at Mason Junior High School as an abject lesson in racism, where white teachers referred to him as “nigger” and even friendly white students thought of him as little more than a mascot. “I was unique in my class, like a pink poodle,” he remembered. He had a natural affinity for reading, debating, and social engagement, and early on he was touted as a charismatic leader.

His predominantly white classmates voted him class president, an honor later blunted by a white teacher’s dismissal of his dreams of being a lawyer. At fifteen, he dropped out of school and entered a sordid world of hustling—one populated by young black men with little education and even fewer prospects. The bowels of black urban American neighborhoods in New York City and Boston became a proving ground for a teenage Malcolm. He came of age in those cities during the 1940s, learning to rely on his intelligence, quick wit, and charisma to survive the streets.

In February 1941, Malcolm departed Lansing by bus to move in with his twenty-seven-year-old, Georgia-born half sister, Ella Mae Collins. A formidable woman whose obsidian skin, sharp intelligence, and outspoken manner reminded Malcolm of Earl, Ella offered the closest example of parental love that the fifteen-year- old had ever received. They lived in the Hill neighborhood of Boston, where small groups of ***working-class*** black families thrived during the war years, enjoying job opportunities as blue-collar and, at times, white-collar professionals. Ella fit neither of these categories. Despite a veneer of middle-class respectability, Malcolm’s sister was a habitual thief, one whose criminal exploits included arrests for shoplifting and assault and battery. In 1942, Ella married her third husband, and Malcolm became fast friends with Malcolm “Shorty” Jarvis, who schooled him in the ways of Boston’s black underworld.

Malcolm dived into Boston’s nightlife; he learned to drink liquor, smoke marijuana, and romance women. He shined shoes at Roseland State Ballroom, where he encountered some of the era’s great jazz musicians, including Count Basie and Duke Ellington. He purchased a zoot suit, with its large lapels, balloon pants, and wide-brimmed hat, and completed the look by styling his hair in the fashionable “conk” style of the 1940s, which straightened his hair with chemicals. Malcolm, whose light skin and auburn hair at times made him feel self-conscious, now went by the nickname Red, danced the Lindy Hop, and searched for ways to make fast money and spend time with easy women.

[ Return to the review of [*“The Sword and the Shield.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/books/review/the-sword-and-the-shield-martin-luther-king-jr-malcolm-x-peniel-e-joseph.html)]

THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. By Peniel E. Joseph 384 pp. Basic Books. $30. Copyright 2020 © by Peniel E. Joseph Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Departing: Two Shopkeepers, Their Cat and Part of Paris’s Soul; paris dispatch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1Y-7B21-DXY4-X2DN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

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**Byline:** Liz Alderman

**Highlight:** An influx of luxury stores is driving out local businesses in the Marais, the historic Jewish and L.G.B.T. center of Paris. Among the casualties is a minimart, run for more than 35 years by two Moroccan brothers.

**Body**

An influx of luxury stores is driving out local businesses in the Marais, the historic Jewish and L.G.B.T. center of Paris. Among the casualties is a minimart, run for more than 35 years by two Moroccan brothers.

PARIS — On a recent evening, Amar Sitayeb squeezed behind a tiny counter at the minimart that he and his older brother Ali have run for more than 35 years in the Marais district of central Paris. A plump gray tabby cat prowled the floor, and faded photos of neighborhood babies, many now grown-ups, were taped to an old cash register.

A stream of regulars filed in, grabbing potato chips, gum and soda, and lingering to exchange gossip and pleasantries. One neighbor with the sniffles bought honey and tea. Mr. Sitayeb fished mint for her from a refrigerator. “This should help,” he said.

Ten minutes later, she returned and asked for rum. “That’ll attack the cold quicker!” he laughed, pulling a bottle from the shelf.

The purchases were mainly an excuse to spend precious moments bantering with the Sitayeb brothers, known to residents around the rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie, a boutique-studded Marais street, as the eyes, ears and unofficial mayors of the area.

For soon, the unthinkable is set to happen: On Jan. 31, their store, Au Marché du Marais, will close, swept away in a tide of moneyed gentrification, like nearly every other independent shop and cafe around them.

“We know everyone here, we’ve lived our lives with them and we’re sad to leave,” said Ali Sitayeb, a fatherly figure who recently turned 70, but exuded a much younger energy. In place of the daily necessities that his store offers, like toilet paper and freshly squeezed orange juice, he announced, a Princesse Tam Tam lingerie chain would be installed.

When I first heard the news, I was stunned. I had settled near the épicerie after moving to Paris in 2000. Since then, an incursion of designer boutiques had accelerated, turning the area into an outdoor shopping arena that [*draws thousands of visitors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/01/travel/marais-paris-france-culture.html?searchResultPosition=2).

The brothers, who originally came from Morocco, remained steady fixtures throughout, greeting me on my way to work, dispensing witticisms and advice, and peppering me with questions about a succession of American presidents.

My neighbors were in mourning. The épicerie was a rare gathering spot, and the brothers, with alert eyes and sunny mustachioed faces, kept vigil over everyone. They held people’s keys and knew all the latest news on marriages, divorces, children, thefts, rivalries, real estate deals — the list goes on.

Theirs, however, is a tale of a rapidly changing Paris. And the closing of their shop, on a street where boutiques now sell 585 euro designer sneakers, has sparked angst among residents who see a warning in how big money-backed luxury brands aimed at wealthy tourists are consuming neighborhoods and eroding cultural identity.

“This changes everything,” said Eva Beau, a doctor who has lived near the shop for 20 years. “I feel like breaking all of this — it’s too sad,” Dr. Beau added, her eyes brimming with tears as she scrutinized the luxury storefronts.

Dr. Beau used to lower a basket with a rope from her fourth-floor apartment, into which the brothers would place coffee and other orders. “The neighborhood doesn’t need more boutiques,” she said. “We need the human contact of people like Ali and Amar.”

The brothers had long debated when to retire. When an electrical fire ravaged the shop five years ago, support from neighbors was so strong that they decided to keep going. But then the lingerie chain, run by Fast Retailing, a Japanese retail giant that owns Uniqlo, Theory and Comptoir des Cotonniers, made an advantageous offer for the space.

The pattern is playing out in cities across France. From Aix-en-Provence to Reims, Tours and Strasbourg, bakeries, cafes and shops are increasingly being taken over by retail conglomerates with vast financial resources. The stores look like quaint boutiques, yet the money behind them is formidable.

Near the Sitayebs’ shop, the Sandro, Maje and Claudie Pierlot clothing chains expanded under the ownership of the American private equity firm KKR before being taken over by the Chinese textile giant Shandong Ruyi.

Lacoste and Kooples, which replaced a bakery and bookstore, belong to Maus Frères, Switzerland’s largest privately held retail group. Chanel and LVMH Moët Hennessy opened perfume and makeup stores, intensifying a surge in Marais real estate prices.

Adding to the pressure is [*the rise of*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/01/travel/marais-paris-france-culture.html?searchResultPosition=2) late-night convenience stores backed by the supermarket giants Casino Groupe and Carrefour. The increased competition has shuttered scores of corner shops in Paris, many run by immigrants from North Africa.

“It’s money that makes the laws,” said Ali Sitayeb’s son, Tariq, 34, who helps run the épicerie but no longer counts on taking over.

The Sitayebs left Morocco in the 1970s as teenagers to earn a living as waiters and dishwashers in Parisian restaurants. But they found they could prosper more by operating a convenience mart well past the traditional 7 p.m. closing time of French retailers.

When the brothers opened the shop in 1984, François Mitterrand was president, prices were in French francs and the Marais, the historic Jewish quarter of Paris, was evolving from a gritty ***working-class*** textile and metal factory district. Butchers and boulangeries honeycombed the area. Yiddish was heard everywhere along the rue des Rosiers.

As cafes, bars and artisanal boutiques moved in, the Marais became the center for Paris’s L.G.B.T. community, drawing more visitors and prompting an ever more vibrant makeover.

While the Marais had already developed when I arrived, the influx of luxury storefronts has exploded since Europe’s economic and debt crisis ended in 2012, squeezing out residential and L.G.B.T. commerce, and taking over the historic Jewish center.

“This used to be a real neighborhood, with families and kids,” Amar Sitayeb said, as crowds of tourists strolled past on a recent weekend. “Now, all that’s disappeared.”

Jean Luc Rouillard, 67, a denizen since 1980, chimed in.

“The Marais has lost its soul,” he declared.

“That’s closing,” Mr. Rouillard said, pointing to a 45-year-old antique shop being dismantled for a luxury hotel. “And that’s closing,” he added, eyeing Au Rendez-Vous des Amis, a neighborhood cafe that had just shuttered to make way for a hamburger joint.

“That too,” he continued, nodding to [*Les Mots à la Bouche*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/01/travel/marais-paris-france-culture.html?searchResultPosition=2), the oldest L.G.B.T. bookseller in the Marais, rumored to be converted soon to a Doc Martens shoe store after the lease became unaffordable. “It’s dramatic,” he said.

As locals contemplated the end of an era, they arranged a surprise party for the brothers on a recent weekday at Le Point Virgule, a small comedy theater next to the shop.

Neighbors filed in silently: Dr. Beau and her daughter Manon, 21; Vincent Douget, a former chef at the cafe; Henriette Delyfer, an art boutique owner who knew the brothers since she was a child; local police officers who had dropped in regularly to chat over orange juice.

At last the brothers arrived. They were speechless at the surprise. Tears misted their eyes. While they were looking forward to spending time with their families, “it’s very hard for us to go,” Amar Sitayeb said.

“They were the heart of this area,” said George Fischer, a retiree who has lived next to the shop for two decades.

Back at the épicerie, Tariq Sitayeb had prepared a potent rum punch and Moroccan pastries to welcome a growing crowd.

Ariel Weil, the mayor of Paris’s 4th arrondissement, appeared and shook Ali Sitayeb’s hand. A circle formed as neighbors lamented the Marais’ latest transformation.

“It’s just clothes, clothes, clothes,” Mr. Fischer said. “How is a bra going to replace my orange juice?”

“On a personal level I’m sad,” Mr. Weil said. “And as mayor, I’m worried that we can’t find a solution to keep small businesses from leaving.”

Ali Sitayeb looked at his watch and sighed. It was his brother’s turn to man the register, and he had to get home to rest. Tomorrow, they would continue the sobering task of winding down the store.

“People don’t want things to change,” said Tariq Sitayeb, as his father faded into the dark night.

“But a page is turning.”

PHOTOS: Above, Ali Sitayeb, left, and his brother Amar in front of their store, Au Marché de Paris, on the rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie. Left, the influx of retail conglomerates with vast financial resources across France. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2020

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[***The Lost Embryos***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62FP-TG31-JBG3-62NX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 2874 words

**Byline:** Katherine Rosman

**Highlight:** Elaine Meyer and Barry Prizant had given up on having more than one child. Then, in their 60s, they got a letter from the hospital where they’d long ago had IVF treatment.

**Body**

When the first letter from Women &amp; Infants Hospital arrived in the mail in July 2017, Elaine Meyer thought perhaps it was a fund-raising solicitation or clerical error. The letter, which included a billing invoice, addressed her as “Dear Patient,” but she had not been a patient at the hospital for nearly two decades. That’s when she and her husband, Barry Prizant, had completed their infertility treatment there.

After three miscarriages, they had gone through several rounds of IVF at Women &amp; Infants in Providence, R.I., near their home in Cranston, resulting in the creation of at least 18 test-tube [*embryos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/us/fertility-clinic-embryo-mixup.html). One of those had become their son, Noah, born in December of 1996, and along with joy there had been a lot of mourning and reckoning with the reality that this would be the sole realization of their efforts.

Dr. Meyer mentioned the letter to her husband and stashed it in a filing cabinet of her home office.

But then another came the next month. “If you would like WIH to continue to store your embryos/oocytes,” the letter said, “please return a copy of this letter, signed and notarized, along with a check in the amount of $500.”

Dr. Meyer, a longtime psychologist at Boston Children’s Hospital and [*associate professor*](https://bioethics.hms.harvard.edu/faculty-staff/elaine-meyer) of psychology at Harvard Medical School, read it with confusion and a growing sense of alarm. Without the payment, the hospital would consider embryos “legally abandoned” and may discard them.

“I thought, ‘This can’t be right,’” she said. “We know we went back for all of our embryos.”

Those frozen embryos, still in the hospital’s possession, are now at the center of a lawsuit that Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant have filed in Rhode Island’s Superior Court, alleging breach of contract, negligence, bailment and intentional infliction of emotional distress — all of which Women &amp; Infants denies in its response.

In a statement, a spokeswoman there declined to comment on the case, citing patient confidentiality and federal privacy laws.

When the letters arrived, Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant, a speech and language pathologist and visiting scholar at Brown University, were then fulfilled empty nesters. Noah was in college, a successful student and happy young man that Dr. Meyer, now 63, calls “the light of our lives.”

She was ensconced in her work educating students and health care professionals how to have difficult conversations with patients, upholding what she calls an “emotional standard of care.”

Dr. Prizant, 69, who specializes in children and adults on the autism spectrum, was training other practitioners and churning out [*papers*](http://barryprizant.com/resources/downloads/publications) and [*podcasts*](https://uniquelyhuman.com/). He is the author of “Uniquely Human,” a book written with [*Tom Fields-Meyer.*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/authors/Tom-Fields-Meyer/451999632) He plays drums in a band and is proud of his roots in the stickball streets of Brooklyn. “Basically, I don’t like to take crap,” he said.

He and his wife, a former 4H club member raised in a large ***working-class*** family in small-town Connecticut, met in 1985 while attending a conference at a psychiatric hospital. Married two years later, they wanted children but felt it was important for her to finish graduate school first. Dr. Meyer got pregnant at 34, then had a miscarriage. Two more miscarriages followed.

The couple first sought treatment from [*Dr. Gary Frishman*](https://fertility.womenandinfants.org/about/doctors/gary-frishman) at Women &amp; Infants, which is affiliated with Brown’s medical school, in 1995. Dr. Prizant gave his wife daily shots before her eggs were harvested at the clinic and mixed in a petri dish with his sperm to create embryos, some of which were then transferred to Dr. Meyer’s uterus. The first two cycles didn’t work.

“It takes something that is supposed to be so private and so intimate and so tender and makes it a whole different affair,” Dr. Meyer said, recalling the experience. “You’re vulnerable and you’re completely dependent on other people. There are so many injections and appointments and disappointments, you put your trust in what the doctors tell you because you are desperate for the process to work.”

During a third cycle, Dr. Meyer became pregnant with Noah. After his birth, she and her husband were optimistic they could have another child. There were nine embryos left over from the three cycles, and they signed agreements with the hospital to “cryopreserve” them for transfer in the future.

Dr. Meyer felt an acute attachment to the embryos, calling each “a spark of life.” She would drive out of her way to pass by the hospital, stopping in the parking lot to sing lullabies to them while in her car. “We were always coming back for our embryos,” she said. “That was always the plan.”

After Noah started preschool, the couple began anew at Women &amp; Infants in August of 2000 with shots and doctor appointments. The hospital would thaw the nine embryos, and those that survived this process would be transferred to Dr. Meyer’s uterus, in the hopes that at least one would develop into a pregnancy.

The couple said they were told all the embryos were thawed; they believe three survived the thaw and were transferred. But weeks later, they were called in for “the failure conversation” — what Dr. Meyer called the meetings with doctors to discuss an unsuccessful procedure and possible next steps.

This one was with [*Dr. David Keefe*](https://nyulangone.org/doctors/1801809066/david-l-keefe), then the director of the hospital’s division of reproductive medicine. He advised Dr. Meyer that at 43, her and her husband’s most reasonable path to additional children was donor eggs or adoption.

Dr. Prizant was done, emotionally exhausted. “It sets you in a constant state of grief,” he said of infertility treatment.

Dr. Meyer, a devoted Quaker, needed a little more time and spiritual consultation, but also made peace, grateful for Noah. “We both decided,” Dr. Prizant said, “to look at having just one child as an opportunity to have more resources to serve many more children through our work.”

A Crack in the Glass

Reading the second letter, which like the first one asked for $500, filled Dr. Meyer with dread. She left a voice mail message at the hospital. Days later, she spoke to a person who turned out to be a clerk in the billing department.

“I am telling you, there are no embryos,” Dr. Meyer said, asking her to contact the lab itself.

For weeks, she waited for a call back. Nothing. She called the clerk again. “I’ve confirmed with the lab, there are two frozen embryos,” the clerk said.

Dr. Meyer was stunned, silent. Then she spoke. “Do you understand how serious this is?” she said.

A few days later, she was driving back from the family cottage in South Kingstown, when Dr. Ruben Alvero, then the director of the fertility center at Women &amp; Infants, called to confirm. “We have two of your embryos,” he said.

She pulled her car to the side of the road.

The embryos, Dr. Alvero said, had been found in a glass vial at the bottom of the tank. The vial has a crack in it, he told her, which meant that the embryos had been exposed, possibly for a decade, to the nitrogen cooling agent. They most likely are not viable, he told her, and apologized.

Dr. Meyer told Dr. Alvero this was too much to take in from the side of the road. A meeting was arranged for December of that year, between Dr. Meyer, her husband, Dr. Alvero and [*Richard Hackett*](https://fertility.womenandinfants.org/about/lab-staff/richard-hackett), who helped to create and manages the I.V.F. lab at Women &amp; Infants. [*Dr. Frishman*](https://fertility.womenandinfants.org/about/doctors/gary-frishman), who had been Dr. Meyer’s main doctor and is still on the staff at Women &amp; Infants, did not attend.

The four gathered in a conference room, with Dr. Prizant and his wife on one side, Dr. Alvero and Mr. Hackett on the other.

According to the legal complaint, the men representing the hospital apologized for the circumstances that had brought them together and explained to the couple again what had happened. Two of Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant’s embryos had disappeared sometime before Dr. Meyer’s procedure in 2000, Dr. Meyer said they told her and her husband. The embryos were located in 2010 when the tank was emptied for cleaning or maintenance and re-entered into the inventory. The vial, as Dr. Alvero had told Dr. Meyer earlier in the fall, had been damaged. When the clinic implemented a new storage fee policy in 2017, the couple received the bills.

She asked if the cells of the embryo still physically existed. They did, the men told her. Though likely compromised, the embryos are still intact, in their glass vial with her name on it.

“Those are ours!” Dr. Meyer blurted out, and said that she didn’t want the embryos discarded. Dr. Alvero told her that the hospital would continue to store them and that he would waive the $500 fee. He and Mr. Hackett apologized and flipped through pages in her huge medical file, which the men had brought to the meeting. Mr. Hackett stopped on one page, she said, and began tapping his fingers on it: a handwritten note that said “2 missing.”

“You knew they were missing” and didn’t tell us, Dr. Meyer asked?

No one ever tried to find the embryos, or thought to alert us when they were found years later, Dr. Prizant asked?

Perhaps the couple forgot that they had been told that the embryos were missing, they said Dr. Alvero suggested.

Dr. Prizant and Dr. Meyer were sure no one had ever told them anything was missing. Why would they have discussed adoption and egg donation if they had known two embryos were lost in the hospital? “That would have set us on a different course of action,” he said.

[*Dr. Keefe*](https://nyulangone.org/doctors/1801809066/david-l-keefe), a professor of obstetrics and gynecology and a fertility specialist at New York University Langone Fertility Center, remembered his patients, and expressed surprise to learn of the two long-lost embryos. “Yikes,” he said. “I feel so terribly for this couple.”

Dr. Keefe said that he would have only known if embryos were missing if someone from the lab had notified him, and in this case they had not. In the rare instances when embryos are lost or misplaced, he added, the protocol is to notify the patient immediately, apologize and explain in detail what might have happened. “Transparency is the foundation of trust and the essential element of the doctor-patient relationship,” he said.

“These are not two cans of peaches on the shelf at a Stop &amp; Shop,” he went on, speaking of the embryos. “They are much more like two kids on a playground. When you’re responsible for them and they’re lost, you notify the people who care about them the most and tell them all you can.”

Dr. Meyer, who has devoted a career to [*speaking up*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2015/01/12/boston-children-should-keep-prouty-garden/Ghdy5Ysb1t1A4PJsKA5KJM/story.html) for patients and more recently to studying and writing about [*bioethics*](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33196794/), scoffs at the idea that she would have quietly accepted the news in 2000 that her embryos had been lost. “There is no way on God’s green earth,” she said.

Dr. Alvero, now the director of reproductive endocrinology and infertility at the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford University and the president of the Society for Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, referred questions to the public relations department of Women &amp; Infants. The hospital’s spokeswoman said Dr. Frishman and Mr. Hackett were not available for comment.

‘My Line in the Sand’

At the meeting in December 2017, Dr. Prizant and Dr. Meyer said, Dr. Alvero asked what might help them feel resolved about the situation.

The couple said they wanted to find something meaningful to come from the careless treatment of their embryos. Perhaps it could provide a learning opportunity, they suggested — proposing, among other ideas, that Dr. Meyer could help train fertility staff at the hospital to interact more compassionately with and informatively to patients in the thicket of family planning.

Dr. Alvero and Mr. Hackett said they would consult with the hospital administration and get back in touch after the holidays. But by May 2018, after five months of silence, Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant wrote a letter to Dr. Alvero, copying the hospital’s interim president and chief executive, the Rhode Island attorney general and the head of the state’s department of health.

“As parents who cherished children, we would NOT have forgotten that our embryos were missing,” they wrote. “We would not have rested until they were found and cared for.”

Soon after mailing the letter, they got a phone call from Katherine Wills, the hospital’s director of risk management. “‘This happened a long time ago,’” Dr. Meyer recalled Ms. Wills telling her. Dr. Meyer felt the message was, “Get over it.”

Dr. Meyer explained to Ms. Wills that embryos discovered in the bottom of the tank represented to her and her husband potential human beings: children, her and her husband’s children. “I was horrified,” Dr. Meyer said.

That conversation, she said, “was my line in the sand.” Hesitant at first, Dr. Meyer and her husband decided to take legal action. “As a woman who had suffered miscarriages and infertility, all the powerful feelings of sadness, shame and grief came crashing back and the knot in my stomach was real.”

They are seeking a jury trial and punitive, compensatory, consequential damages. But Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant said the real point of the lawsuit is to compel the hospital, and perhaps other infertility treatment providers, to commit to reliable and accountable storage management and patient care practices. (They want to urge vigilance on the increasing number of people freezing eggs and embryos.)

In a legal filing, the hospital alleged that Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant “were guilty of comparative negligence” but provided no further detail. [*Angela L. Carr*](https://www.bglaw.com/team/angela-l-carr/), the hospital’s lawyer, declined to comment.

“I would not be true to myself if I let this be swept under the rug,” Dr. Meyer said. “It is our job as parents to give our children, and in this case embryos, every opportunity for life and for dignity. We were denied our right to fulfill our role as parents.”

‘You Assume There is Oversight’

Dr. Prizant and Dr. Meyer’s saga is “an interesting story not because it’s unique but because it’s probably not unique,” said [*Jeffrey Kahn*](https://bioethics.jhu.edu/people/profile/jeffrey-kahn/), the director of the Berman Institute of Bioethics at Johns Hopkins University. (He does not know the couple and is not involved in their case.) “There is so little regulation and no accounting of how many embryos there are in storage,” he said.

The fertility industry is a lucrative business but operates largely unchecked by regulators, Dr. Kahn said, for several reasons, including federal policies in place since the mid-1980s. The policies bar federal dollars from being used for research that involves the harm or destruction of human embryos.

Federal regulation tends to follow federal funding, often leaving privately funded I.V.F. facilities without oversight. Also, most of what takes place in an I.V.F. laboratory falls outside the purview of the Food and Drug Administration. “You assume there is oversight, as there is with most doctors and procedures, but when it comes to infertility, that turns out not to be true,” he said.

A study published in 2020 in the journal [*Fertility &amp; Sterility*](https://www.fertstertreports.org/article/S2666-3341(20)30039-8/fulltext) found that 133 lawsuits were filed in the previous decade over lost, discarded or damaged frozen embryos. That number reflects lawsuits filed, which is likely a fraction of actual occurrences, said [*Dov Fox*](https://www.sandiego.edu/law/faculty/biography.php?profile_id=3332), the director of the Center for Health Law Policy and Bioethics at University of San Diego and one of the study’s authors. Dr. Fox also noted that most of these types of suits settled out of court, with undisclosed terms and nondisclosure agreements, making it difficult to know the outcomes.

Three lawsuits have been filed against Women &amp; Infants Hospital related to lost embryos, [*including two*](https://www.nytimes.com/1995/10/01/us/fertility-clinic-is-sued-over-the-loss-of-embryos.html) in the mid-1990s, when Dr. Meyer was a patient. In 2019, a woman named Marisa Cloutier-Bristol described receiving in 2017 a bill from Women &amp; Infants similar to the ones that Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant received, which notified Ms. Cloutier-Bristol that the hospital had a frozen embryo belonging to her and her late husband, despite having been told in 2003 that her I.V.F. cycle had not produced any viable embryos.

“I felt like I was now grieving a child I didn’t even know existed, a child I could have had,” she told “[*Good Morning America*](https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/wellness/story/woman-sues-discovering-hospital-embryos-frozen-2004-61833101)” in 2019. She sued the hospital. (The case has since been dismissed. Through her lawyer, Ms. Cloutier-Bristol declined to comment.)

As Dr. Meyer and Dr. Prizant’s case winds its way through the pandemic-delayed civil courts system, the couple is also thinking about what to do with their embryos.

After seeking spiritual support and guidance at their temple and their Quaker meeting, the couple is leaning toward repossessing their embryos and burying them in the backyard in Cranston, where her mother’s ashes, and the remains of the family dog, are buried. They also have talked to a rabbi about a [*cemetery*](http://swanpointcemetery.com/) burial.

“We need to allow our embryos to finally have some peace and rest,” Dr. Meyer said. “And we need to find some peace and rest ourselves.”

PHOTOS: Dr. Elaine Meyer and Dr. Barry Prizant, her husband, have one son. They said they hoped for more children, but it was not to be. (ST1); From top: Dr. Elaine Meyer and Dr. Barry Prizant, who are suing the hospital where they underwent infertility treatment years ago; Dr. Meyer with the petri dish containing embryos that were transferred to her uterus in 2000; a photograph of the couple’s wedding day; and family photos and a card made by the couple’s son, Noah. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MALHOTRA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST7)

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2021

**End of Document**



[***A Pioneer's Unpublished Script***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6030-GTN1-JBG3-607F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 7, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1682 words

**Byline:** By Daniel Pollack-Pelzner

**Body**

A play based on Charles W. Chesnutt's ''Marrow of Tradition'' shows the writer of ''A Raisin in the Sun'' attuned to the history of white violence.

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Hansberry told the reporter that she was writing an adaptation of ''The Marrow of Tradition,'' a long out-of-print novel by Charles W. Chesnutt about a massacre that destroyed black rights gained after the Civil War, based on a rarely acknowledged white supremacist coup that overthrew the multiracial government of Wilmington, N.C., in 1898. Chesnutt visited Wilmington to research his novel; published in 1901 and not reprinted until 1969, it was one of the few book-length accounts of the massacre.

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Stephanie Browner, the general editor of the coming Oxford Complete Works of Chesnutt, spent a year sorting through the ''Marrow'' files in Hansberry's papers at the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The earliest draft is dated 1955; a decade later, when Hansberry died of cancer at 34, ''Marrow'' still appeared on her list of plays to finish.

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''My perspective is that we should take what she's done, even if she didn't deem it finished,'' said Imani Perry, a Princeton University professor and the author of ''Looking for Lorraine: The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry.'' ''She was so prolific. There's a lot that doesn't have the final period put on it.''

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The unpublished script shows the playwright grappling with a question that feels nearly as pressing in 2020 as it did in 1959 or 1901: what to do when white supremacist violence threatens black lives. In Hansberry's script, as in Chesnutt's novel, North Carolina's white elite turns the white ***working class*** against black allies through racist propaganda, rousing a lynch mob after a black servant is falsely accused of raping and murdering a white woman.

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In one of the play's most fraught scenes, a cross-section of the black community -- a doctor, an editor, a reverend and a dockworker -- debate how to prevent this looming violence. Fight back? Flee to a nearby swamp? Beseech white leaders to intervene?

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Will the wife's realization be enough to change an unequal system? Can she muster the psychological strength to challenge the race privilege from which she benefits?

Hansberry's stage directions for ''Marrow'' frame these questions in spatial terms. The set is divided between the white sister's house on one side of the stage and the black sister's home on the other. Only slowly do we realize that the familiar domestic interior both masks and reveals the roots of violence in the home: sexual, political, economic.

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It's a question that lingers throughout the play, a challenge to the audience as well as its characters. Browner pointed out that the beggar woman becomes bound up in a mix of imitation, desire, and violence that crosses lines of race, class, gender and sexuality. A white bachelor who mimics the beggar woman also flirts with a black male servant, all while courting a white heiress whose relatives are concealing an interracial marriage.

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Perry's ''Looking for Lorraine'' has helped to draw attention to Hansberry -- who had relationships with women and wrote lesbian fiction under a pseudonym -- as a queer pioneer. She said that ''Marrow,'' begun around the time that Hansberry's friend James Baldwin composed ''Giovanni's Room,'' ''potentially changes what we might think of as the timeline for black queer studies.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/theater/lorraine-hansberry-marrow.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/theater/lorraine-hansberry-marrow.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, the playwright Lorraine Hansberry in 1959 in her apartment at 337 Bleecker Street in Manhattan, where she wrote ''A Raisin in the Sun,'' the first-ever Broadway play by an African-American woman. Below, Charles W. Chesnutt in the early 1900s. One of his novels inspired Hansberry's play ''Marrow.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ATTIE/GETTY IMAGES

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**Load-Date:** June 7, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Unseen Script Offers New Evidence of a Radical Lorraine Hansberry***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6024-W6S1-DXY4-X000-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 6, 2020 Saturday 05:59 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

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**Byline:** Daniel Pollack-Pelzner

**Highlight:** A play based on Charles W. Chesnutt’s “Marrow of Tradition” shows the writer of “A Raisin in the Sun” attuned to the history of white violence.

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**End of Document**



[***When a Small Museum Is a Community Lifeline***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJP-5991-JBG3-6382-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 1, 2020 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1523 words

**Byline:** By Robin Pogrebin

**Body**

The Underground Museum in Los Angeles has become not only an art destination but a community lifeline.

LOS ANGELES -- The low-slung building on Washington Boulevard here might seem like a nondescript storefront sandwiched between a carpet installation business and a lawn mower repair shop.

But in the eight years since it was founded, the Underground Museum has become not only one of the most important destinations for black art in the country but also a crucial gathering place for its ***working class*** Arlington Heights neighborhood -- with a bookstore featuring works by black writers, poetry readings in the wooden bar and events in its back garden including free meditation, yoga and movie screenings.

As cultural institutions all over the world wrestle with how to bring art to the public during the pandemic, smaller ones like the Underground Museum are also trying to figure out how to continue serving communities that have come to rely on them in other ways.

''It's not just pretty pictures we're putting on the wall,'' said Karon Davis, an artist who created the museum with her husband, the painter Noah Davis, who was the moving force behind the Underground and died in 2015 of a rare cancer at age 32. ''We're actually doing a lot of work for the community.''

Most immediately, the Underground -- which is not planning layoffs -- is trying to minister to its public by helping deliver produce, continuing its weekly meditation program via Instagram and working to create a neighborhood support program even as residents adjust to life without the museum.

''It was my go-to spot to hang out,'' said Jazzi McGilbert, the owner of Reparations Club, a concept store that opened in the neighborhood about a year ago. ''I had my mother's funeral in their garden. It has always been a safe haven for me, so not being able to go -- it's isolating. They're like my family.''

Christopher Hearn, who regularly attends yoga classes, said he has also come to rely on the Underground as a place ''you can go to exhale and imagine at the same time.''

And Naeem Forrester, who works at the nearby Natraliart Jamaican Restaurant & Market, said the Underground Museum had ''been a huge influence on the growth of our business in the past few years.''

''We miss the rush of customers from their lively events as well the usual neighborly chats,'' Mr. Forrester said. ''It definitely feels different not having them around.''

The museum has also become a model for more established institutions on how to connect with a community, while also presenting first-rate exhibitions.

''The best cultural institutions play important roles in their respective communities, far beyond showing art,'' said Christine Y. Kim, contemporary art curator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which itself is trying to reach underrepresented neighborhoods. ''The Underground Museum has an energy that we are desperately missing during this quarantine period, especially as we were looking forward to Noah's beautiful solo exhibition.''

Indeed, the virus crisis took hold just as the museum was about to present the highly anticipated exhibition of work by Mr. Davis, who created the museum to bring art to what he viewed as the cultural equivalent of a food desert.

The show -- which was set to open on March 21 after an acclaimed run at Zwirner gallery in New York -- would have marked the first formal presentation of Mr. Davis' work in his own museum and promised to raise the profile of an institution that is otherwise known mostly to art insiders and local residents.

''It was really hard to push the opening,'' Ms. Davis said. ''It's been anticipated by the family, the staff and the community and now people really have to wait for it.''

The 27 canvases featured in the Zwirner exhibition were noteworthy for their painterly skill, quotidian beauty and quiet humanity. The installation also paid homage to the Underground, with a ''back room'' modeled on the museum's offices; a video montage by Mr. Davis's brother, the filmmaker Kahlil Joseph; a sculpture by his wife; and furniture designed by his mother, Faith Childs-Davis.

The Underground Museum has always been a family affair, including not only Mr. Davis and his wife -- who at first lived on a mattress in the museum with their infant son Moses -- but also Mr. Joseph and his wife, Onye Anyanwu, a film producer.

Eschewing the gallery system, Mr. Davis used an inheritance from his father, Keven Joseph Davis -- a sports-and-entertainment lawyer, who represented the Williams sisters -- to create the studio and home that became the museum.

At first the couple put up their own shows, including one with its own versions of iconic works like Jeff Koons's vacuum cleaner; because of the museum's lack of climate control, other institutions would not lend work. Mr. Davis planned a ''Purple Garden'' in the back of the museum, inspired by European gardens, that would hold only purple flowers.

''It was a bit of a playground for friends and artists to explore ideas,'' Ms. Davis said, ''very casual.''

Particularly after his diagnosis, Mr. Davis drove himself hard. ''He was just on a mission,'' Ms. Davis said. ''I really feel the museum was a healing project for him.''

Mr. Davis never got to fully realize that mission for the Underground Museum. He left a list of 18 curatorial proposals; the museum has worked its way through four of them so far. The Underground, under its current director, Megan Steinman, has also presented its own shows, featuring artists like Lorna Simpson, Deana Lawson and, most recently, Rodney McMillian.

''He knew time was short,'' Ms. Davis said. ''Three days before he passed, he was in the garage till 4 a.m. with a morphine bag, painting all the way up to the end.''

In 2014, the curator Helen Molesworth, then at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, discovered the Underground, where she connected with Mr. Davis. They established an official partnership through which MOCA lent work to the Underground, the first of which was a multipart video installation by the South African artist William Kentridge. ''I had begun to understand the Underground Museum as an artwork in itself,'' Ms. Molesworth said.

Not only did Mr. Davis learn from Ms. Molesworth -- she helped upgrade the HVAC and security to make the Underground safer for art -- but she learned from him, namely that she could use MOCA's collection differently.

''I was trying to tell a different story of 20th century art,'' she added, ''because MOCA had been such a white male institution.''

It didn't take long for the Underground to come to the attention of celebrities. When the film director Barry Jenkins screened his movie ''Moonlight'' in the garden, he ''was struck by what a diverse crowd it was -- tons of black folks, ­people from the neighborhood, white, Latino, Asian,'' he told W Magazine. ''I thought, this is America.''

The Underground also attracted art world luminaries like Ann Temkin, chief curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art; Thelma Golden, director of the Studio Museum in Harlem; and the artist Glenn Ligon.

''What is it -- artist project, kunsthalle, community hub, pop-up museum?'' Mr. Ligon said. ''It has a spirit and energy unlike other art spaces I've ever been to and once I was there I wanted to be part of it, even though I wasn't sure what 'it' was.''

Elizabeth Alexander, the poet and scholar who is president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which helps support the Underground, visits the museum every time she's in Los Angeles -- often going straight from the airport. ''It's always nourishing,'' she said.

Jose Berber, who lives near the museum, said he ''was very excited to attend a museum that wasn't in Beverly Hills or in the Arts District.''

''I felt like those spaces always lacked a voice that I could directly connect with and they were not readily accessible to people outside of those geographic locations,'' Mr. Berber said. ''The Underground has provided me a space to feel seen, heard, appreciated, and loved.''

The success of the Noah Davis show in New York has also brought Mr. Davis, and by extension the Underground, more market attention.

Mr. Zwirner, who now represents the Davis estate, said he has sold two pieces to major museums and has been fielding requests for acquisitions and exhibitions. Last month, Mr. Davis's oil painting, ''In Search of Gallerius Maximumianus,'' sold at Phillips auction house for $400,000, five times the high estimate of $80,000. (As with most auction sales, the proceeds went only to the seller and Phillips; the museum supports itself through grants and donations.)

If he were still living, what would Mr. Davis say to all of this sudden commercial success? ''He would say, 'I told you so. What took y'all so long?''' Ms. Davis said, smiling. ''He was a visionary and he knew it.''

Nevertheless, having the show of his work go on view at the Underground -- whenever that does finally happen -- is going to be undeniably poignant. ''It's a bit of a coming home,'' Ms. Davis said. ''Everyone is super excited about Noah coming home.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/arts/design/underground-museum-los-angeles-coronavirus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/arts/design/underground-museum-los-angeles-coronavirus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top left, the family of Noah Davis, a founder of the Underground Museum, with museum staff and board members, at the opening of his exhibition at David Zwirner gallery in New York in January, including his widow, the artist Karon Davis, seated, with necklace. From top: ''Single Mother With Father Out of the Picture'' (2007-8)

''Isis'' (2009)

and an installation view of the ''Noah Davis'' show. He died in 2015. Before the onset of the coronavirus, the Underground had planned to show the paintings in Los Angeles starting last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE ESTATE OF NOAH DAVIS

THE ESTATE OF NOAH DAVIS

THE ESTATE OF NOAH DAVIS AND DAVID ZWIRNER

KERRY MCFATE) (C2)

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[***The Long, Slow Drowning of the New Jersey Shore***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63BW-C3P1-JBG3-64BJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 3760 words

**Highlight:** Billions have been spent to protect the beachfront. But inch by inch, water is winning the war.

**Body**

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From a satellite’s point of view, New Jersey’s barrier islands barely register, like fine white bones pulled from a body of green, separated by a vascular tissue of wetlands and shallow bays. Twenty thousand years ago, when the Laurentide ice sheet covered much of Canada and the northern United States, the coast of what would be New Jersey reached to the edge of the continental shelf, nearly 100 miles east of the present shoreline. For the next 10,000 years, as the last ice age came to an end and the sea level rose by more than 300 feet, the New Jersey coastline moved steadily west.

This alluvial coastal plain is stratified with quartz and glauconite sands, silt, clay and at least eight different aquifers going down beyond 6,000 feet before there is any semblance of solid earth — a slab of bedrock formed between 550 million and 300 million years ago. Geologists like to say that New Jersey’s coastal plain sits “unconformably” atop this Paleozoic base. Most unstable are the handful of delicate barrier islands at its edge, which shift naturally with the push of waves and tides, currents and winds. Henry Hudson passed these ribbons of land in August 1609, days before meeting the river that would bear his name. Johannes de Laet, who chronicled Hudson’s voyage several years later, dismissed the coast as “white sandy beach and drowned land within.” Walt Whitman, a frequent visitor to New Jersey’s coast, was awed by the way shorelines breathe. He called them a “curious, lurking something.”

This article was supported by the Pulitzer Center’s Connected Coastlines reporting initiative.

For millenniums before being driven out by the Dutch and English, the Jersey Shore’s original human inhabitants, known today as the Delaware, ventured from the mainland in the spring, along the creeks and thoroughfares of the back bays and onto spots like what is now called Seven Mile Island, in New Jersey’s southernmost county, Cape May. They set up their summer camps within dunes blanketed with beach grass and sand pea, amid thickets of bayberry, oak and red cedar. They spent their days harvesting fish and oysters, some of which they smoked to preserve for the winter months. The Delaware knew better than to permanently settle on such terrain. When fall arrived, they broke down their camps and retreated, traveling a north-south trail that some historians have suggested is the rough footprint of U.S. 9, now a designated coastal-evacuation route.

The barrier islands today display ample evidence of their battle with human development: failing bulkheads bowing against the corrosive press of water; lumpy and cracked streets, the result of the earth’s constant settling beneath them; high tide bubbling from sidewalk seams; beaches wiped away by a single anonymous storm. In winters, without the crush of tourism — the roughly $24 billion seasonal economic engine of four shore counties — the only traffic comes from contractors demolishing old homes to erect bigger ones, raised on stilts to cartoonish heights. Whole blocks are cordoned off as armies of workers elevate roads and replace old, overwhelmed storm-water plumbing with higher-capacity systems.

The enemy, of course, is the water. Early development on the islands was concentrated toward the oceanfront, but the static nature of infrastructure was in conflict with the shoreline’s need to breathe. Boardwalks, homes and roads and the jetties, sea walls and bulkheads constructed to protect them did little more than accelerate erosion. So, in the late 1980s, New Jersey began entering into 50-year agreements with the Army Corps of Engineers, in which the federal government pays for much of the regular replenishment of the state’s beaches and dunes. The projects, which have already pumped 134 million cubic yards of sand across 130 miles of Atlantic coast, at a cost of more than $2 billion, has been effective at protecting beachfront property. But until recently it largely missed a simple fact of geography: From ocean to bay, barrier islands naturally slope from thick to razor-thin.

At Avalon, located on Seven Mile Island, the ocean did an unexpected thing during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. When it hit one of the most carefully managed beachfronts — and stable dune systems — the nearly 10 feet of storm surge was simply redirected from the shore to, and through, the island’s two inlets, where the water faced little impediment from the low-slung bulkheads of back-bay homes. While the ocean famously breached several locations farther up the coast, here the floodwaters mostly came from behind. This flooding caused by Sandy obliterated any notion that beach replenishment would be enough to protect the barrier islands as the sea level there begins what a Rutgers study predicts will be a rise of at least a foot over the course of a century. The next Sandy is a grave concern, but such devastating weather events are still rare. What most worries these communities is “nuisance flooding,” the quiet inundation that can amount to a few inches or several feet of standing water and that is getting worse.

In many places on the barrier islands, nuisance flooding now accompanies practically every full-moon high tide, heavy downpour or strong shoreward wind. These events rarely show up in the news, but in their persistent submerging of lawns and roads for hours at a time, they represent the primary existential threat to the beating heart of the Jersey Shore.

In 1981, a coastal scientist named Stewart Farrell began the work that would become the Stockton University Coastal Research Center, now located on the mainland just north of Atlantic City; the center’s “beach profile” surveys have served as blueprints for many replenishment projects along the shore. But he has come to question the islands’ ability to keep back the highest tides in coming decades. “On the oceanfront, where the sand dunes are 10 to 12 feet, maybe two feet of sea-level rise is no big deal,” he says, “but on the back bay, two feet means you have to splash through water twice a day, every day, just to get to your house. That’s not going to do property values a whole lot of good.”

Over the last century, the sea level at the Jersey Shore has risen twice as fast as the global average, because the land here is also sinking. The water’s upward climb — 18 inches in New Jersey — has increased nuisance flooding up and down the coast, just as it has in low-lying communities around the world. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which maintains about 100 gauges to measure nuisance flooding throughout the United States, has found that episodes of nuisance flooding have doubled since 2000. Last year, 14 locations on the Southeast Atlantic and Gulf coasts experienced record numbers of flooding events, thanks in part to a historic hurricane season. By 2030, NOAA predicts, the national median rate of nuisance flooding will be two to three times greater than it is currently; the rate will be five to 15 times greater by 2050. “The acceleration has begun,” William Sweet, a NOAA oceanographer who leads a team that writes [*an annual report on the phenomenon,*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis) told me. “And inches matter, now more than ever.”

You could be forgiven for thinking the Jersey Shore’s local governments are not terribly concerned by such warnings. According to [*a report from Climate Central and Zillow,*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis) some 4,500 homes, worth $4.6 billion, were built in New Jersey between 2010 and 2016 in areas where, even if global greenhouse gas emissions decrease moderately, there will be a risk of flooding once per decade, at a minimum, starting in 2050. The report also notes that no state has built new homes in a risk zone at a faster pace — not even Florida, with far more shoreline. And that was before the pandemic and the resulting urban exodus and real estate boom. Houses built 15 years ago are being torn down and replaced with bigger ones that occupy as much square footage as zoning rules allow, Martin Pagliughi, Avalon’s eight-term mayor, told me. In the last two years, the median price of the homes sold in the borough climbed by $700,000. The era of the quaint fishing cottage is dead.

Pagliughi’s full-time job is coordinator of Cape May County’s Office of Emergency Management. A septuagenarian who moved to the shore during college — when it “was the Wild West,” he says — Pagliughi has lasted so long as mayor in large part because he understood earlier than most that being able to quantify the losses from disasters, like the amount of sand displaced by a hurricane, means more government aid. Avalon was Farrell’s first client; the town hired him in 1981 to survey the borough’s rapidly disappearing oceanfront, and Pagliughi has kept Coastal Research Center beach surveys in the budget under his leadership. In the early 2000s, Avalon installed the county’s first pumping stations for bayside flooding — electric-powered underground pumps that can move tens of thousands of gallons of water per minute from the streets, through pipes that drain into the back bays. Despite the increase in flooding, Pagliughi says he doesn’t “buy into” the Rutgers forecast that sees a 17 percent chance that the sea-level will rise by more than six feet during this century. “We’ll address the hazards as they come,” he told me. “But a hundred years from now? I don’t know, I won’t be here to worry about it.”

Pagliughi, along with another mayor nearby, became the first to hire C.R.C. to [*map local nuisance-flooding risks.*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis) In a multiyear project that began in 2017, C.R.C. collected millions of data points from cigar-size sensors called HOBOs, which are zip-tied to the undersides of storm drains, where the water creeps in first. The data quickly began to produce incredibly granular pictures of nuisance-flooding risk, certainly far more detailed than NOAA’s tide-gauge analyses. The two approaches are very different: Whereas NOAA’s median threshold for an official nuisance-flooding event in New Jersey last year was 1.85 feet, the HOBOs record increases greater than a tenth of an inch. But, as Sweet notes, both “speak to exposure.” A handful of other barrier island towns soon followed Avalon’s lead.

Around the time Farrell delivered the first results of the nuisance-flooding project to Avalon, in August 2019, I visited him at C.R.C., which is housed inside a drab single-story building plunked six miles from the university’s main campus, not far from Atlantic City. He wore an old T-shirt tucked into denim carpenter’s shorts, rumpled white knee socks and worn black Skechers. Farrell stopped teaching years ago after the C.R.C. work for shore towns, the state and the Army Corps of Engineers became a full-time job.

Farrell said that even for him the monitoring data were “striking.” Over the course of a year and a half in Avalon, C.R.C.’s sensors recorded 151 nuisance-flooding events across 13 locations. “These events don’t matter much now,” Farrell later told me, “except for the fact that if you don’t pay attention to them, and sea-level rise hits the expected three-to-four feet by 2100, a normal high tide is going to be at the level of the worst of these events every day, twice a day. Your home’s an island at high tide.”

The tiny borough of Beach Haven, on Long Beach Island, also took part in C.R.C.’s nuisance-flooding monitoring. Last year, I went there to meet with its mayor at the time, Nancy Taggart Davis. By then, I had talked to dozens of Jersey Shore mayors, engineers and other municipal officials about the billions it will cost just in the short term to fight the water. None of them had seriously considered curbing development to reduce risk to life and property. But Davis, who is in her 70s and is an emeritus professor of pathology at Stockton, was different. Despite her commitment to investing in pumping stations and higher bulkheads, she nevertheless acknowledged a near future when homes would have to be bought out and real estate surrendered. She wished she could put on “blinders,” she said. “It really saddens me.” Then she added, “But somebody’s going to have to face it.” Beach Haven’s construction official, Sean MacCotter, who took part in our conversation, nodded. “Eventually,” he said, “the water will win.”

For the last five years, the Army corps has been conducting its own [*New Jersey back-bays study,*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis) as part of the agency’s long-term strategy for managing the risk of coastal flooding. It estimates that the state’s 950-square-mile back-bay areas and oceanfront will soon be sustaining $1.57 billion in annual damages over a 50-year period if no new flood-mitigation measures are implemented. One of the study’s visions for the future imagines a coast armored with concrete and steel. But the scale of that sort of work dwarfs the projects currently underway on the barrier islands: Storm-surge barriers alone would cost more than $16 billion. The study’s authors concede that “in some cases, just as ecosystems migrate and change functions, human systems may have to relocate in a responsible manner.”

No town is more vulnerable than Atlantic City, the Jersey Shore’s largest and poorest municipality. Beginning in 2030, according to the corps study, the city will start incurring more than $300 million annually in flood-related damages over the same half-century; by 2050, NOAA estimates that Atlantic City will have 65 to 155 nuisance-flooding events yearly.

What began, in 1854, as a vision of a resort where urbanites could experience the healing powers of the Atlantic’s salt air has, over the course of a century and a half, mushroomed into a carnival by the sea. By the mid-20th century, about 16 million visitors were coming to Atlantic City during the summer months, overrunning its beach and boardwalk and amusement piers. City officials hastily filled the surrounding salt marshes with mud and sand to make room for a year-round population that peaked at 69,000 in 1947. When state and federal laws in the 1970s put an end to the indiscriminate filling of wetlands, it was already too late: Miles of housing — disproportionately occupied by ***working-class*** immigrants and African Americans, as a result of redlining — sat on sinking land.

When Farrell arrived in South Jersey in 1971, as a freshly credentialed 29-year-old Ph.D., Stockton’s main campus had yet to be completed, so he taught his geology and marine-science classes in the bottom-floor suites of a failing hotel near Atlantic City’s boardwalk. The city was at the tail end of a long decline, thanks in part to the development of nearby shore towns that were far less crowded. In the 1980s, the city tried to reinvent itself as a gambling mecca; at the water’s edge, real estate tycoons like Steve Wynn, Carl C. Icahn and Donald Trump built expansive casinos. But small businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods withered, and the city went into a second decline. Sandy brought collapse. The poverty rate has soared to nearly 40 percent, the highest in New Jersey, and Atlantic City’s dire flooding problems have effectively been ignored. “There was no interest,” Farrell told me.

One morning in February 2020, I visited Atlantic City’s new director of planning, Barbara Woolley-Dillon, whose first days on the job had been consumed by the urgent need to slow down the flooding. Woolley-Dillon’s office downtown occupies a palatial corner of City Hall, a harsh cube of concrete and black glass. Since 2016, the city’s imperiled finances had been under state oversight, and in that time the planning-and-development department temporarily dwindled to two people. The view through the huge windows took in the city’s northeastern flank, where the rebranded Hard Rock and Ocean hotel-casinos loomed over rowhouses and apartment complexes. The view, said Woolley-Dillon, who is in her 50s, “is my inspiration for having to do better for the residents.”

In its back-bays study, the corps imagines protecting Absecon Island, which is divvied up between Atlantic City and three other towns, with a storm-surge barrier and a cross-bay barrier along with connections to levees and flood walls. The projected costs could surpass $6 billion. Woolley-Dillon was a former planner for another barrier-island town, Mantoloking, which was leveled by Sandy just before she started there; she is a seasoned veteran in matters of disaster recovery. But when I asked her about the corps’ plan, she sighed. She echoed a comparison I’d heard other shore experts make many times. “Do you know what happened with Katrina?” she said. “They didn’t anticipate the worst-case scenario. Once the levees breached, you were stuck, you were in a swimming pool with your house not bobbing. We don’t want to be in that same position.”

I noted that the corps’s study also mentioned retreat. Woolley-Dillon said that if homeowners wanted to sell their homes to a buyout program run by the state, she couldn’t stop them. But she preferred to focus on the city’s official position — that it was resolved to adapt in the face of climate change rather than withdraw. She talked about what they were building: a medical center; a resilient microgrid; and an expansion of Stockton’s Atlantic City campus that would include an institute focused on coastal resilience. Since we met, the city has positioned itself to be the jobs hub for New Jersey’s burgeoning offshore wind industry, with a training facility, conferences and research center. “We’re doing a lot of things toward resiliency,” she said. “But when you are on a barrier island, it is very difficult. How much more can you do?”

Not long after our conversation, Woolley-Dillon and other city officials met with New Jersey’s home-buyout program, Blue Acres, which acquires clusters of repeatedly flooded properties from willing sellers and demolishes them. Once homes are razed, the land is preserved as open space, a buffer zone for nuisance flooding. Blue Acres’ chief, Fawn McGee, informed Woolley-Dillon that a “list of families” in Atlantic City had submitted applications for buyouts. The program had emerged as a national model — since Sandy alone, more than 700 properties had been purchased. But all were in low- to middle-income communities on the mainland. Not a single home had been acquired on the barrier islands, where new construction was a constant. Atlantic City, however, seemed poised to be the exception. In the city’s wounds of neglect, managed retreat finally appeared to be finding a foothold on the oceanfront

Last summer, I met an artist named Michael Cagno in Ducktown, an Atlantic City neighborhood. Cagno, who is 48 and runs the Noyes Arts Garage, a gallery and workshop for local artists, wore mirrored sunglasses and a blue short-sleeved polo that revealed faded tattoos. He has spent his life on South Jersey’s bay and ocean shorelines, drawn to the juxtaposition of the built and natural worlds. His paintings depict marshlands, water, mud and grasses reclaiming the landscape, overwhelming the man-made.

Early in the 20th century, Italian immigrants — who raised waterfowl in this slice of Atlantic City — lived and worked in compact, redbrick rowhouses and small shops along the neighborhood’s narrow, tree-lined avenues. Today, Ducktown’s 2,500 mostly Latino and Asian American residents, about 70 percent of whom are renters, live and work in those same buildings. It is one of Atlantic City’s most historic neighborhoods, and one of its poorest, with a poverty rate that exceeds 40 percent. It is also one of the most flood-prone. Virtually all of Ducktown’s bay front is unprotected: High tides constantly breach its decades-old, disintegrating bulkheads. In 2020, the state stepped in with $20 million, [*transferred from Blue Acres,*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis) to help the city with a series of flood-mitigation projects, including the replacement of Ducktown’s bulkheads. It was an odd twist, perhaps — Cagno had heard that a dozen or so Ducktown homeowners had given up and submitted buyout applications to the program. (Blue Acres does not comment on applications.)

As we walked along one quiet, shaded avenue, Cagno estimated that more than 100 properties in the neighborhood had been abandoned. Some were still damaged from Sandy. He had only just learned about the potential buyouts. He couldn’t blame anyone for wanting to retreat, though he hoped that some of the Blue Acres applicants were not absentee property owners with tenants who had no interest in leaving. Cagno was part of a community group that had recently put together a “Revitalize Ducktown” plan, a first among Atlantic City’s 11 neighborhoods. Part of the plan was to advocate a transfer of ownership of Ducktown’s abandoned properties to developers interested in rehabilitating them. Demolition was not something the group envisioned.

We lingered for a while at the end of Turnpike Road, where a rotting bulkhead and strip of gravel shoreline barely separated asphalt and water. From the windows of some nearby homes, you could cast a fishing line into the bay. Cagno swept a hand to the east. At the ocean’s edge, the Bally’s, Caesars and Harrah’s casinos thumbed the blue sky; in the foreground, a line of multicolored rowhouses leaned into one another like crooked teeth. There was a white picket fence around one yard, and across the street the bay glimmered in the early summer light.

This scene was one of several Cagno wanted to paint. If the Ducktown he knew couldn’t be saved physically, then it ought to be preserved in oil on canvas. The houses were more than just structures; they were also the story of a community. “These are real people,” he said. “Real lives.”

Andrew S. Lewis is a contributing writer for Outside magazine and covers environmental issues on New Jersey’s Atlantic and Delaware Bay coasts for N.J. Spotlight News. Devin Oktar Yalkin is a photographer based in New York who has covered a diverse range of subjects for the magazine, including [*Joe Biden*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis), [*dirt-track racing,*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis) [*live music*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis) and [*basketball on Montana’s Flathead Indian reservation*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=boardwalks_end_lewis).

This article was supported by thePulitzer Center’s Connected Coastlines reporting initiative.

PHOTOS: The Atlantic City boardwalk. (MM42-MM43); Bayfront homes in Ocean City, N.J. (MM44-MM45); Left: The scientist Stewart Farrell, founder of the Stockton University Coastal Research Center. Opposite: Bulkheads on the bay inlet at Venice Park, Atlantic City. (MM46); A storm-water drainage pipe in Avalon, on the fragile barrier island called Seven Mile Island. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEVIN OKTAR YALKIN) (MM47-MM49)

**Load-Date:** August 14, 2021

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[***Democratic Senate Edge Could Hinge on Ticket-Splitting Montana***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60FV-PD91-JBG3-632B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The race between Steve Daines, the Republican incumbent, and Steve Bullock could prove crucial in a year when Democrats need to win in conservative-leaning states where President Trump may still prevail.

BOZEMAN, Mont. -- In the deeply polarized election of 2016, every state that supported President Trump backed Republican senators -- and each state that Hillary Clinton carried voted for a Democratic Senate candidate.

But four years later, Democratic hopes for gaining a clear Senate majority depend in part on winning in conservative-leaning states where Mr. Trump may also prevail, even as he sags in the polls. In states like Alaska, Iowa, Georgia and here in Montana, Democrats are hoping their Senate candidates can outperform Joseph R. Biden Jr., their presumptive nominee.

That's the dynamic Gov. Steve Bullock is counting on in Montana, where ticket-splitting is as much a way of life as fly-fishing.

Montanans have supported Republican presidential candidates, with one exception, for over a half-century. In that same period, though, they have elected a series of Democratic governors and senators. Senator Steve Daines, whom Mr. Bullock is challenging, was the first Republican elected to the Senate seat that he holds in over a century.

Yet as he faces off against Mr. Bullock, whose popularity has risen as he leads the state's coronavirus response, Mr. Daines is counting on Montanans to act a little more like voters everywhere else and stick with one party as they make their way down the ballot.

The race here will measure the political impact of the pandemic -- many governors have grown in stature for their handling of the virus, and Mr. Bullock is the only sitting governor running for the Senate. It will also test Montana's iconoclastic identity in a time of encroaching red-and-blue homogeneity.

But for Democrats, going on the offensive in a red-leaning state in an age of polarization is no easy task. By nominating the more moderate Mr. Biden, they hope they can at least lose more closely, if not win outright, in states where Mrs. Clinton was thrashed and her party's Senate candidates went down with her.

''The reason he was so strong in '16 is because you could go up and down here -- Democrats and Republicans would both tell you they hate Hillary,'' Jon Tester, a Democrat who is Montana's senior senator, said of Mr. Trump over an afternoon beer in Great Falls.

Even as Mrs. Clinton lost Montana overwhelmingly, though, Mr. Bullock still managed to get re-elected as governor.

A Helena-reared lawyer who made a foray for president last year, Mr. Bullock has won statewide office three times, first as attorney general before he became governor.

''Montanans know me,'' he said in an interview, explaining how he'd overcome Republican claims that he'd abet liberal voices in Washington. ''I've worked with Republicans to get things done.''

Winning a federal race, in which the issues are more national in scope, is difficult enough for a Democrat in a red state. But Mr. Bullock made that task harder by leaving Montana for half of 2019 to run for president, drifting to the left on some issues and repeatedly insisting he would not fall back to seek the Senate seat.

Without prompting last week, though, he noted that he had stood up to President Barack Obama's administration on environmental policies he thought were harmful to Montana's agriculture and energy sectors.

Such talk was notably absent from his White House bid, when he sought the Democratic nomination by edging to the left on gun control and deeming Mr. Trump a ''lying con man from New York with orange hair and a golden toilet.''

Asked if his ridicule of Mr. Trump was over the line, he suggested some regret.

''By Washington standards, not at all,'' Mr. Bullock explained. ''By my typical standards, stronger than things that I would typically say.''

Navigating Mr. Trump is a delicate issue for Montana Democrats, who must energize their liberal base without alienating the state's ticket-splitters. Mr. Tester aired ads in his 2018 re-election campaign trumpeting his work with the president, which helped blunt the impact of Mr. Trump's four trips to the state that year.

Few G.O.P. senators have so happily linked themselves to Mr. Trump as Mr. Daines, a chemical engineer by training who represented Montana as its lone congressman before winning his Senate seat in 2014.

In an interview in his Bozeman campaign office, he said he was eager for the president to return to the state and revealed that Mr. Trump had ''asked to come, too.''

However, just as Mr. Bullock's ill-fated bid for president has complicated his attempt to run again in Montana, the coronavirus has created headwinds for Mr. Daines.

Mr. Trump's standing here has fallen, as it has elsewhere, because of his ineffective response to the outbreak. Some Republican polling this summer suggests he is leading Mr. Biden only by single digits in Montana.

Asked to assess the president's performance on the pandemic, Mr. Daines largely sidestepped the question, stating that he supported letting states and localities ''have primacy.''

Further muddling matters for Mr. Daines: Any effort by him to embrace the national Republican strategy of pinning the blame on China for the virus's spread in America is complicated by his years of work for Procter & Gamble in China. Democrats are already airing commercials highlighting the senator's work in the country.

More than anything, though, the health crisis has created challenges for Mr. Daines by delaying the parry-and-thrust of the campaign, allowing Mr. Bullock to enjoy what his opponent called a ''rally around the flag'' bounce.

Mr. Daines acknowledged that his role was more of constituent service specialist than candidate -- and that the virus was foremost on the minds of voters.

''These are third-generation business owners that are crying on the phone to me, saying: 'Steve, I'm losing everything,''' he recalled. ''And so in that moment you're not thinking so much about, 'Well, Steve Bullock got an F on guns and I got an A+.' It's not the discussion.''

That was easy enough to see as the two officials made their way across this sprawling state, where the metric for a candidate's sweat equity is in tires changed, not shoes replaced.

In the Flathead region, near Glacier National Park, Mr. Bullock visited a food bank. As he toured a nearby timber facility, the governor was joined by an employee, a Trump voter now dejected by the country's state of affairs, whose stepmother had contracted the virus.

Closer to Great Falls, Mr. Daines was similarly confronted with fallout from the pandemic.

He visited a small agricultural equipment dealer who thanked him for the paycheck protection loan that he had received through Congress. ''It was a big help,'' said the dealer, Steven Raska, explaining that he had been able to pay a few employees for over two months with the money.

Demonstrating his clout with the Trump administration, Mr. Daines also convened a round-table event for ranchers and farmers that featured Bill Northey, a top administrator at the Department of Agriculture. The growers gave both men an earful about how the virus had upended their livelihoods.

''Covid could not have hit the sheep industry at a worse time,'' said Leah Johnson, who runs the Montana Wool Growers Association.

With the virus spiking in the state, Mr. Bullock finally issued a mask mandate on July 15 for any county with four or more active cases.

Former Senator Max Baucus, a Democrat who represented the state in Congress for nearly 40 years, said the pandemic had initially lifted Mr. Bullock.

''But the trouble with Covid is you can't get out and shake hands, and that would help him compare himself to Daines,'' said Mr. Baucus, explaining that he had overcome Montana's national Republican leaning by cultivating individual voters. ''My main approach to the state was: people, people, people.''

The uncertainty surrounding the virus, and Montana's heterodox political nature, were on display Thursday in Bozeman. A few dozen protesters in Trump gear hoisted signs and marched down the city's commercial center in opposition to the mask order.

They passed a number of storefronts that even before the mandate had asked customers to wear masks -- a reflection of the changing nature of Bozeman. There's now a Lululemon, sitting across the street from a coffee shop plastered with anti-racism signs that could have been pulled from the most liberal college campus (''De-Prioritize White Comfort'').

Few places have as strong a sense of place as Montana, where politicians routinely invoke how many generations their families go back in the state. This focus on rootedness and the state's sparse population have helped perpetuate its independent streak as races remain more about the individual.

''We have six people per square mile and three times as many cows as people, so that makes for a lot of reliance,'' said Marc Racicot, a former Republican governor. ''The social connection is a little richer and not so contaminated with only electronic communications.''

Yet even as it treasures its status as ''The Last, Best Place,'' one of its slogans, Montana, which has about one million people, is being reshaped by transplants. And nowhere more so than Bozeman, a community cherished for its proximity to Yellowstone Park that locals now call ''Bozeangeles.''

Traditionally, Democrats won statewide by winning or breaking even in the county surrounding Billings, the population center of Montana's Republican-dominated east. That's changing, though, because of the rising population in Gallatin County, which includes Bozeman and is the fastest-growing jurisdiction in the state.

Mr. Tester's trajectory in Gallatin County tells the story of Montana's transformation: Over three elections, Mr. Tester has gone from winning 49 percent to 51.5 percent to 59.4 percent there.

Once rooted in labor, the Democratic coalition here increasingly reflects the national party, with its twin pillars of upscale whites and ***working-class*** minorities (Native Americans in the case of Montana).

''These urban spaces are growing dramatically, and these spaces are becoming the heart of the Democratic base here,'' said David Parker, a Montana State University professor who wrote a book on the 2012 Senate race.

At the same time, though, Republicans are winning their heavily rural base by even larger margins today: Even Mr. Tester, a descendant of homesteaders who is the only working farmer in the Senate, has seen his support sag in sparsely populated counties since he first ran in 2006.

It adds up to a shrinking pool of persuadable voters.

''It's not quite like what it was,'' Mr. Racicot acknowledged, before hinting at why so many people want to move to Montana. ''But it's a lot closer to that ideal than the rest of the nation.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/27/us/politics/montana-senate-bullock-daines.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/27/us/politics/montana-senate-bullock-daines.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From top, Gov. Steve Bullock, a Democrat running for Senate in Montana, meeting with volunteers at a food bank in Columbia Falls this month. President Trump, who handily won Montana in 2016, visited the state four times in 2018 in an unsuccessful effort to help unseat Senator Jon Tester, a Dem- ocrat. Senator Steve Daines, the incumbent Republican and Mr. Bullock's opponent, has linked his fortunes to the president. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK COTE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Tensions Flare With de Blasio Over Recovery***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60TW-MSY1-DXY4-X04M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 13, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1957 words

**Byline:** By J. David Goodman, Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Jeffery C. Mays

**Body**

The tensions burst into the open when 163 executives joined to criticize Bill de Blasio's leadership. Others think their portrait of the city is overly bleak.

With conditions decaying in New York City neighborhoods and business districts, a powerful corporate executive traveled to Gracie Mansion in July to meet with Mayor Bill de Blasio. He briefed the mayor on a plan -- prepared by 14 consulting firms -- for how City Hall could work with business leaders to overcome the pandemic downturn.

Mr. de Blasio appeared supportive. The executive, Steven R. Swartz, head of the Hearst media conglomerate, left feeling hopeful, as he later told others from the Partnership for New York City, a top business group.

But weeks then went by, and the corporate leaders began feeling that Mr. de Blasio was ignoring their concerns.

On Thursday, they struck back in the form of an open letter that publicly upbraided the mayor for neglecting ''public safety, cleanliness and other quality-of-life issues,'' which they said had led to ''widespread anxiety'' among New Yorkers.

The letter was signed by 163 chief executives and leaders, a striking array from some of the biggest companies in New York City, including Goldman Sachs, JetBlue, Mastercard, Morgan Stanley, Pfizer and Warby Parker, as well as from top law firms and real estate developers. They called on the mayor to take ''immediate action to restore essential services.''

From the start of his mayoralty in 2014, Mayor de Blasio has prided himself on championing the ***working class*** and spurning the city's business elite, drawing a sharp contrast with his predecessor, Michael R. Bloomberg, a billionaire with close ties to corporate leaders. That antagonistic posture rankled many top executives, but they mostly kept their criticisms private during the economic boom years that characterized most of Mr. de Blasio's tenure.

Faced with a pandemic and its devastating economic consequences, the mayor and the city's top business leaders now have little record of working together to draw upon. The letter from the chief executives underscores how the years of distrust are creating new obstacles for what Mr. de Blasio had hoped would be the start of the city's ''rebirth.''

The relationship is further complicated because Mr. de Blasio is term-limited. He leaves office at the end of 2021, so both sides have less incentive to patch things up.

For now, the companies say they need Mr. de Blasio's leadership to help persuade workers that it is safe to return to the office and assure them that any quality-of-life problems that may have worsened during the pandemic will be addressed. The city needs the companies to return to help begin to restore the huge loss in tax revenue.

''It's all a chicken-and-egg problem. Until the people come back, the streets aren't safe. If the streets aren't safe, the people don't come back,'' said Kathryn Wylde, the president of the Partnership for New York City, which sent the letter. ''So somebody's got to break the egg.''

To some extent, both the mayor and the business leaders are grappling more with perceptions than reality.

The pandemic has killed more than 23,000 people in New York City and clearly presents unique threats to the city's future. But New York City has rebounded before, notably after the fiscal crisis of the 1970s and the attacks of Sept. 11. And the city has, for the moment, defied predictions and largely contained its outbreak, successfully ramping up testing and contact tracing while maintaining some of the lowest rates of positive test results in the country.

Moreover, the disorder described in the letter is not prevalent on most streets, where New Yorkers dine comfortably outside at night.

Shootings have increased to a worrisome degree in some neighborhoods, but in general, crime is nowhere near as bad as it was in the early 1990s. (Roughly the same number of people have been shot so far this year as at this point in 2010, during the middle of the Bloomberg administration.)

Some business leaders privately expressed concern that the public nature of the letter, and its suggestion of rampant disorder, could be counterproductive because it suggested that conditions were far worse than they actually are.

The report sent to the mayor in July outlined a number of potential partnerships between private business and the city government, and called for, among other things, flexibility in building codes, community-based child care and public-private partnerships to provide free Wi-Fi access to students through the school year.

On its face, many of the ideas appeared aimed at appealing to Mr. de Blasio, with proposals to support small and minority-owned businesses and to improve online learning.

The report, entitled ''A Call to Action and Collaboration,'' was less pointed on the subject of disorderly streets than Thursday's letter, referring only obliquely to the need for ''trust that the urban environment is healthy, secure and welcoming'' in order to ''attract and retain talent.''

At least publicly, Mr. de Blasio and his senior aides did not lash back at the business leaders in response to the letter. Mr. de Blasio urged the business community to lobby the federal and state governments for more aid to help patch the city's big budget deficits caused by the outbreak.

''We need these leaders to join the fight to move the city forward,'' Mr. de Blasio said.

Privately, de Blasio aides expressed frustration that the corporate executives were not pressing state and federal officials to do more to help the city.

Still, at roughly the same time, and in a very different setting, a similar message of discontent was being delivered to the de Blasio administration by a coalition of neighborhood business groups and local chambers of commerce from around the city.

In a 90-minute video meeting on Thursday with top city officials, including three deputy mayors and the police commissioner, the small business groups urged action on open-air drug use, drug sales, illegal vending and homelessness, according to two people who attended the meeting.

The group had been organized with the help of the Real Estate Board of New York and included at least one labor leader, Gary LaBarbera of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.

''I live in Harlem, and the trash is not being picked up,'' said the president of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, Jessica Walker, who signed the letter and took part in the video meeting. ''This is being felt all over the city, and we want to make sure it doesn't get too far.''

The local business groups said that the city could inspire some confidence if it began encouraging its own sprawling work force to return to the office.

The one-two punch from New York City's business class was not coordinated, according to two people involved in its planning. But it highlighted the long road to recovery for the city, and raised questions about whether a mayor with a little over a year to go in his tenure can dismiss these complaints as just coming from the wealthy.

''We do not make decisions based on the wealthy few,'' the mayor said in August, when asked about rich New Yorkers possibly abandoning the city. ''That's not how it works around here anymore.''

Bill Neidhardt, the mayor's press secretary, said Mr. de Blasio shares the concerns of business leaders about cuts to city services and genuinely wants their help with a solution.

For City Hall, that has meant help in seeking funds from Washington and long-term borrowing authority from Albany, in the hope of forestalling layoffs of city workers on Oct 1. Many of the signatories of the letter have good relationships with state leaders, including Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo. (Mr. Cuomo and Mr. de Blasio, both Democrats, have had a long and fraught relationship.)

''There is a simple message -- help us get long-term borrowing,'' Mr. Neidhardt said. ''For the people who have the ear of lawmakers and decision makers, we desperately need your help.''

Ms. Wylde said the group does not support the long-term borrowing that the mayor and his advisers favor. ''They think the problem is money. The problem is not money. The problem is uniting the city around a practical plan for recovery,'' she said.

The letter reflected frustration among business leaders after the publication by the partnership of the report that was presented to Mr. de Blasio at Gracie Mansion in July. ''It didn't seem to result in any action,'' Ms. Wylde said.

Then in August, Ms. Wylde said she became alarmed when a survey of her members showed, surprisingly, that even as the pandemic appeared to be largely under control in New York City -- with roughly 1 percent of tests coming back positive -- fewer major businesses were planning to return to their offices than had been planning to do so in May.

While state and city guidelines permit offices to be filled to half-capacity, neither the mayor nor the governor, fearful of a new outbreak, has pushed hard for office workers to return. Most buildings are below 10 percent occupancy.

The letter began to circulate later that month among partnership members and attracted signatures quickly, including from sports organizations like the National Basketball Association, and even past donors to the mayor, such as Steven Rattner, a Wall Street financier and a former adviser to the Obama administration.

But Ms. Wylde said she waited to publish it until after Labor Day, in part because of concern among some members, who had spent the pandemic outside the city, that they would be criticized for weighing in on New York's future from afar.

''They felt it was unseemly to be writing from the Hamptons,'' she said.

Still, the letter set off howls among some Democrats and progressives who saw the call to address quality-of-life issues -- and the support it garnered from the city's former police commissioner, William J. Bratton -- as an endorsement of punitive policing to deal with problems of poverty, drug addiction and homelessness.

Mark Treyger, a city councilman from Brooklyn, said the letter reeked of ''chutzpah'' and the executives could instead be offering to pay more in taxes. ''There are folks worried about facing eviction -- as opposed to executives worried about a gum wrapper on the sidewalk,'' he said.

Several of the signatories have been antagonists of Mr. de Blasio in the past, including John Catsimatidis, a billionaire Republican grocery magnate who has run for mayor before and has toyed with a run in 2021. Others, like Blair W. Effron, of the investment bank Centerview Partners, have been supporters.

''It's not about being a Democrat or a Republican right now; it's about being a New Yorker who loves New York,'' said Mr. Catsimatidis, who has returned to his Manhattan office after several months in the Hamptons. ''These people are going to be moving their companies.''

Lisa Sorin, president of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, said she signed the letter as a last resort. The Bronx is struggling to address street homelessness, graffiti and illegal vendors, she said. Commercial corridors are filthier than ever.

''You can only be but so patient. We are in unprecedented times,'' said Ms. Sorin. ''That explains why we needed to stand on the rooftop and scream.''

Kathryn Garcia, the city's sanitation commissioner who is leaving her post to explore a run for mayor, said she understood the anxiety voiced in the letter. The budget cuts to her department had taken a toll on New Yorkers, she said, especially those who spend time at parks where bins are overflowing with trash.

''It's one of the few things that New Yorkers are allowed to do,'' she said, ''and we've made it unpleasant.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/12/nyregion/coronavirus-business-nyc-reopen.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/12/nyregion/coronavirus-business-nyc-reopen.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The chief executive of Hearst, whose headquarters, rear left, is in Manhattan, gave Mayor Bill de Blasio a proposal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** September 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***A Small, Enduring Bloc***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60FM-S631-JBG3-617C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 27, 2020 Monday 14:37 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1869 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. Protests have grown more volatile. New virus cases are stabilizing, at a high level. And Trump’s support among Black and Latino voters has not fallen.

Since taking office, President Trump has lost support among most major demographic groups: women and men, older and younger voters, college graduates and non-graduates. But there are at least two big exceptions: Black and Latino voters.

Trump will lose both groups badly in November, polls show. But his support among them has not slipped. If anything, it may have risen slightly. Close to 10 percent of Black voters and [*roughly 30 percent of Latinos back Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

“I think there’s a lot of denial about this fact,” David Shor, a top Democratic data analyst, [*recently told New York magazine*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

This enduring Black and Latino support for Republicans has had big consequences. It helped the party win victories in 2018 in Florida, Georgia and Texas, and [*could help decide Senate control this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

What explains it? Most political analysts admit they aren’t sure. “I don’t think there are obvious answers,” Shor said.

But there are some plausible theories.

Republican support among voters of color (including Asian-Americans) fell in the years before Trump entered politics. Many were turned off by the Republican Party’s racial appeals to white voters — anti-immigrant rhetoric, embrace of the Confederate flag, lies about Barack Obama and attempts to restrict voting access.

Trump has adopted a [*more obvious version of white identity politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). But he didn’t invent the tactic. Black and Latino Americans who still vote Republican may simply not be bothered by it.

“Latino support for Trump was already at historic lows,” Gary Segura, dean of the Luskin School of Public Affairs at U.C.L.A. and co-founder of the polling firm Latino Decisions, told me. “There’s just not that much room for them to move down.”

These Republican voters of color may instead be focused on other issues. Black and Latino voters are [*somewhat more conservative on abortion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) than white voters, for instance. Some voters of color also favor a reduction in immigration. Others [*don’t like political correctness*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Shor points out that a big slice of ***working-class*** voters in many countries — across races — prefer the right-leaning party.

Mark Hugo Lopez of the Pew Research Center notes that Latinos are a diverse group. In focus groups in Florida, Lopez has seen Dominican- and Cuban-Americans react to Trump’s harsh comments about Mexican immigrants with lines like, “That’s unfortunate but not necessarily me.”

Finally, some analysts say that Joe Biden and other Democrats haven’t given voters of color enough reason to support the party. “Dems need to give them something to vote for, not simply against,” Cornell Belcher, a Democratic strategist, told me.

“Latinos don’t have a strongly formed opinion” about Biden, Stephanie Valencia of Equis Research [*told Vox’s Matthew Yglesias*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

For more: [*Shor’s wide-ranging interview with Eric Levitz*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) is full of fascinating political analysis.

THREE MORE BIG STORIES

1. Portland ignites more protests

Protests across the U.S. [*grew more volatile over the weekend*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), spurred by the presence of federal agents in Portland, Ore. In Seattle, protesters smashed windows and set fires, and the police responded with flash grenades and pepper spray.

“I’m furious that Oakland may have played right into Donald Trump’s twisted campaign strategy,” said Libby Schaaf, the mayor of Oakland, Calif. “Images of a vandalized downtown is exactly what he wants to whip up his base and to potentially justify sending in federal troops that will only incite more unrest.”

In Austin, Texas: A demonstrator carrying a rifle [*was shot and killed on Saturday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) by a motorist who had threatened protesters with his car, the authorities said.

2. End of a surge?

The number of new U.S. coronavirus cases [*has stabilized over the past week*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), after having risen for the previous month. The current level — about 66,000 new cases a day — remains far higher than in virtually any other large, high-income country.

But the stabilization suggests that more Americans may again be starting to take steps to slow the virus’s spread, including wearing masks and avoiding indoor activities.

In other developments:

* Trump administration officials are concerned that some pharmaceutical executives are [*exaggerating their companies’ roles in Operation Warp Speed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), the administration’s push for a vaccine, in an effort to inflate stock prices.

1. [*Florida’s number of reported coronavirus cases*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)has surpassed that of New York.
2. Test results are still taking [*days, or even two weeks, to come back*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in many places. “If it takes up to two weeks to get results, we can’t detect brewing outbreaks and respond with targeted shutdowns,” [*Elisabeth Rosenthal, a doctor and health journalist, writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

3. Arrest in Russia sparks an uprising

Tens of thousands of people marched in the remote Russian city of Khabarovsk for the third straight weekend, rallying in [*a rare public display of defiance against President Vladimir Putin*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). The protests flared after the arrest of the territory’s popular governor this month, which critics viewed as an effort by Moscow to target a political rival.

Putin remains broadly popular in Russia. But his approval rating has been falling amid public disenchantment with corruption, stifled freedoms and the pandemic’s economic pain.

Here’s what else is happening

* A horse-drawn carriage carried the body of Representative John Lewis [*across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), on Sunday — the same bridge where state troopers attacked him and other civil rights protesters in 1965. Lewis will lie in state in the U.S. Capitol starting this afternoon.

1. Lexington, Va. — the burial place of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson and a city awash in Confederate iconography — is now [*delicately reassessing its identity*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. Times reporters have [*reconstructed the life of Roy Den Hollander*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a man known for his frivolous lawsuits and hatred of women. Officials say he murdered two people recently.
3. Lives Lived: Olivia de Havilland was one of the last surviving stars of Hollywood’s fabled Golden Age, earning an Oscar nomination for her role in “Gone With the Wind.” She and Errol Flynn were such a popular onscreen couple that rumors flew of an on-set romance. [*She died on Sunday at age 104*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

IDEA OF THE DAY: Margaret Sanger

Abortion-rights advocates have long claimed Margaret Sanger — who opened the first birth control clinic in the U.S. — as a hero. Abortion opponents have long argued that Sanger’s advocacy for eugenics — limiting child birth among the poor, disabled and others — was a precursor to abortion.

Planned Parenthood’s decision last week [*to drop Sanger’s name from its Manhattan clinic*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), citing her support for eugenics and tolerance of racism, has rekindled the debate.

Anti-abortion writers argue that Planned Parenthood’s leaders have effectively acknowledged the connection between abortion and racism. “This does not excuse their continued perpetuation of her legacy through their insidious practice of targeting the most vulnerable, especially poor women and women of color (both of whose populations so often intersect), by locating the vast majority of Planned Parenthood clinics within walking distance of nonwhite neighborhoods,” [*Serrin Foster and Damian Geminder write in America*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a Jesuit publication.

[*The Times’s Ross Douthat*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) cites the writing of both Ibram X. Kendi and Justice Clarence Thomas to argue that abortion fails the test of anti-racism.

Cathy, a Times reader in Hopewell Junction, N.Y., [*responded in the Comments section*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing):

“You can convince me that structural racism, poverty, lack of opportunity, expensive child care, wage inequality and any number of social ills make abortion more necessary, but the sin lies with our society, not Planned Parenthood. If we want to reduce abortion, and want to argue that racism is an inherent part of abortion, we need to reduce the demand, not the supply.”

[*Roxane Gay*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) has previously written in The Times that Sanger “freed women from indenture to their bodies.”

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PLAY, WATCH, EAT, LISTEN

Make something hearty

This week, try making [*Yewande Komolafe’s spin on yam and plantain curry*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a one-pot stew with a sauce of caramelized shallots, garlic and ginger.

It’s an adaptation of asaro, the Yoruba word for starchy root vegetables simmered in a tomato and chile sauce. Regional variations of the dish are staples in southern Nigeria and other parts of West Africa. Though the stew is traditionally made with West African yam, you can use unripe plantains or taro root.

Taylor Swift, indie rocker?

On Friday, the pop star Taylor Swift released her surprise new album “Folklore,” made entirely during quarantine. Swift, who has transitioned from country music to pop music with ’80s rock and hip-hop influences, is no stranger to trying on new genres.

Still, this album, which she recorded in collaboration with a member of the indie rock band the National, marks a notable departure from her usual “high-gloss, style-fluid, emotionally astute big-tent pop,” writes Jon Caramanica, The Times’s pop music critic. He calls it “alternately soothing and soppy.” [*Read the review here.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)

The future of TV sports

Two top-tier sports — the W.N.B.A. and Major League Baseball — have started their 2020 regular season, and nearly everything about their surroundings is different, including the television broadcasts. Televised sports during a pandemic typically involve fewer cameras and no on-site announcers.

And television workers are worried, [*as The Times’s Kevin Draper explains*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). They fear that the changes “will become permanent and lead to a loss of jobs.” The next several months will become a test of what a future with fewer announcers and more robotic cameras may look like.

The N.B.A. returns: The men’s basketball season resumes on Thursday, and The Times’s Marc Stein has taken up residence in Disney World to cover it. Two players have already been ordered to quarantine [*for violating the rules of the N.B.A. bubble*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Diversions

* Want to learn to draw? [*Start with your shoe.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)

1. This summer, three spacecraft are blasting off to explore Mars. [*Learn more about their missions*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: “Sesame Street” muppet who lives in a trash can. (5 letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. The word “edificitos” — Spanish for “little buildings” — appeared for the first time in The Times, in a [*feature on the Mexican architect Luis Barragán*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), as noted by the Twitter bot [*@NYT\_first\_said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about how New York City hospitals handled the coronavirus outbreak. And [*the latest Book Review podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) explores our fascination with unexplained phenomena.

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: A Trump supporter in Tulsa, Okla. last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Leah Millis/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Inside the Clash Between Powerful Business Leaders and N.Y.C.’s Mayor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60TN-3RW1-DXY4-X20D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 12, 2020 Saturday 19:10 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1962 words

**Byline:** J. David Goodman, Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Jeffery C. Mays

**Highlight:** The tensions burst into the open when 163 executives joined to criticize Bill de Blasio’s leadership. Others think their portrait of the city is overly bleak.

**Body**

The tensions burst into the open when 163 executives joined to criticize Bill de Blasio’s leadership. Others think their portrait of the city is overly bleak.

With conditions decaying in New York City neighborhoods and business districts, a powerful corporate executive traveled to Gracie Mansion in July to meet with Mayor Bill de Blasio. He briefed the mayor on a plan — prepared by 14 consulting firms — for how City Hall could work with business leaders to overcome the pandemic downturn.

Mr. de Blasio appeared supportive. The executive, Steven R. Swartz, head of the Hearst media conglomerate, left feeling hopeful, as he later told others from the Partnership for New York City, a top business group.

But weeks then went by, and the corporate leaders began feeling that Mr. de Blasio was ignoring their concerns.

On Thursday, [*they struck back in the form of an open letter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html) that publicly upbraided the mayor for neglecting “public safety, cleanliness and other quality-of-life issues,” which they said had led to “widespread anxiety” among New Yorkers.

[*The letter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html) was signed by 163 chief executives and leaders, a striking array from some of the biggest companies in New York City, including Goldman Sachs, JetBlue, Mastercard, Morgan Stanley, Pfizer and Warby Parker, as well as from top law firms and real estate developers. They called on the mayor to take “immediate action to restore essential services.”

From the start of his mayoralty in 2014, Mayor de Blasio has [*prided himself on championing the* ***working class*** *and spurning the city’s business elite*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html), drawing a sharp contrast with his predecessor, Michael R. Bloomberg, a billionaire with close ties to corporate leaders. That antagonistic posture rankled many top executives, but they mostly kept their criticisms private during the economic boom years that characterized most of Mr. de Blasio’s tenure.

Faced with a pandemic and its devastating economic consequences, the mayor and the city’s top business leaders now have little record of working together to draw upon. The letter from the chief executives underscores how the years of distrust are creating new obstacles for what Mr. de Blasio had hoped would be the start of the city&#39;s “rebirth.”

The relationship is further complicated because Mr. de Blasio is term-limited. He leaves office at the end of 2021, so both sides have less incentive to patch things up.

For now, the companies say they need Mr. de Blasio’s leadership to help persuade workers that it is safe to return to the office and assure them that any quality-of-life problems that may have worsened during the pandemic will be addressed. The city needs the companies to return to help begin to restore the huge loss in tax revenue.

“It’s all a chicken-and-egg problem. Until the people come back, the streets aren’t safe. If the streets aren’t safe, the people don’t come back,” said Kathryn Wylde, the president of the Partnership for New York City, which sent the letter. “So somebody’s got to break the egg.”

To some extent, both the mayor and the business leaders are grappling more with perceptions than reality.

The pandemic has [*killed more than 23,000 people in New York City*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html) and clearly presents unique threats to the city’s future. But New York City has rebounded before, notably after the fiscal crisis of the 1970s and the attacks of Sept. 11. And the city has, for the moment, defied predictions and largely contained its outbreak, successfully ramping up testing and contact tracing while maintaining some of the lowest rates of positive test results in the country.

Moreover, the disorder described in the letter is not prevalent on most streets, where New Yorkers dine comfortably outside at night.

Shootings have increased to a worrisome degree in some neighborhoods, but in general, crime is nowhere near as bad as it was in the early 1990s. (Roughly the same number of people have been shot so far this year [*as at this point in 2010*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html), during the middle of the Bloomberg administration.)

Some business leaders privately expressed concern that the public nature of the letter, and its suggestion of rampant disorder, could be counterproductive because it suggested that conditions were far worse than they actually are.

The report sent to the mayor in July outlined a number of potential partnerships between private business and the city government, and called for, among other things, flexibility in building codes, community-based child care and public-private partnerships to provide free Wi-Fi access to students through the school year.

On its face, many of the ideas appeared aimed at appealing to Mr. de Blasio, with proposals to support small and minority-owned businesses and to improve online learning.

The report, entitled “A Call to Action and Collaboration,” was less pointed on the subject of disorderly streets than Thursday’s letter, referring only obliquely to the need for “trust that the urban environment is healthy, secure and welcoming” in order to “attract and retain talent.”

At least publicly, Mr. de Blasio and his senior aides did not lash back at the business leaders in response to the letter. Mr. de Blasio urged the business community to lobby the federal and state governments for more aid to help patch the city’s big budget deficits caused by the outbreak.

“We need these leaders to join the fight to move the city forward,” [*Mr. de Blasio said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html).

Privately, de Blasio aides expressed frustration that the corporate executives were not pressing state and federal officials to do more to help the city.

Still, at roughly the same time, and in a very different setting, a similar message of discontent was being delivered to the de Blasio administration by a coalition of neighborhood business groups and local chambers of commerce from around the city.

In a 90-minute video meeting on Thursday with top city officials, including three deputy mayors and the police commissioner, the small business groups urged action on open-air drug use, drug sales, illegal vending and homelessness, according to two people who attended the meeting.

The group had been organized with the help of the Real Estate Board of New York and included at least one labor leader, Gary LaBarbera of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.

“I live in Harlem, and the trash is not being picked up,” said the president of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, Jessica Walker, who signed the letter and took part in the video meeting. “This is being felt all over the city, and we want to make sure it doesn’t get too far.”

The local business groups said that the city could inspire some confidence if it began encouraging its own sprawling work force to return to the office.

The one-two punch from New York City’s business class was not coordinated, according to two people involved in its planning. But it highlighted the long road to recovery for the city, and raised questions about whether a mayor with a little over a year to go in his tenure can dismiss these complaints as just coming from the wealthy.

“We do not make decisions based on the wealthy few,” the mayor said in August, when asked about rich New Yorkers possibly abandoning the city. “That’s not how it works around here anymore.”

Bill Neidhardt, the mayor’s press secretary, said Mr. de Blasio shares the concerns of business leaders about cuts to city services and genuinely wants their help with a solution.

For City Hall, that has meant help in seeking funds from Washington and long-term borrowing authority from Albany, in the hope of forestalling layoffs of city workers on Oct 1. Many of the signatories of the letter have good relationships with state leaders, including Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo. (Mr. Cuomo and Mr. de Blasio, both Democrats, have had [*a long and fraught relationship*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html).)

“There is a simple message — help us get long-term borrowing,” Mr. Neidhardt said. “For the people who have the ear of lawmakers and decision makers, we desperately need your help.”

Ms. Wylde said the group does not support the long-term borrowing that the mayor and his advisers favor. “They think the problem is money. The problem is not money. The problem is uniting the city around a practical plan for recovery,” she said.

The letter reflected frustration among business leaders after the publication by the partnership of [*the report that was presented to Mr. de Blasio*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html)at Gracie Mansion in July. “It didn’t seem to result in any action,” Ms. Wylde said.

Then in August, Ms. Wylde said she became alarmed when a survey of her members showed, surprisingly, that even as the pandemic appeared to be largely under control in New York City — with roughly 1 percent of tests coming back positive — [*fewer major businesses were planning to return*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html) to their offices than had been planning to do so in May.

While state and city guidelines permit offices to be filled to half-capacity, neither the mayor nor the governor, fearful of a new outbreak, has pushed hard for office workers to return. Most buildings are below 10 percent occupancy.

The letter began to circulate later that month among partnership members and attracted signatures quickly, including from sports organizations like the National Basketball Association, and even past donors to the mayor, such as Steven Rattner, a Wall Street financier and a former adviser to the Obama administration.

But Ms. Wylde said she waited to publish it until after Labor Day, in part because of concern among some members, who had spent the pandemic outside the city, that they would be criticized for weighing in on New York’s future from afar.

“They felt it was unseemly to be writing from the Hamptons,” she said.

Still, the letter set off howls among some Democrats and progressives who saw the call to address quality-of-life issues — and the [*support it garnered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html) from the city’s former police commissioner, William J. Bratton — as an endorsement of punitive policing to deal with problems of poverty, drug addiction and homelessness.

Mark Treyger, a city councilman from Brooklyn, said the letter reeked of “chutzpah” and the executives could instead be offering to pay more in taxes. “There are folks worried about facing eviction — as opposed to executives worried about a gum wrapper on the sidewalk,” he said.

Several of the signatories have opposed Mr. de Blasio on some recent issues, including John Catsimatidis, a billionaire Republican grocery magnate who has run for mayor before and has [*toyed with a run in 2021*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/nyregion/de-blasio-economy-coronavirus.html). Others, like Blair W. Effron, of the investment bank Centerview Partners, have been supporters.

“It’s not about being a Democrat or a Republican right now; it’s about being a New Yorker who loves New York,” said Mr. Catsimatidis, who has returned to his Manhattan office after several months in the Hamptons. “These people are going to be moving their companies.”

Lisa Sorin, president of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, said she signed the letter as a last resort. The Bronx is struggling to address street homelessness, graffiti and illegal vendors, she said. Commercial corridors are filthier than ever.

“You can only be but so patient. We are in unprecedented times,” said Ms. Sorin. “That explains why we needed to stand on the rooftop and scream.”

Kathryn Garcia, the city’s sanitation commissioner who is leaving her post to explore a run for mayor, said she understood the anxiety voiced in the letter. The budget cuts to her department had taken a toll on New Yorkers, she said, especially those who spend time at parks where bins are overflowing with trash.

“It’s one of the few things that New Yorkers are allowed to do,” she said, “and we’ve made it unpleasant.”

PHOTO: The chief executive of Hearst, whose headquarters, rear left, is in Manhattan, gave Mayor Bill de Blasio a proposal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** September 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Trump and His Aides Focused for Now on 2 Rivals (Neither Is the Front-Runner); White House Memo***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y07-FVT1-JBG3-63VW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Maggie Haberman and Annie Karni

**Highlight:** When it comes to the Democratic presidential primary candidates, President Trump is worried about Mike Bloomberg while his campaign sees an opportunity in Bernie Sanders.

**Body**

When it comes to the Democratic presidential primary candidates, President Trump is worried about Mike Bloomberg while his campaign sees an opportunity in Bernie Sanders.

President Trump’s advisers see Senator Bernie Sanders as their ideal Democratic opponent in November and have been doing what they can to elevate his profile and bolster his chances of winning the Iowa caucuses, according to Republicans familiar with the plans.

But their new focus on Mr. Sanders, independent of Vermont, comes at a time the president himself has been closely watching Michael R. Bloomberg, a late arrival to the Democratic primary race, unnerved by his campaign spending and [*his suggestion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/11/us/politics/michael-bloomberg-spending.html) he might spend $1 billion of his own fortune on opposing Mr. Trump, even if he does not emerge as the nominee.

It has left the president and his campaign focused on two different candidates in the weeks before Democrats cast their first votes in Iowa — one, a populist running with a grass-roots movement behind him, and the other, a liberal billionaire who could refashion the general election because of his bottomless bank account.

Neither is the national front-runner, but Mr. Sanders is believed to have gained significant ground in Iowa, and both are on the minds of the president and his team.

Most of Mr. Trump’s advisers see his biggest looming threat as Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., who has maintained a steady level of support despite an onslaught of attacks from the president and his team. But there is often a divide between how Mr. Trump and his aides view opponents.

Over the past few weeks, aides to the president in a series of conversations have discussed how to keep the focus on Mr. Sanders, the self-described democratic socialist who favors a significant expansion of government health programs and who is currently at the top of some Iowa polls. They see attacking him as a way to excite his base and draw attention away from other Democrats.

Such efforts tend to be haphazard and revolve around Mr. Trump’s comments at rallies and on his Twitter feed, as does much of the messaging of his campaign. The president, his advisers say, has been in need of a clear target for months, and he believes he is actually hurting Mr. Sanders.

Mr. Trump’s advisers do not necessarily share that view. But they find utility in trying to elevate Mr. Sanders, and aides are discussing ways to keep attention on Mr. Sanders in the lead-up to the Iowa caucuses on Feb. 3.

“Wow! Crazy Bernie Sanders is surging in the polls, looking very good against his opponents in the Do Nothing Party,” [*Mr. Trump posted Sunday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/11/us/politics/michael-bloomberg-spending.html) on Twitter, after a Des Moines Register poll showed Mr. Sanders leading in the state. “So what does this all mean? Stay tuned!”

“It means you’re going to lose,” Mr. Sanders [*tweeted in response*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/11/us/politics/michael-bloomberg-spending.html).

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But some have concerns that Mr. Sanders might be more durable in the Rust Belt states, like Michigan and Wisconsin, with high concentrations of white ***working-class*** voters that emerged as trouble spots for the president in the 2018 elections.

The advisers say that in their voter research Mr. Sanders registers with his own supporters as authentic — the same quality that Mr. Trump’s base ascribed to the president in 2016. They view Mr. Sanders as a more difficult opponent than Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts, but less of a challenge than Mr. Biden.

And Mr. Trump’s advisers are discussing rolling out policies to counter Mr. Sanders’s populist appeal.

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“Bernie Sanders would not protect American interests as president and his weakness is something that begs to be highlighted,” he added.

Mr. Sanders’s campaign manager, Faiz Shakir, pointed out that Mr. Trump ran as the candidate who “would stop the endless wars” and is now attacking the senator as weak. He added of Mr. Trump’s efforts to tar Mr. Sanders: “There’s no ‘there’ there.”

As for Mr. Bloomberg, the president has made clear he is aware of the money Mr. Bloomberg, a former New York mayor, is pouring into the race — especially into the attack ads hitting him in 118 media markets across the country. And this week he responded on Twitter to a TV spot focused on the top issue for Democrats in the 2018 midterms: health care.

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Bloomberg aides noted that the ads highlight a core weakness for Mr. Trump, one that he seemed cognizant of defending himself over.

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Despite Mr. Trump’s own history of upending expectations of which candidates succeed, his aides insist they do not view Mr. Bloomberg as a serious contender for his party’s nomination, and they believe that the power of his money is limited, noting that Mr. Bloomberg’s aides would be legally prohibited from direct coordination with the Democratic nominee’s campaign, unlike the national party committees.

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PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders on Sunday at a rally in Iowa City. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jordan Gale for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Trump Campaign Focuses on 2 Rivals (Neither Is the Front-Runner)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1C-B761-JBG3-62CV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Maggie Haberman and Annie Karni

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/14/us/politics/trump-sanders-bloomberg-2020.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/14/us/politics/trump-sanders-bloomberg-2020.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders on Sunday at a rally in Iowa City. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jordan Gale for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 20, 2020

**End of Document**



[***The Other King of Pop***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:601G-W721-DXY4-X027-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1657 words

**Byline:** By Luc Sante

**Body**

WARHOL

By Blake Gopnik

Andy Warhol was not just an artist; he was a giant evolving sensibility that angled itself through a great portion of the late 20th century, absorbing everything in its passage and altering it, often permanently. He affected painting, film, fashion, partygoing, record-keeping, packaging, branding and a very large manifest of items that fall under the heading of self-presentation. His corpus includes everything from major paintings and epic films to Mylar balloons and generic business portraits to monosyllabic interview responses and the standard italic font that became wholly identified with his rubber-stamped signature. You can't really appreciate anything Warhol did without having some idea of its place in his evolution. Consequently Warhol, more than even van Gogh or Picasso, endures not as a mere collection of works but as a narrative, one that gets more complex the more closely you look.

Conveying that narrative, coherently and comprehensively, was the task faced by the art critic Blake Gopnik as author of the first true doorstop biography (there have been earlier efforts, but none on this scale). He had to account for how a shy, ''effeminate'' child of Carpathian immigrants in ***working-class*** Pittsburgh came to occupy a central position in American and even global culture, while reinventing his artistic practice again and again, often radically, from the 1950s to his death at 58 in 1987, and also turning his unprepossessing self -- his bad skin, his passive and recessive personality, the toupees and wigs he wore to disguise his baldness, even his lifelong abject loneliness -- into an internationally recognized and respected trademark.

Having interviewed more than 260 people and consulted some 100,000 documents, Gopnik succeeds in establishing the chronology and tracing the fine lines of Warhol's many succeeding interests, decisions, departures, whims and relationships of all sorts. Few artists' biographies can have recorded so many changes -- in style, stance and social milieu -- occurring often on a week-to-week basis for some 35 years, amounting to a density of information more akin to, say, military history. We will all find our favorite Warhol avatar, of the hundreds on offer, somewhere within these pages. Mine is 33-year-old teeny-bopper Andy, who worked accompanied by loud pop 45s played on repeat. After the artist Ray Johnson visited the studio, he wrote in a letter the phrase ''We saw his recent paintings of Liz Taylor as we heard 'That Little Town Flirt''' over and over for a page and a half. That period didn't last long -- Warhol was never much attuned to music, despite his association with the Velvet Underground -- but it resonates because his paintings of the early '60s share many qualities with the girl-group records of the same era: brass, grit, immediacy, not to mention the impression that both are at once throwaways and for the ages.

Gopnik excels at disentangling the strands of the narrative and correcting common lore. Even someone who has been actively aware of Warhol's career for more than half a century may forget that there were four separate Factories over 25 years and that the many famous superstars did not all coincide; Edie Sedgwick did not share a timeline with Candy Darling. (There is a way in which Warhol's career resembles successive iterations of a long-running TV franchise.) Gopnik's patient chronology brings a sense of proportion to the outline of the life. The Campbell's Soup cans lasted only a couple of years (with commercial reprises much later), and Warhol's body of work as a film director a mere five. By the same token, there are many generally overlooked pockets of his career, such as ''Raid the Icebox'' in 1969, when he compiled a touring collection of 404 objects from the storage rooms at the museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, including ''closetfuls of antique shoes''; such retrieval shows are common now, but were unknown then. And Gopnik gives the ''Time Capsules'' their due. These boxes (1974-87, and perhaps beyond), into which were thrown everything from junk mail to reels of film, were a natural progression from such earlier cataloging projects as the ''Screen Tests,'' but represented a leap of conceptual logic nevertheless. '''It'll all get so simple that everything will be art,' Warhol had predicted back in 1966. ... Now he was finally making that prediction come true in full.''

Gopnik's research turns up many testimonials by people who witnessed Warhol dropping his mask of robotic blankness and revealing the discerning intelligence within (few direct quotes, sadly), and he presses the case for Warhol remaining an ''Old Radical'' even while superficially resembling a ''New Conservative.'' That does not prevent him from second-guessing his subject at every turn. He makes Warhol seem vaguely imitative for incorporating silk-screening into his paintings in 1962 -- a pioneering move, although he himself never made the claim -- because an employee of his alma mater was doing something like that in Andy's student days. He chides Warhol for his failures artistic and otherwise, and suggests he is being a conformist when he catches him coinciding with a general trend. He even scores Warhol for the angular signature logo of Interview magazine, ''the scrawl of an artist too confident, too busy and above all too important to take care of his writing.''

There are several odd features to the book. Gopnik seems to think that too many proper names will confuse the reader, so that quotes are attributed to ''one famous critic,'' ''a convert to Warhol,'' ''a hotshot young writer in New York,'' ''one of the founders of Dada,'' ''the same British critic who coined the term 'Pop Art''' and so on, like so many blind items. When Gopnik cites a ''book of French film theory that had links to his Marilyns. ... Its inside front cover lined up 10 images of a gun-toting Marlon Brando that were perfectly echoed in Warhol's line of Elvises,'' he is obviously describing Edgar Morin's ''The Stars,'' so why not just say so in the text? (The book's endnotes appear online and in its e-book edition.)

''Warhol'' throws off such mixed signals that it is difficult to determine what kind of reader it was intended for. It is a 900-page brick that evinces much studious research, and yet it is pitched as if it were a feature in a newsmagazine, or as if its readers were primarily serial consumers of celebrity bios. Not expecting the reader to identify Marcel Duchamp or Robert Rauschenberg on first appearance may be standard practice, but Gopnik doesn't trust you'll remember them from one time to the next. As a consequence, only a handful of people ever appear without epithets. Any elder who exerted an influence on Warhol will have his or her name preceded by ''hero''; contemporaries are tagged as ''friend'' or ''rival.'' Gopnik has no confidence in the reader's attention span, so recapitulations are constant; every point is made, made again, recast slightly, made yet again. Any foreshadowing that occurs early in Warhol's life -- or its reverse, the echoing that happens later on -- is liberally signposted, no matter how tenuous the connection. In 1967, a book by Warhol is published by Random House, ''a big, mainstream firm recently acquired by RCA, itself a major 1950s client of Warhol's that had also acquired Hallmark, the patron for Warhol's Christmas tree.''

The writing is often lazy and reductive in ways that suggest the book is meant for immediate consumption rather than durability. Someone is said to be ''blown away'' by a nightclub; a gallery is described as ''über-hip.'' Gopnik writes, ''It's not clear how entertaining the plotless 'Lonesome Cowboys' could really have been for a moviegoing public accustomed to the adventures of Herbie the Love Bug'' -- could he have chosen a movie less likely to share an audience with a Warhol production? He hits the soup-can air horn again and again: ''Presley ... had a genuine importance that made him more Cordon Bleu than Campbell's Soup''; Warhol ''was canned soup, not eel bisque finished with smoked cotton candy.'' And when Gopnik takes off on a literary flight, the vessel is likely to crash: ''At his best, Warhol didn't think outside the box. He thought outside any artistic universe whose laws would allow boxes to exist.''

All those things make the book much more difficult to read than it ought to be. Warhol made extraordinary work and led an equally extraordinary, unprecedented life that carried with it a significant budget of pain. He bridged the chasm between high and low as no one had before, and repeatedly found new ways to tilt the balance between art and life. He initiated or anticipated so many ways that people would later use communication and imagery that he could pass as having predicted Twitter and Instagram. He was gay, and presented himself to the world as a metonym of gayness (which did not prevent him from employing women as beards at times, nor his mother from trying to get him married off). He realized the social art that many had merely theorized before him; wherever he was, he turned his milieu into a spectacle, with every routine occurrence qualifying as an action, accruing documentation as it went. He played with the idea of business art as a kind of parody, then found himself ensnared in the real thing and dragged ever further into its depths, to the point of signing limited-edition prints of Superman, Mickey Mouse, Santa Claus and other characters who by then were sub-Pop. Gopnik gives the reader all the pertinent facts of Warhol's life, yet his ever-present lecturer's whiteboard obscures all but the occasional fugitive glimpse of Warhol's soul.Luc Sante's new collection, ''Maybe the People Would Be the Times,'' will be published in September. He teaches at Bard.WARHOL By Blake Gopnik Illustrated. 961 pp. Ecco/HarperCollins Publishers. $45.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/03/books/review/warhol-blake-gopnik.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/03/books/review/warhol-blake-gopnik.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Patriotic Andy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KAREN BYSTEDT)

Warhol with some of his work in his studio on East 47th Street, 1964. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS, INC., VIA ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

SAM FALK, VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2020

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[***For Families Already Stretched to the Limit, the Pandemic Is a Disaster***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:601G-W721-DXY4-X099-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 31, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 40

**Length:** 1644 words

**Byline:** By Nikole Hannah-Jones

**Body**

The two-­bedroom apartment near an old cemetery in Glassboro, N.J., may not look like much, but it means everything to Chekesha Sydnor-­Jones and her family. After an eviction, they spent 2018 crammed into a motel room. After scrimping and saving, Sydnor-­Jones's family was able to put a month's deposit down on a rental in this middle-­class town and move into an actual home. The space is tight -- Sydnor-­Jones's three adult daughters shared the finished attic with her 10-year-old daughter; her 18-year-old son has one bedroom on the main floor, and she and her partner have the other.

Before the pandemic hit, things were looking up. After a bout of joblessness, Sydnor-Jones had managed to buy a car and started driving for Uber and Door­Dash. Glassboro is home to Rowan University, and she found that money could always be made serving the bustling campus. Sydnor-­Jones's partner had returned from North Carolina and began working in construction.

Assata Shakur, who is the oldest daughter at 25, struggled to find work until she landed a union job as a housekeeper at Rowan, making about $425 a week after taxes. After working for a period, she would be able to attend Rowan at a discount and finish her education. Sydnor-­Jones's daughter Assira, who is 23, learned that she was pregnant last fall and reluctantly took a job as a door-to-door saleswoman for a clean-­energy company. But she found she had a talent for it, and between the commission she earned and her part-time job at Home Depot, where she made $11 an hour, she and her boyfriend, who also worked at Home Depot and the clean-­energy company, started to save money for the baby and for their own place. Sydnor-­Jones's son, Lahab, who is 18, worked at Amazon for about $17 an hour and was pulling in additional income driving for Door­Dash. Sydnor-­­Jones's 20-year-old daughter, Ahlayashabi, was not working before the pandemic. Almost none of them individually made a living wage in New Jersey, one of the most expensive states in which to live in the nation, but with all of them working and pooling their living expenses, they managed.

Today Sydnor-­Jones and her family find themselves in the type of financial calamity that they've never known. As New Jersey, one of the states hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic, implemented stringent shutdown restrictions, almost overnight, the family's income evaporated. The door-to-door sales company that employed Assira and her boyfriend laid them off, and they had to make do on the part-time work at Home Depot. Eventually, Assira, afraid for her health, took an early leave. Construction work stopped. And when Rowan University shut down and the students left, Sydnor-­Jones and her son lost almost all their income from Uber and Door­Dash. Only Assata is still fully employed -- while her hours at Rowan University have been cut, she is still drawing her paycheck -- but that could be imperiled if students do not return to school in the fall.

For black Americans, whose unemployment rate was double that of white Americans before the pandemic, ­Covid-19 is particularly disastrous. While white unemployment has risen to 14.2 percent, black unemployment has grown to 16.7 percent, according to April data from the Bureau for Labor Statistics, and experts think the black unemployment rate is most likely severely undercounted. Heidi Shierholz, policy director of the Economic Policy Institute who served as the chief economist to the labor secretary under President Barack Obama, told The Washington Post that she expected unemployment among black people to soar to an almost incomprehensible 30 percent, the worst of all racial groups. ''It will be an absolute nightmare,'' she said.

And for ***working***-­***class*** black families like Sydnor-­Jones's, the data are particularly devastating. Black Americans are heavily concentrated in the service sector and gig economy -- the types of jobs employees cannot do from home and where layoffs have been most severe. This month, the Federal Reserve chairman, Jerome H. Powell, said that in March, when the shutdowns began, nearly 40 percent of American households earning less than $40,000 a year experienced job losses. Nearly half of black households earn less than $40,000 a year.

Sydnor-­Jones, who is 46, cannot remember a time when money wasn't tight. Her mother worked child-care and counseling jobs that were important but low-­paying. She bought a fixer-­upper that they could never really afford to fix up in Camden, N.J., during the 1990s, when jobs disappeared from the city and nearly 40 percent of residents there lived in poverty, making it the poorest city in one of America's wealthiest states. Sydnor-­Jones recalls spending a winter with no heat while she and her mother lived in two rooms in the otherwise-uninhabitable house.

She dropped out of college after two years and then worked a series of early childhood education jobs to support herself and her children. In 2006, she moved to Williamstown, about 20 miles south of Camden, a diverse middle-­class suburb out of her price range. She reasoned it was worth it to get her children access to the safe and high-­quality schools the community offered. ''I could live a middle-­class life in Camden or be poor out here, and I decided to be poor out here,'' she explained. Sydnor-­Jones learned from her mother how to be resourceful, supplementing her income by doing hair from her home on the side.

But the pandemic has stymied her resourcefulness -- she can't merely pick up extra shifts driving for Uber or do a friend's hair in her kitchen. So she has filed for unemployment under expanded terms that now include gig workers. But her claim was pending for weeks before she finally received a check in mid-May. ''I try to be understanding that I am one of, what is it, like, 33 million that have filed for unemployment. Not that that's much solace.''

With virtually no income coming in, Sydnor-­Jones has cut expenses where she can. She downgraded her cellphone plan, opting for a $15-a-month bare-bones package. She got rid of cable and internet but has been able to sign up for free internet for her 10-year-old, Azhani, which is provided to low-­income children so they can access remote learning. She has prioritized paying the electric and water and gas bills, which are higher with everyone home all day every day, and put off other expenses, like medication. Sydnor-­Jones has severe asthma, a condition that black Americans, more likely to live near environmental poisons, suffer disproportionately and that makes ­Covid-19 particularly deadly. Yet she said she could not afford to pick up the $46 inhaler waiting for her at the pharmacy. Like one in 10 black Americans, she lacks health insurance.

Still, Sydnor-­Jones's family could not pay all the rent this month. A nervous pit formed in her stomach when she had to tell the landlord they had only $350 of the $850 due. He was understanding, she said, but for how long?

Last month, Sydnor-­Jones headed to the food bank, something she has never done before. When she got there, she ran into many friends and neighbors. Everyone, it seemed, was trying to make ends meet. The boxes of canned goods and dried milk and beans helped restock her empty cupboards. Sydnor-­Jones is also growing vegetables -- tomatoes, peppers, spinach and cucumbers -- in a plot her partner dug behind their apartment building. These days she cooks a lot of beans and rice. ''Thankfully I have a family that is pretty good with what some might call 'struggle meals.' I think it is a little bit easier having adults, because they understand why it is as it is.''

Still, every day feels more desperate. Many adults living in a small space is never an easy situation, but the suffocating combination of almost everyone's being without work, with too little money and too much time on their hands, is leading to more and more frequent flare-ups. Arguments and slamming doors have become a daily soundtrack. Assata, who also suffers from asthma along with diabetes, has grown increasingly worried that she might contract the virus by working outside the home at Rowan. Racial data that cities and states started releasing last month revealed a stark disparity: In New Jersey and across the nation, black Americans were disproportionately contracting ­Covid-19 and dying from it. It's an astounding yet predictable paradox: Black Americans, because of where they live and work, are among the most likely to lose work because of ­Covid-19 shutdowns but also have to go to work because their jobs are deemed essential. Assata feels as if she must risk her health because her entire family now depends on her income, and sometimes that makes her resentful. ''I mean, I want to help my family, and I feel horrible being upset,'' she said. ''But it's also frustrating. And then you're all stuck with each other. I don't know how long we can keep doing this, how long my mom and everybody can keep fighting over there not being enough money.''

For Mother's Day, Sydnor-­Jones splurged on cheap steak for the family, trying to make it celebratory, but she and her partner wound up in an ugly argument -- she cannot even remember over what. He's accustomed to working, she said, and not being able to help provide is breaking him down. It is growing harder and harder to keep her family from spiraling into despair. ''I don't like asking my kids for help,'' she said. ''You feel like the worst parent in the world. You try to remind yourself that everybody's going through this, but it eats you up.''

Scenes From an Economic Collapse:Glassboro, N.J.Baton Rouge, La.Milwaukee, Wis.Las Vegas, Nev.Pueblo, Colo.Crete, Neb.San Antonio, Texas

Nikole Hannah-Jones is a staff writer for the magazine. She won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in commentary for her lead essay for The 1619 Project.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/magazine/for-families-already-stretched-to-the-limit-the-pandemic-is-a-disaster.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/magazine/for-families-already-stretched-to-the-limit-the-pandemic-is-a-disaster.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Chekesha Sydnor-Jones (right) with her son, Lahab, and three of her. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH PRICE) (MM41)

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2020

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[***'The Crisis of 2020,' Predicted in 1991: What's Next?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6011-W0P1-JBG3-60B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 29, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

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**Byline:** By Jeremy W. Peters

**Body**

Two scholars coined the term millennial and developed a fan base for their grim theories. Now, the surviving one sees a generational realignment happening in American politics that does not bode well for Republicans.

They called it the Crisis of 2020 -- an unspecified calamity that ''could rival the gravest trials our ancestors have known'' and serve as ''the next great hinge of history.'' It could be an environmental catastrophe, they wrote, a nuclear threat or ''some catastrophic failure in the world economy.''

That was in 1991.

The scholars responsible were William Strauss and Neil Howe, whose book ''Generations'' introduced a provocative theory that American history unfolds in boom-to-bust cycles of roughly 80 years. Their conclusions about the way each generation develops its own characteristics and leadership qualities influenced a wide range of political leaders, from liberals like Bill Clinton and Al Gore to pro-Trump conservatives like Newt Gingrich and Stephen K. Bannon.

Seems as if they were on to something. So now what?

Mr. Strauss died in 2007, before anyone could know how eerily correct ''The Crisis of 2020'' would be. But Mr. Howe, who now hosts a podcast and analyzes demographic trends for an investment advisory firm, is still very much in the insight business. And what he sees on the other end of the coronavirus pandemic -- a generational realignment in American politics hastened by the failure of the baby boomer generation to lead the nation out of its quagmire -- does not bode well for President Trump or the Republicans.

For most of the past 75 years, the Republican attitude about government has been rooted in a deep skepticism of authority that says, in essence: Success doesn't take a village; it takes a determined individual whose government isn't standing in the way. But that belief, Mr. Howe said, ''is uniquely ill-suited to the current crisis.''

Nearly 30 years ago, when he first predicted an event like the coronavirus, Mr. Howe said the year 2020 was not a mark-your-calendar prognostication of doomsday but a round number that fit the cyclical nature of their theory: It is roughly 80 years after the last great crises of World War II and the Great Depression.

More insightful than the date itself was the assertion that historical patterns pointed toward the arrival of a generation-defining crisis that would force millennials into the fire early in their adulthood. (Mr. Strauss and Mr. Howe were the first to apply that term to those born in the early 1980s because they would come of age around the year 2000.)

More than just a novelty, their theory helps explain why some of the most prominent voices calling for political reform from left, center and right have been young -- Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, 30; Pete Buttigieg, 38; Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, 40.

And as baby boomers continue to age out of public service, the theory says, fixing the problems created by the pandemic will fall to this younger, civically oriented generation. Mr. Howe, who at 68 is a member of the cohort he is critical of, said in an interview that it was no coincidence that the boomer president and many people in his generation -- especially the more conservative ones -- have generally taken a more lax attitude toward the coronavirus than younger people.

Polls have found that younger Americans overwhelmingly favor a cautious approach to getting back to normal -- and are more worried about the virus. This includes many young Republicans, ages 18 to 49, who were far more likely than Republicans 50 and older to say the worst of the outbreak is yet to come, according to a Pew Research Center poll last month.

''This is really the problem with Gen X and baby boomers,'' Mr. Howe said. ''They've championed this kind of individualism. They've championed thinking less about the community.''

On the one hand, conservatives might argue that they are the best equipped to confront a moment that feels at times as if the apocalypse is at hand. Cable news, talk radio and right-wing websites have long been full of ads for products intended to sustain people through catastrophe: investments in precious metals, home generators and supplies to can your own food.

But the peace of mind those products offer is ultimately about looking out for oneself -- the kind of ''me first'' conservatism that developed out of America's post-World War II boom.

Mr. Howe's critique of today's conservatives is shared by a growing number of younger Republicans. Rachel Bovard, the senior director of policy at the Conservative Partnership Institute, said that many in her generation wanted to see an interventionist government in areas of policy like trade and finance.

''I think that's gone unquestioned for so long, and it's become this national theology: Private enterprise is good. Full stop,'' Ms. Bovard, 36, said. ''I prize my liberty, whether it's liberty from a tyrannical government or a tyrannical corporation.''

Mr. Howe and Mr. Strauss followed ''Generations'' with ''The Fourth Turning,'' which elaborated on looming calamity. But beyond disaster prediction, the foundation of their work is that Americans tend to develop certain traits that are fairly consistent across their generation.

In the preface to ''Generations'' nearly 30 years ago, they nodded to the despair that boomers sometimes felt about the character of their peers. ''You may feel some disappointment,'' they said, ''in the Dan Quayles and Donald Trumps who have been among the first of your agemates to climb life's pyramid.''

Mr. Howe will admit to some disappointment himself on where Mr. Trump is on life's pyramid: ''I think thus far,'' he said, ''it's fair to say that Trump has not grown into the role.''

One upside to the crises at the heart of these theories is the innovation they tend to produce -- an economic and social program like the New Deal, or a public health discovery like the vaccine for polio. But so far the Trump administration has been incapable or unwilling to think big about the problems at hand, critics say.

''The really bad news is we are in the grip of an administration that sees everything as marketing, spin, branding,'' said David Kaiser, a former professor at the Naval War College and a historian who is a fan of the Strauss and Howe theories. ''And I don't think is really capable of thinking through a problem and acting on it.''

This skepticism that big, bold solutions will come from the Trump administration is shared even by Mr. Bannon, a fairly reliable defender of the president's since he was pushed out of his role as White House chief strategist in August 2017. In an interview, Mr. Bannon said that the administration never took seriously the possibility that a catastrophe like the coronavirus could strike, which has led to a failure of imagination in dealing with the problem.

''You had a called shot in the beginning of this administration, and nobody paid attention to it,'' he said. Mr. Bannon was a promoter of the crisis theories in ''The Fourth Turning'' when he was still at the White House.

''I got mocked and ridiculed by so many people. They said: 'You can't believe in this stuff. It makes you look like a kook,''' he said. The doubters included the president, who told Mr. Bannon that the theory was too dark for him. ''He said, 'I'm an optimist.' I said: 'I'm a realist. And this is reality,''' Mr. Bannon recalled.

Mr. Bannon said that instead of coming up with new programs to deal with the millions of people who may never get their old jobs back, the White House and its conservative allies were falling back on the kind of stimulus policies they purport to loathe.

Where were all the conservative businessmen who have insisted that the government get out of their way, Mr. Bannon asked? ''I saw them all, once again, run to the government for bailouts,'' he said.

Writing in 1997 in ''The Fourth Turning,'' Mr. Howe and Mr. Strauss warned that after the 2020 crisis, the party in power at the time ''could find itself out of power for a generation'' akin to the 1860 Democrats and 1929 Republicans.

Not everyone sees a grim ending in this crisis for Mr. Trump and the Republicans. Dick Morris, a former Clinton aide who has since become a conservative critic of the Democrats, said he believed the Strauss and Howe theory helped explain how Mr. Trump won in 2016, and how he could do so again this year.

If Mr. Trump's victory was a rebellion of ***working-class*** voters who felt the country's leaders had failed them, Mr. Morris said, his re-election will ''hinge on who is going to rebuild the economy once this is all over, which is also Trump's strength.''

Mr. Morris, a fan of Strauss and Howe, recalled that when he worked for Mr. Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign, the former president told him that reading ''Generations'' influenced him to pick Mr. Gore as his running mate because of their closeness in age and political temperament. Three of the last four presidents are boomers -- Mr. Clinton, George W. Bush and Mr. Trump, all of whom were born in 1946. The likely Democratic nominee this year, Joseph R. Biden Jr., is 77 and part of the older ''Silent Generation.''

If the pandemic doesn't break the boomer generation's grip on American government, some see hope that it will end the brand of conservatism that has thrived during their time in power.

''Where's my copy of 'Atlas Shrugged?''' Mr. Bannon asked, referring to the Ayn Rand novel that conservatives often cite for its heroic portrayal of individualism and self-determination. ''It's in the shredder.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/28/us/politics/coronavirus-republicans-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/28/us/politics/coronavirus-republicans-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Neil Howe, left, and Bill Strauss in Washington in 2001, left. Their book ''Generations'' introduced a theory that American history unfolds in boom-to-bust cycles of about 80 years. Lining up for face mask distribution in Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEMETRIUS FREEMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE WASHINGTON TIMES/ZUMA)

Stephen K. Bannon at a cybersecurity meeting with President Trump and his administration at the White House in 2017. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2020

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[***They Predicted ‘The Crisis of 2020’ … in 1991. So How Does This End?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:600V-74P1-DXY4-X00H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1674 words

**Byline:** Jeremy W. Peters

**Highlight:** Two scholars coined the term millennial and developed a fan base for their grim theories. Now, the surviving one sees a generational realignment happening in American politics that does not bode well for Republicans.

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[Follow our [*live Trump vs Biden 2020 election updates and analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/03/us/trump-biden-election).]

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But the peace of mind those products offer is ultimately about looking out for oneself — the kind of “me first” conservatism that developed out of America’s post-World War II boom.

Mr. Howe’s critique of today’s conservatives is shared by a growing number of younger Republicans. Rachel Bovard, the senior director of policy at the Conservative Partnership Institute, said that many in her generation wanted to see an interventionist government in areas of policy like trade and finance.

“I think that’s gone unquestioned for so long, and it’s become this national theology: Private enterprise is good. Full stop,” Ms. Bovard, 36, said. “I prize my liberty, whether it’s liberty from a tyrannical government or a tyrannical corporation.”

Mr. Howe and Mr. Strauss followed “Generations” with “The Fourth Turning,” which elaborated on looming calamity. But beyond disaster prediction, the foundation of their work is that Americans tend to develop certain traits that are fairly consistent across their generation.

In the preface to “Generations” nearly 30 years ago, they nodded to the despair that boomers sometimes felt about the character of their peers. “You may feel some disappointment,” they said, “in the Dan Quayles and Donald Trumps who have been among the first of your agemates to climb life’s pyramid.”

Mr. Howe will admit to some disappointment himself on where Mr. Trump is on life’s pyramid: “I think thus far,” he said, “it’s fair to say that Trump has not grown into the role.”

One upside to the crises at the heart of these theories is the innovation they tend to produce — an economic and social program like the New Deal, or a public health discovery like the vaccine for polio. But so far the Trump administration has been incapable or unwilling to think big about the problems at hand, critics say.

“The really bad news is we are in the grip of an administration that sees everything as marketing, spin, branding,” said David Kaiser, a former professor at the Naval War College and a historian who is a fan of the Strauss and Howe theories. “And I don’t think is really capable of thinking through a problem and acting on it.”

This skepticism that big, bold solutions will come from the Trump administration is shared even by Mr. Bannon, a fairly reliable defender of the president’s since he was [*pushed out of his role as White House chief strategist*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/03/us/trump-biden-election) in August 2017. In an interview, Mr. Bannon said that the administration never took seriously the possibility that a catastrophe like the coronavirus could strike, which has led to a failure of imagination in dealing with the problem.

“You had a called shot in the beginning of this administration, and nobody paid attention to it,” he said. Mr. Bannon was a [*promoter*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/03/us/trump-biden-election) of the crisis theories in “The Fourth Turning” when he was still at the White House.

“I got mocked and ridiculed by so many people. They said: ‘You can’t believe in this stuff. It makes you look like a kook,’” he said. The doubters included the president, who told Mr. Bannon that the theory was too dark for him. “He said, ‘I’m an optimist.’ I said: ‘I’m a realist. And this is reality,’” Mr. Bannon recalled.

Mr. Bannon said that instead of coming up with new programs to deal with the millions of people who may never get their old jobs back, the White House and its conservative allies were falling back on the kind of stimulus policies they purport to loathe.

Where were all the conservative businessmen who have insisted that the government get out of their way, Mr. Bannon asked? “I saw them all, once again, run to the government for bailouts,” he said.

Writing in 1997 in “The Fourth Turning,” Mr. Howe and Mr. Strauss warned that after the 2020 crisis, the party in power at the time “could find itself out of power for a generation” akin to the 1860 Democrats and 1929 Republicans.

Not everyone sees a grim ending in this crisis for Mr. Trump and the Republicans. Dick Morris, a former Clinton aide who has since become a conservative critic of the Democrats, said he believed the Strauss and Howe theory helped explain how Mr. Trump won in 2016, and how he could do so again this year.

If Mr. Trump’s victory was a rebellion of ***working-class*** voters who felt the country’s leaders had failed them, Mr. Morris said, his re-election will “hinge on who is going to rebuild the economy once this is all over, which is also Trump’s strength.”

Mr. Morris, a fan of Strauss and Howe, recalled that when he worked for Mr. Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign, the former president told him that reading “Generations” influenced him to pick Mr. Gore as his running mate because of their closeness in age and political temperament. Three of the last four presidents are boomers — Mr. Clinton, George W. Bush and Mr. Trump, all of whom were born in 1946. The likely Democratic nominee this year, [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/03/us/trump-biden-election), is 77 and part of the older “Silent Generation.”

If the pandemic doesn’t break the boomer generation’s grip on American government, some see hope that it will end the brand of conservatism that has thrived during their time in power.

“Where’s my copy of ‘Atlas Shrugged?’” Mr. Bannon asked, referring to the Ayn Rand novel that conservatives often cite for its heroic portrayal of individualism and self-determination. “It’s in the shredder.”

PHOTOS: Neil Howe, left, and Bill Strauss in Washington in 2001, left. Their book “Generations” introduced a theory that American history unfolds in boom-to-bust cycles of about 80 years. Lining up for face mask distribution in Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEMETRIUS FREEMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; THE WASHINGTON TIMES/ZUMA); Stephen K. Bannon at a cybersecurity meeting with President Trump and his administration at the White House in 2017. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Coronavirus, United Kingdom, Disney Plus: Your Tuesday Briefing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YGY-H021-JBG3-60YC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 24, 2020 Tuesday 09:04 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1571 words

**Byline:** Mike Ives

**Highlight:** Here’s what you need to know.

**Body**

Here’s what you need to know.

(Want to get this briefing by email? Here’s the [*sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).)

Good morning.

We’re covering Britain’s nationwide lockdown, the eerie beauty of empty sites and an astronaut’s tips for dealing with isolation.

Britain under lockdown as Europe’s cases swell

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has faced a storm of criticism for his laissez-faire approach to the coronavirus pandemic, on Monday [*placed Britain under virtual lockdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) by closing all nonessential shops, banning meetings of more than two individuals and requiring people to mostly stay home.

Those steps bring Britain into alignment with measures across Europe, including in France, where an existing nationwide lockdown will be strengthened as of today.

The drastic measures are an effort to avoid forcing doctors in overwhelmed hospitals to have to turn away patients — [*as they are already doing in northern Italy*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

Here are the [*latest updates*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) and   [*maps of the pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

* Asian markets rose strongly this morning, a day after the U.S. [*Federal Reserve vowed*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) to buy as much government-backed debt as needed to keep financial markets functioning. The European Union’s finance ministers are set to discuss today   [*a proposal for using an untapped bailout fund*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) worth 410 billion euros to prevent a potential sovereign debt crisis. We have a   [*live briefing*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

1. The World Health Organization warned on Monday that the pandemic was “[*accelerating*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing),” with more than 300,000 cases so far. More than a third are in Europe.

* Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany tested negative for the virus days after being [*exposed to an infected doctor*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), a spokesman said.
* [*President Trump hinted*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing)that the economic shutdown meant to halt the spread of the virus across the country would not be extended, even as his team warned of   [*an alarming spread in and around New York City*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).
* The U.S. Olympic Committee [*joined calls by other countries*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) for the Summer Games in Tokyo to be postponed, hours after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan suggested as much.

1. South Korea has so far [*managed to flatten its coronavirus curve*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) without shutting down its economy, but it may already be too late for other rich countries to follow the same model.
2. [*Harvey Weinstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), a disgraced film producer who is serving 23 years in New York State for sex crimes, is among the celebrities who have tested positive for the virus, two sources told The Times.

What to know: The Times is providing free access to [*much of our coronavirus coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), and our   [*Coronavirus Briefing newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) — like all of our newsletters — is free. Please consider   [*supporting our journalism with a subscription*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

Relief at your government’s whim

The pandemic has not spared the rich or famous from infection, but ***working-class*** people are bearing a disproportionate share of the economic pain.

[*How much depends on where they live*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). That disparity reflects not only the world’s differing safety nets, but also what governments are doing right now to stem the crisis.

Denmark, for example, has promised to cover 75 percent to 90 percent of salaries if businesses do not lay off their employees — an effort to avoid paying for the disruptions caused by mass unemployment. Britain and South Korea, among other countries, are taking a similar line.

But in the U.S., where health care is not guaranteed, many workers could be left far more vulnerable — even if Congress eventually passes [*a proposed $2 trillion relief bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

Quotable: “I don’t know what I’m going to do,” said Jose Luis Candia, a father of three who lost his two jobs busing tables at high-end Manhattan restaurants. “Oh my God.”

Related: The crisis has exposed the economic fragility of ride-hailing drivers, food delivery couriers and [*other gig economy workers in Europe and the U.S*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

The upside of emptiness

[*The Times sent dozens of photographers*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) to now-empty fairgrounds, railway stations and other sites around the world.

Their images capture the sort of dystopian beauty that is divorced from normal life and recalls the experience of “bygone explorers coming upon the remains of a lost civilization,” as our architecture critic puts it.

But by listening to experts and keeping our distance from one another, he adds, “we have not yet lost the capacity to come together for the common good.” In that sense, these empty scenes “remind us that beauty requires human interaction.”

If you have 15 minutes, this is worth it

Why drugs need clinical trials

As the coronavirus claims thousands of lives, some in the United States want to rush potential cures to market, even if it means bypassing legal checks and balances.

But those rules are there for a reason. Case in point: About 10,000 babies in Germany, Britain, Australia and elsewhere were born with severe defects in the 1950s and 1960s after their mothers took thalidomide, a sedative that had been approved by German regulators without testing in pregnant women.

The drug was not approved at the time in the U.S., and the crisis led to laws requiring rigorous clinical trials for proposed medications. Our Science desk has [*the story of thalidomide’s American survivors*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). Above, baby pictures of one of them, Carolyn Sampson.

Here’s what else is happening

Alex Salmond: The former first minister of Scotland was [*acquitted of sexual offenses*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) that had involved accusations from nine women and included one count of attempted rape.

Afghanistan: The U.S. State Department [*said it was cutting $1 billion in aid to the country*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) this year, after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo failed in Kabul to persuade rival Afghan leaders — who both claim to be the legitimate president — to support a unified government.

Disney Plus: [*The newish streaming service*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) arrives in a handful of Western European countries today.

Snapshot: Above, the Clean Ocean Sailing crew in their 112-year-old boat, off England’s Cornish coast. Their mission: [*removing plastic waste from areas of land that are inaccessible by foot*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

Athletes in isolation: [*They’re as bored as we are*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). Lionel Messi is among those taking to a Toilet Roll Challenge, in which players use their feet to keep a roll in the air.

What we’re reading: This [*ode to novelty mugs in Bon Appétit*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). Melina Delkic, on the Briefings team, calls it “a welcome reminder to look to the little things that give you joy for reasons you can’t explain.”

Now, a break from the news

Cook: [*St. Louis gooey butter cake*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing). It’s a good time to   [*make recipes your own*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) — after all, they’re “just sheet music,” says our Food editor Sam Sifton. “You can play them in all sorts of ways.”

Watch: The HBO documentary “[*After Truth*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing)” argues that while “fake news” is abetted by modern technology, it’s rooted in opportunism and cynicism.

Read: In “[*Hitler’s First Hundred Days*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing),” the historian Peter Fritzsche shows how Hitler and his conservative allies crushed what remained of the Weimar Republic, in part by censoring the press and suspending civil liberties.

Smarter Living: To stay healthy during quarantine or isolation, follow a schedule and go outside if you can (but leave at least six feet between you and others). Those are among the tips that Scott Kelly, a retired NASA astronaut, [*shared in a Times Op-Ed*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

And now for the Back Story on …

Seattle’s outbreak

Mike Baker, our correspondent in Seattle, has been reporting on the coronavirus outbreak for several weeks. He’s covered an outbreak at a nursing home, and the dozens of deaths at a hospital in Kirkland, Wash. Our [*Times Insider*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) team spoke with him about what it’s been like.

What is an average day like for you right now?

I usually have been getting up between 6 and 6:30 and getting up to speed on what’s happening on the East Coast and in other parts of the world. I’ve spent a lot of time in the morning getting in touch with various state, local and federal officials.

Right now, we’re entering this phase where most of the containment strategies are largely in place and we’re waiting for what kind of wave of cases hits the health care system.

How do you cover that?

Just last week, I got a chance to go inside the hospital system where they had the most cases of patients die of the coronavirus in the country, and the staff members there were willing to talk with me.

What did it feel like to be in that hospital?

It’s really hard to overstate how heartbreaking it is to follow these families and stories.

On the other hand, you have just [*incredible stories about the doctors and nurses*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) who are on the front lines. A lot of them were exposed and sent into quarantine, and then brought back because there was such a shortage of staff. Now they’re reusing equipment to the point where they have to wipe down their face shields with bleach wipes and their shields are foggy.

That’s it for this briefing. See you next time.

— Mike

Thank you

To Mark Josephson and Eleanor Stanford for the break from the news. You can reach the team at [*briefing@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

P.S.

We’re listening to “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).” Our latest episode is about the coronavirus pandemic and the Democratic presidential primary.

Here’s today’s   [*Mini Crossword puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing), and a clue: Utter nonsense (five letters).   [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing).

The publishers of The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post   [*called on China today to reverse its decision*](https://www.nytimes.com/morning-briefing) to bar the publications’ American journalists from working in the country.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Testa for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***The Prospect of a New Military Conflict Divides Right-Wing Pundits***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1C-5WJ1-JBG3-609D-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Michael M. Grynbaum

**Body**

Cracks in the conservative commentariat as the White House struggles to form a clear narrative.

It was the kind of full-throated critique of President Trump familiar to MSNBC viewers, yet transplanted to the heart of Fox News: Tucker Carlson, the network's conservative 8 p.m. host, upbraiding the White House for its attempts to justify the killing of a top military commander in Iran.

''It's hard to remember now, but as recently as last week, most people didn't consider Iran an imminent threat,'' Mr. Carlson said at the start of his Monday show, going on to mock Mr. Trump's secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, for saying intelligence agencies had identified an undefined Iranian threat.

''Seems like about 20 minutes ago, we were denouncing these people as the 'deep state' and pledging never to trust them again without verification,'' Mr. Carlson told viewers, eyebrow arched. ''Now, for some reason, we do trust them -- implicitly and completely.''

At 9 p.m., Fox News made way for the pro-Trump commentary of Sean Hannity, who declared ''the world is safer'' after the death of the commander, Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani.

But Mr. Carlson's dissent showed how a right-wing media world that typically moves in lock step with the president has struggled to reconcile Mr. Trump's surprise escalation with his prior denunciations of open-ended conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In an interview, Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump's former chief strategist, said that he and other supporters of the president were still hunting for an effective defense.

''This is a very complicated issue, and the people who support President Trump, from Tucker Carlson all the way to Marco Rubio and Lindsey Graham, are really trying to work through this,'' Mr. Bannon said on Monday. ''What you're seeing now -- live on television, live on radio -- is people working through what this means.''

Just as the political world was caught off guard by the killing of General Suleimani, so was the conservative media complex.

As reports of the missile strike in Baghdad that killed the general emerged on Thursday, Mr. Hannity phoned into his Fox News show from vacation to offer vociferous praise. That same night, Mr. Carlson warned his viewers that ''America appears to be lumbering toward a new Middle East war.''

On ''Fox & Friends'' the next morning, the co-host Brian Kilmeade said he was ''elated'' by the news, only to be scolded by Geraldo Rivera, who pointed to false intelligence peddled by the George W. Bush administration to justify the Iraq war.

''Don't for a minute start cheering this on,'' Mr. Rivera, a Fox News correspondent, told the hosts.

Mr. Bannon, the former chief of Breitbart News, now runs a pro-Trump podcast, ''War Room: Impeachment.'' In the interview, he said he was concerned that a burgeoning conflict in Iran could threaten Mr. Trump's support among ''***working-class***, middle-class people, particularly people whose sons and daughters actually fight in these wars,'' a group that believed the president opposed significant foreign intervention.

''Why was it necessary to kill this guy and to kill him now and to exacerbate the military issues, given the fact that President Trump looks to us as someone who's not trigger happy?'' Mr. Bannon said, paraphrasing a question he said he was hearing from independent voters.

''That still has to be explained,'' Mr. Bannon continued. ''I don't know if it's the president addressing the nation. I don't know if it's the president getting on 'Fox & Friends.' But clearly, at some point in time, the president's got to walk through not just what his logic was, but also where he wants to take this.''

Indeed, part of the problem for conservative media commentators was the lack of guidance from the White House, which has been slow to settle on a public narrative around General Suleimani's death.

In 2003, as the Bush administration prepared for a conflict in Iraq, White House officials took pains to build support among allies and media commentators for an invasion. In 2020, the Trump administration seems to be attempting the reverse: retroactively arguing its case even as the world grapples with the consequences of a provocative military strike.

Without providing specifics, Trump aides have referred to evidence from intelligence agencies about an imminent threat from Iran -- the same intelligence agencies that Mr. Trump and his media surrogates have attacked for three years as biased and prone to fabricating evidence.

The White House press secretary, Stephanie Grisham, is virtually unknown to the public, because she has not held a briefing in her six months on the job and rarely agrees to interviews outside of Fox News. An attempt on Twitter by Vice President Mike Pence to connect General Suleimani to the 9/11 attacks was quickly proved wrong.

Mr. Pompeo, dispatched to the major political talk shows on Sunday, argued that ''appeasement'' of Iran would increase the risk of a terror attack, even as General Suleimani's death set off enormous anti-American protests in Tehran. That prompted an on-air rebuke from Mr. Carlson, who showed a clip of Mr. Pompeo on his Monday Fox News show.

''The risk of terror is also increased by bombing other people's countries,'' Mr. Carlson said.

Mr. Carlson, a longtime opponent of American involvement in the Middle East, has been more willing than Mr. Hannity to criticize Mr. Trump, though he has not called out the president by name in his recent commentary on Iran. After his Monday segment on General Suleimani, he introduced a five-part series, ''American Dystopia,'' chronicling urban decay in San Francisco. (The president later retweeted a Twitter post by Mr. Carlson promoting the series.)

Mr. Trump, for his part, has done relatively little so far to persuade the public. Aside from a brief and hastily convened TV statement from his Palm Beach resort, he has kept to Twitter, initially posting a caption-less picture of an American flag on the day of the Baghdad strike. On Tuesday afternoon, the president spoke informally to reporters at the White House about the strike.

On Monday, he granted his first interview on the matter to the radio show of the conservative host Rush Limbaugh, a Trump safe space with a direct line to the president's political base.

''I hope this is the greatest year of your life, sir,'' Mr. Limbaugh cooed to Mr. Trump at one point, while also venturing that the Suleimani killing had many Americans on edge. ''People are being scared to death, their kids are being scared to death, out of their minds, that somehow this is going to start World War III,'' he said.

Mr. Trump responded haltingly, as if testing out ideas for his message. ''This should have been done for the last 15 to 20 years,'' the president said, calling General Suleimani ''a terrorist'' and declaring that ''our country is a lot safer.'' Soon, he had veered into complaints about House Democrats and their views on Israel.

Charlie Sykes, a longtime right-wing talk-radio host and a critic of Mr. Trump, said in an interview that the president could still draw on a reservoir of support among his conservative supporters.

''Killing terrorists has always been a great talking point for Republican presidents,'' Mr. Sykes said. Mr. Trump's campaign-trail opposition to the Iraq war, though, complicates matters.

''Trumpism is both isolationist and highly militaristic at the same time,'' said Mr. Sykes, who is also a MSNBC contributor. ''It's not dovish -- it's highly militaristic, but it's selectively militaristic. Being strong is not inconsistent with appeasing the North Koreans or Vladimir Putin.'' He paused to laugh. ''My head is hurting just thinking about this.''

On Monday night, Mr. Hannity previewed a potential new talking point for the president. ''We can't and won't be going with boots on the ground in Iran,'' he told viewers. ''That's not going to happen, and frankly, it's not necessary.''

Still, the situation in Iran remains fluid. On Monday, Mr. Bannon used his podcast to point out the contradictions of the president's approach, noting, ''One of the central building blocks of why he was elected president was to get out of these foreign wars.''

A co-host, the former Trump campaign aide Jason Miller, leaped to the president's defense, but Mr. Bannon interrupted. ''You're thinking like Republicans,'' he said. ''Where's the populist nationalist movement in this? This is supposed to be a new day.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/07/business/media/tucker-carlson-iran-trump-media.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/07/business/media/tucker-carlson-iran-trump-media.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From top, Fox News's Tucker Carlson has broken with other pundits on the right, like his colleague Sean Hannity and radio star Rush Limbaugh. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

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ANDREW HARNIK/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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[***In Michigan, Old Classmates Reckon With a Divided Country***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:613B-M8W1-DXY4-X2RT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jennifer Steinhauer

**Body**

From a gauzy distance, Kevin Swift describes his high school years in the 1980s in Kalamazoo, Mich., as a carefree time of basketball games, English classes and beer parties. ''We had it great there,'' said Mr. Swift, who is Black and grew up in a majority-white neighborhood.

Class divisions seemed far less rigid; the richest kid in town drove a station wagon. Racial tensions were an issue, Mr. Swift said, but he didn't think they were overwhelming. Most parents didn't talk politics, or let it divide them. ''There was a lot more innocence in the world,'' he said.

That was then. In the decades since, Kalamazoo, like the rest of the battleground state of Michigan, has gone through wrenching economic and social changes, driving increased partisanship and hardening the race and class divisions that once seemed malleable, unraveling old friendships and reordering lives in this politically charged era.

Today, southwestern Michigan is a place where Trump and Biden signs festoon lawns in equal number on some blocks, where the governor, Gretchen Whitmer, is such a lightning rod that people wear T-shirts proclaiming their hate or love for her. In 2016, Kalamazoo County was one of the few in Michigan where Hillary Clinton beat Donald J. Trump, yet Representative Fred Upton, a Republican, also prevailed that year, as he had for decades.

Over the summer, there were both Black Lives Matter protests and a Proud Boys rally, and the ensuing violence led to the Kalamazoo police chief resigning. More recently, one of the men arrested for plotting to kidnap Ms. Whitmer hails from Plainwell, 10 miles to the north.

These cultural and economic shifts are of deep interest to me, and not just because I am a reporter: I grew up with Mr. Swift around those kegs, in a once reliably blue state that helped make Mr. Trump president.

Over phone calls, Zoom chats and text exchanges, some of my former classmates from Loy Norrix High School described the shifting sands -- and in some cases their own evolving politics -- in our home city, which now seems deeply divided.

Moderate to liberal to deeply conservative, resigned to vote, excited to vote or undecided about their vote, they represent a lot of Americans, but they do not fit into convenient stereotypes. Rather, they illustrate a truism about modern politics: that as partisan as we have become, most Americans' views are more kaleidoscopic than polychrome, which makes understanding them a complex exercise of listening to them, voice by voice.

DONNA AND ROB KELLER

Over the past 30 years, the job base in Kalamazoo, a city of roughly 76,000 people, has diversified away from manufacturing into health care and hospitality. The city's population has diversified as well: As in much of the rest of the Michigan, its Hispanic population rose over 40 percent in the past decade. And with a growing college-age population, the city of Kalamazoo has grown more liberal, even as the surrounding areas have reddened.

Though crime is high in some neighborhoods, downtown is booming. In 2005, anonymous donors created the Kalamazoo Promise, a college scholarship program for graduates of public high schools, which helped stymie a population drop and the city's general fortunes. ''Kalamazoo is a city that for the most part works,'' said Mr. Upton, who represents the area in Congress.

For Donna and Rob Keller, who are both white and graduated from Loy Norrix in 1986, all of these are reasons to stick around: Their twins went to Loy Norrix as well, and they now attend Kalamazoo College.

''Now there's no reason not to buy a house in Kalamazoo as opposed to Portage or Texas township or somewhere else,'' said Mr. Keller, referring to the outlying suburbs.

But economic development did not shore up political comity. ''My parents were both pretty strong Democrats,'' Ms. Keller recalled, noting that her father was instrumental in getting a Planned Parenthood building rebuilt after it had been destroyed in 1986 by arsonists, and was friendly with local elected Democrats.

''He had Republican friends and they ribbed each other; he absolutely loved to talk to people about politics,'' she said, recalling his bipartisan running group that met daily for 20 years.

''This was before it was terribly divisive,'' she continued. ''When we were little, we had plenty of friends whose parents were Republicans. And I don't know my kids could come up with any.''

Both Kellers remain stalwart Democrats, but not as far to the left as some friends or their own children.

''There are limitations to my progressive nature,'' Mr. Keller said. ''We are both centrist Democrats, sort of Bill Clinton Democrats. And that drives our kids crazy.''

CHRIS KOOI

Chris Kooi is, on paper, the kind of voter who helped Mr. Trump win Michigan in 2016: white, non-college educated, late-Gen Xer, male. In 2003, he moved from Kalamazoo to a rural county 20 miles west, the sort of place where Mr. Trump ran up the numbers.

Like many people, Mr. Kooi, 52 and a sales manager at Spectrum Business, a telecom provider, has grown more conservative with age. Mortgages, college payments for his two daughters and bills affect his political calculus. ''I once thought of myself as more liberal, more open minded,'' said Mr. Kooi, a 1986 graduate of Loy Norrix. But later when he ran a business, ''I realized I probably shouldn't be.''

And yet he also represents the sort of voter who kept Michigan blue for so long: He voted for both Clintons and Barack Obama (though he also voted for both Bushes).

So where does that put him in 2020? ''I'm very confused this election,'' he said. He is unnerved by Mr. Trump's rhetoric, he said, and adds that the president's economic policies have not particularly benefited his family. ''His tax cuts affected me and my family negatively,'' he said. ''His cookie-cutter program took my ability to itemize my tax returns and in turn cost me money by eliminating write-offs that I had taken previously.''

Nevertheless, he believes the president may be better for the economy. ''I don't know what will happen to the economy here if Biden wins,'' he said. ''I don't know if it'll affect me, the middle class, here.'' Mr. Kooi tunes out the president as much as he can, he said. But he has internalized Mr. Trump's knocks on Mr. Biden's acuity. ''What scares me about Biden,'' Mr. Kooi said, ''is I think he's starting to lose it a little bit.''

Mr. Kooi said he thinks the president is a racist, and that Mr. Trump's views are part of a general deterioration of tolerance that seems to have spread across the nation since Mr. Kooi's high school years.

''It seems to me like the races are keeping to themselves,'' said Mr. Kooi, who now lives in Paw Paw, a mostly white suburb. ''We are segregated as a community and that is all of our faults.'' His boss is Black, and he gets along with his Black co-workers but added with resignation, ''I can probably safely say that within my circle, I don't have any Black friends.''

KEVIN SWIFT

The years right after high school were difficult for Mr. Swift, and he struggled to find a career. In the past, he, like some of the parents of our high school friends, might have found work with General Motors, which had a plant in Kalamazoo. But the company shut it down in 1999, part of a statewide decline in goodpaying blue-collar jobs. Eventually, he moved to Lansing to take a job at a G.M. plant there.

Along the way, Mr. Swift watched as competition for jobs and tensions over local and national politics soured the region's more harmonious vibes that he says he felt as a high school student. A growing racial divide even invaded his personal life, leading to tense encounters with onetime white friends.

''I give Trump a lot of credit for one thing,'' Mr. Swift, 55, said. ''He has shown me more about my friends than I ever knew.''

Turnout among Black voters like Mr. Swift dropped 12 points in Michigan between the 2012 and 2016 elections, and the lack of those voters is believed to have played a central role in Mrs. Clinton's loss in the state.

Democrats are hoping to re-energize Black voters over issues like police brutality and the Trump administration's failure to stop the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, which has hit the state's Black population hard. But Mr. Swift, for one, sees government as part of the problem for ***working-class*** Black people.

''The fight is the government against Blacks, not whites against Blacks,'' he said. ''Our government in recent years has fined several banks for unfair lending practices, and after fining them $30 million, they did nothing to change the conditions of those loans. Redlining is a government program.''

He is also cynical about the Black Lives Matter movement, which he believes has been overtaken by opportunists trying to make money off activism.

Mr. Swift will vote for Mr. Biden, but without relish. ''To me, the Republican and Democratic parties are opposite ends of the same plane that 98 percent of us can't get on,'' he said.

JAMIE DENISON

Jamie Denison, who played in Invasion, a high school cover band, said he was ''a youthful progressive but always had a more conservative mind-set than most.'' He is all for Mr. Trump.

Mr. Denison, 54, has stayed around to take advantage of the Kalamazoo Promise for his four children. He has grown angered by what he sees as violence by liberal activists and a political orthodoxy that he calls ''seething indoctrination.''

At one point, his oldest child's school had a sanctioned walkout to protest gun violence, which his daughter did not want to participate in, he said. ''I never thought Kalamazoo was a seething liberal boiling pot,'' Mr. Denison, who is white, said.

Black Lives Matter has unnerved him still more. ''I think Black lives matter as much as any other life,'' he added. ''I don't agree with the movement because they are a fascist organization. Since the lockdown, a lot of my Black friends from church have gone off on me from Facebook,'' in response to his posts, he said. ''When we get back to church maybe we will be able to talk about that.''

Mr. Denison, who left his banking job to pursue a career in voice-over work and is a few credits shy of an M.B.A., said the Trump administration had been good for his family's financial situation, largely because ''the optimism he gives us allowed us to change gears and restructure.''

Mr. Trump's handling of the coronavirus has done nothing to dent his appeal for Mr. Denison, who often repeats some of the conspiracy theories trafficked by some of the president's followers. ''It is tragic that a man-made, intentionally released, politically motivated virus has taken innocent lives,'' he said. ''It is even more tragic that the same people responsible for creating and releasing it are still trying to use it to win the upcoming election.''

At a recent visit to a more rural area, Mr. Denison said he was happy to see Trump yard signs and flags, which he won't put in his own yard. ''There is no way I would ever hang that at my house,'' he said. ''I would never want to fight someone for throwing a Molotov cocktail at it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/17/pageoneplus/18rex5.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/17/pageoneplus/18rex5.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Loy Norrix High School in Kalamazoo, Mich. Since the author's graduation, the city has gone through wrenching economic and social changes.

Chris Kooi, his wife, Tammie, and their children Emma, left, and Chloe. He has grown more conservative with age.

Kevin Swift and his family moved to Kalamazoo when he was in elementary school. He said Trump showed him things about his friends he never knew.

Donna Perry Keller and Rob Keller. ''We are both centrist Democrats, sort of Bill Clinton Democrats. And that drives our kids crazy,'' Mr. Keller said.

Jamie Denison with his family, from far left, Ava, Marissa and Oliver, and from front left, Eliza and Skyler. Mr. Denison is all in for Trump, saying the administration has been good for his family's financial situation. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELAINE CROMIE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Why These Voters Rejected Hillary Clinton but Are Backing Joe Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:613B-KB31-JBG3-641V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** For many Democrats and independents who sat out 2016, voted for third-party candidates or backed Donald Trump, Mr. Biden is more acceptable to them in ways large and small than Mrs. Clinton was.

**Body**

For many Democrats and independents who sat out 2016, voted for third-party candidates or backed Donald Trump, Mr. Biden is more acceptable to them in ways large and small than Mrs. Clinton was.

[Follow our live coverage of the [*Biden inauguration*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration).]

Samantha Kacmarik, a Latina college student in Las Vegas, said that four years ago, she had viewed Hillary Clinton as part of a corrupt political establishment.

Flowers Forever, a Black transgender music producer in Milwaukee, said she had thought Mrs. Clinton wouldn’t change anything for the better.

And Thomas Moline, a white retired sanitation worker in Minneapolis, said he simply hadn’t trusted her.

None of them voted for Mrs. Clinton. All of them plan to vote for [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration)

“I knew early that Trump definitely wasn’t the guy for me,” recalled Mr. Moline, an independent. But when it came to Mrs. Clinton, “I guess I had a bad taste in my mouth from her husband’s eight years in office.” He voted for Gary Johnson, the Libertarian candidate, a decision he regrets, and he feels at ease backing [*Mr. Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration).

“I identify more with Biden — whether that’s being a male chauvinist, or whatever you want to call me,” he said.

The point seems almost too obvious to note: Mr. Biden is not Mrs. Clinton. Yet for many Democrats and independents who sat out 2016, voted for third-party candidates or backed Mr. Trump, it is a rationale for their vote that comes up repeatedly: Mr. Biden is more acceptable to them than Mrs. Clinton was, in ways large and small, personal and political, sexist and not, and those differences help them feel more comfortable voting for the Democratic nominee this time around.

Mr. Biden also benefits, of course, from the intense desire among Democrats to get President Trump out of office. And a majority of voters give the president low marks for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, the dominant issue of the race. But a key distinction between 2020 and 2016 is that, four years ago, the race came down to two of the most disliked and polarizing candidates in American history, and one of them also faced obstacles that came with being a barrier-breaking woman.

Mr. Biden now leads Mr. Trump in many public polls by bigger margins than Mrs. Clinton had in 2016. In private polling and focus groups, voters express more positive views of Mr. Biden than of Mrs. Clinton, though they know far less about his decades in political office, according to strategists affiliated with both Democrats’ campaigns.

Interviews with dozens of voters, union members and Democratic strategists reveal a party embracing Mr. Biden — a 77-year-old white man — as a familiar political pitch, though some bristled at what they saw as the gender bias in that assessment.

“The Republicans did a fantastic job of making Hillary Clinton seem like the devil for the last 20-plus years, so she was a hard sell,” said Aaron Stearns, the Democratic chairman in Warren County in northwestern Pennsylvania. “It’s just a lot easier with Joe Biden because he’s a guy and he’s an old white guy. I hate saying that, but it’s the truth.”

Even as Mr. Biden proposes [*a significantly bigger role*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration) for government than Mrs. Clinton did four years ago, some voters view the Democratic nominee as more moderate compared to how they saw her. And they don’t see him as being as divisive a political figure as they did Mrs. Clinton, despite Mr. Biden’s long record of legislative battles.

“I didn’t like Hillary — I felt that she was a fraud, basically, lying and conniving,” said Sarah Brown, 27, of Rhinelander, Wis., who regrets her 2016 vote for Mr. Trump and plans to vote for Mr. Biden. “I’m not a super big fan of him, either, but the two options — I guess it’s the lesser evil.”

Since 2019, Mr. Biden has held an advantage of four to eight points over Mrs. Clinton in key swing districts, according to an analysis by John Hagner, a partner at Clarity Campaign Labs, a Democratic data analytics firm.

Polling shows Mr. Biden scoring higher than Mrs. Clinton among a wide range of demographic groups — most notably older voters, white voters and suburbanites. But his advantage is stark among those who sat out the 2016 election or backed third-party candidates.

Mr. Biden leads Mr. Trump, 49 percent to 19 percent, among likely voters who backed third-party candidates in 2016, according to recent polling of battleground states by The New York Times and Siena College. Among registered voters who sat out the 2016 election, Mr. Biden leads by nine percentage points, the polls found.

At times, Mr. Biden has been notably critical of his party’s 2016 nominee, arguing that she lacked “vision” and failed to connect with ***working-class*** voters, and openly relitigating what he saw Mrs. Clinton’s debate missteps.

He has also noted “unfair” sexism against her, adding [*at an event in Iowa*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration), “That’s not going to happen with me.”

Mrs. Clinton, too, has reflected on how she was perceived during the race.

“You should also be prepared for the slights, the efforts to diminish you — you personally, you as a woman,” she advised Senator Kamala Harris on Mrs. Clinton’s podcast before the vice-presidential debate.

In 2016, Mr. Trump’s appeal as a political leader was intriguing to many voters, given that he was an outsider and that few expected him to win, while Mrs. Clinton was a Washington veteran.

“Always institutionally, people want to get change,” said former Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia, a close friend of the Clintons. “Trump was anti-establishment, anti-swamp. They now have seen the horror that this man has done to our country.”

Yet, even as votes are being cast in 2020, Democrats still worry about some of the reasons for their loss in 2016.

Mrs. Clinton’s campaign was criticized over its ground game in some battleground states; Mr. Biden’s campaign avoided direct contact with voters for months. Mrs. Clinton was attacked for keeping a lighter schedule than Mr. Trump at times; Mr. Biden made his first visit of the year to Wisconsin in September.

But Mr. Biden has never been torn down like Mrs. Clinton, who had faced more than two decades of unrelenting G.O.P. attacks by the time she ran.

Internal polling conducted for the Bernie Sanders campaign found that Mr. Biden had a reservoir of good will that Mrs. Clinton did not possess.

“He was a hard guy to hit,” said Ben Tulchin, Senator Sanders’s pollster. “ There’s not a lot of passion for him, but they like him.”

Republicans, too, have found Mr. Biden to be a much tougher target. Even now, four years after she last ran for any office, Mrs. Clinton has appeared in more [*Republican ads attacking down-ballot Democratic candidates*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration) than has Mr. Biden, according to data compiled by Advertising Analytics. In the final weeks of his campaign, Mr. Trump has tried to [*reignite controversy over*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration) Mrs. Clinton’s emails, blasting out fund-raising requests with the subject line: “HILLARY CLINTON.”

Accounts of focus groups conducted by the two campaigns underscore how perceptions of Mr. Biden and Mrs. Clinton are shaped by voters’ genders.

The quality of Mrs. Clinton’s that emerged as the most appealing in 2016 groups was not her accomplishments but that she had set aside her own ambitions to serve in President Obama’s administration, according to people involved with the campaign.

Winning over female voters entailed walking a particularly tortured path, former campaign aides say.

“She had to show more experience than they did, but not so much experience that they couldn’t relate to her,” said Jennifer Palmieri, the communications director for Clinton’s campaign. “We kept running into those conflicts in people’s own heads.”

In focus groups conducted by the Biden campaign after he won the party nomination, voters were generally unfamiliar with his achievements but far less conflicted about him personally, strategists said.

“Biden didn’t have as much definition as I thought he would have had in the electorate,” said Steve Schale, a veteran Florida Democratic operative who is chief executive of Unite the Country, a super PAC backing Mr. Biden. “They just see him as a nice guy.”

Mrs. Clinton and many others believe she faced a more difficult political calculus because of her gender, [*indicating in a tweet*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration) after the first debate that she would have liked to tell Mr. Trump to “Shut up, man” — as Mr. Biden did — but had been constrained by how those attacks might backfired against her.

“When you’ve never had a woman president, it’s hard to imagine what that’s going to look like,” said Stephanie Schriock, the president of Emily’s List, an organization that seeks to elect Democratic women.

Unlike Mrs. Clinton, who was known as a workhorse legislator and [*secretary of state*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/20/us/biden-inauguration) and projected that image, Mr. Biden spent decades cultivating a brand as just another guy riding home on the Amtrak.

“There’s no doubt there was an element of sexism, but also there was a sense that she was looking down on people,” said David Axelrod, Mr. Obama’s campaign strategist. “Biden, his cultural sensibilities are different.”

Voters who rejected Mrs. Clinton and who now back Mr. Biden present varying rationales. Midwestern union workers, most of them men, said they had found it hard to identify with Mrs. Clinton, never mind picture her as president.

“I have more faith in Joe Biden than Hillary because I like his background, where he grew up,” said Dave Clawson, the Democratic treasurer of the United Steelworkers chapter in Lorain, Ohio. “He’s middle class, worked his way up. I saw her as not a very nice person. I don’t know how to explain it.”

John Melody, a retired steelworker from South Euclid, Ohio, said he had questioned why Mrs. Clinton wanted the job, attributing most of her success to her husband.

“I thought the girl just wanted the job because she wanted to be the boss, that’s all,” said Mr. Melody, 76, who often votes Democratic for president but supported the Green Party candidate, Jill Stein, in 2016. “Biden’s a regular guy.”

In focus groups, Black voters who sat out 2016 said they hadn’t believed that Mrs. Clinton would tangibly improve their lives, said Adrianne Shropshire, the executive director of BlackPAC, a super PAC that aims to energize Black voters.

“With Biden, their assumption is he will mitigate their pain and suffering,” Ms. Shropshire said.

Democrats say Mr. Biden doesn’t provoke the same level of antipathy in rural areas, where vandalism of Mrs. Clinton’s yard signs was rampant four years ago.

Rich Fitzgerald, the county executive of Allegheny County, Pa., which includes Pittsburgh and its suburbs, said he sees Biden signs in conservative areas where he had never spotted support for Mrs. Clinton.

“Seeing people that live in some of these Trump counties that feel confident enough to put a Joe Biden sign in their yard just tells you something,” he said.

Liberal Democrats, too, are showing more willingness to set aside their ideological differences, following the lead of Senator Sanders, who quickly backed Mr. Biden after ending his primary bid.

“In the last election, I didn’t see things as being as dire as I do in this election, and I didn’t think that Donald Trump could win,” said Nikki Baker, 66, a Minneapolis waitress who voted for Ms. Stein in 2016. “When Angela Davis and Noam Chomsky are saying you have to vote for Joe Biden, then I have to vote for Joe Biden.”

Amanda Cox contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Thomas Moline voted for the Libertarian candidate in 2016, saying the Clintons had left “a bad taste” in his mouth. “I identify more with Biden,” he said. Nikki Baker, right, voted for Jill Stein, but said, “I didn’t see things as being as dire as I do in this election.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A21)

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[***Trump’s Threat of Force***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60DB-Y291-JBG3-63FT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1782 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. Labs are making progress on a virus vaccine. Polar bears are at risk of extinction. And Trump threatened to send federal officers into U.S. cities.

President Trump has been preoccupied with big-city crime for more than 30 years.

In 1989, he [*took out ads*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in New York newspapers asking, “What has happened to our City over the past ten years?” (The ads implied he favored the death penalty for five Black and Latino teenagers who turned out to be wrongly accused of a rape.)

In his 2016 presidential campaign, he made false claims about how dangerous [*Oakland*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), [*Philadelphia*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) and other cities were.

And now he seems to have decided that sending — or threatening to send — federal troops to Chicago and other cities is his best hope for turning around a struggling re-election campaign.

Meeting with reporters in the Oval Office yesterday, Trump said that he [*planned to deploy federal law enforcement agents to Chicago*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), after already having done so in Portland, Ore., last week. He suggested he might also do so in New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore and Oakland. He was vague about the reasons, saying all of the cities were run by “radical left” Democrats.

But the politics of the move are fairly clear. Trump is trailing Joe Biden in the polls, and the move lets him try to shift the nation’s attention away from the coronavirus crisis. Instead, he can run against two of his favorite bogeymen: “the radical left” and big-city crime.

In recent weeks, he has frequently tried to portray Black Lives Matter protesters as out-of-control radicals, even though millions of Americans have participated and the protests have typically been peaceful. He has also made [*numerous racial appeals*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to white Americans, such as defending the Confederate battle flag.

Threatening to send troops into cities — most of which have large Black populations — unites the two themes and lets him cast himself as a defender of a fading America. “If Biden got in,” Trump said yesterday, “the whole country would go to hell. And we’re not going to let it go to hell.”

In response, Democrats vowed to pursue legislation or lawsuits to stop him. “We won’t let these authoritarian tactics stand,” Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon said. “It’s an American crisis.”

More from Portland: As military-clad federal agents swept through the streets this past weekend, they encountered a Navy veteran who had come out to ask whether the officers felt their actions violated the Constitution. They [*beat him with a baton and doused him with pepper spray*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

THREE MORE BIG STORIES

1. Progress on a vaccine

Three competing laboratories [*released promising results yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) from early human trials of a coronavirus vaccine. The labs said that the vaccines produced strong immune responses with only minor side effects.

There’s no clear timeline for when a vaccine will be available, and one researcher cautioned that, “There is still a long way to go.” But progress has been more rapid — so far — than many scientists expected.

In other virus developments:

* After weeks of skepticism, Republicans are now showing clear support for another stimulus bill to help the ailing economy. But the negotiations among Trump, congressional Republicans and congressional Democrats [*are likely to be thorny*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

1. European Union leaders agreed early today on [*a groundbreaking stimulus package of 750 billion euros ($857 billion)*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to rescue their economies from the ravages of the pandemic.
2. Which U.S. airlines are packing planes, and which are keeping seats open to reduce virus risks? [*Here’s a guide*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

2. Is Biden’s lead safe?

Big polling leads in presidential campaigns disappear more often than not. Just ask [*Thomas Dewey*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), Michael Dukakis or Hillary Clinton. Even some winners — Jimmy Carter in 1976, and George W. Bush in 2000 — have watched huge summer leads shrivel.

All of which offers reason to assume that Biden’s current lead is vulnerable. But this year’s campaign does differ in a major way, [*as Nate Cohn explains in a new analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). A single story — the coronavirus — has come to dominate daily life, he writes, “and voters have reached an overwhelmingly negative view of how the president has handled it.” Unless that changes, Trump may struggle to mount the comeback that underdogs often do.

From Opinion: Ross Douthat argues that [*the most likely scenarios for a Trump comeback*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) involve a fading of the virus’s worst effects or a surge in crime and disorder.

In other politics news

* A sign of political enthusiasm on the left: Total primary turnout among Democratic voters [*has surpassed 2016 levels*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), despite the pandemic.

1. John Kasich, the Republican former governor of Ohio, is expected to speak in support of Biden at the Democratic National Convention next month, [*The Associated Press reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
2. Democratic Party leaders in Georgia [*nominated Nikema Williams*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a state senator from Atlanta, to replace John Lewis — who spent nearly 34 years in Congress, until his death last week — on the ballot this year.

3. Finding work when the tourists leave

More than half of Bali’s economy relies on tourism, and the coronavirus has hit it like no other disaster in recent memory. When hotels started laying off workers, many returned to their home villages and [*took up traditional ways of earning a living*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), including fishing and harvesting crops.

“I feel hollow,” said a former hotel steward who has been digging for clams. “There is no job. I can only survive by depending on the sea.”

It’s not just Bali: Other tourism-dependent locales are facing similar struggles. Reuters has reported on the struggle in [*Jamaica*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and Politico has looked at [*Greece*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Here’s what else is happening

* A self-described “anti-feminist” lawyer was identified as the suspect [*who fatally shot the 20-year-old son of a federal judge*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) at the family’s home in New Jersey over the weekend. The lawyer later shot himself in an apparent suicide.

1. Russia has weaponized information as part of [*a long-running effort to interfere in the British political system*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and successive British governments ignored the attacks, according to a report by the British Parliament.
2. Polar bears may become nearly extinct by the end of the century as a result of shrinking sea ice in the Arctic if global warming continues unabated, [*scientists said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
3. Lives Lived: For the enigmatic filmmaker Luther Price, celluloid was like putty in his hands. Art-house fans were spellbound, but who was he really? A son of a ***working-class*** town north of Boston, he never revealed his real name. [*He died at 58, the cause also not revealed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Subscribers help make Times journalism possible. [*To support our efforts, please consider subscribing today*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

IDEA OF THE DAY: The biases facing women

We live in a world that’s often designed for men. Consider:

* For decades, car companies used crash dummies based on an average man’s body — and then designed cars to protect that body. Partly as a result, women have been more likely to suffer debilitating injuries or die in vehicle crashes.

1. Biomedical researchers often conduct studies on men, which means the science of male illness is more advanced than the science of female illness. One example: Doctors don’t know as much about women’s heart attack symptoms as men’s.
2. In thousands of public spaces — theaters, museums, sports arenas and more — women must wait in longer lines to use the bathroom than men. It’s an entirely solvable problem that society simply accepts, to women’s detriment.

“The inequities that women experience — so many of them invisible — are a stark reminder that we do not live in a country that treats women and men equally,” my colleague Francesca Donner writes. She’s part of a team that has published an innovative new series on hidden gender inequities, called “[*7 Issues, 7 Days*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).”

[*Sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and you’ll get a new installment in your inbox every day for the next week. Among the topics: politics, economics, the dinner dishes and the dreaded “tampon tax.”

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, WRESTLE

Make something beautiful

This [*carrot tart with ricotta and feta*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) will instantly brighten up any dining table. It uses frozen puff pastry, so it’s easy to make, and you can swap the carrots for onions, parsnips or zucchini, depending on your preference.

Life after WWE

For more than a decade, Nikki and Brie Bella regularly traveled 300 days a year, wrestling five nights a week for live audiences. The twin sisters were among the first women to star on the main stage of the WWE program “SmackDown,” and helped introduce a more female-focused era of pro wrestling.

But the sisters haven’t exactly slowed down since retiring as champions last year: They’re both pregnant and busy shooting the sixth season of their reality show. (Conveniently, they are also neighbors.) [*Here’s what they had to say*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) about filming a TV show — and going through a pregnancy — while socially isolating.

Revisiting an American icon

The story of Jackie Robinson is legendary. “Robinson is a secular saint,” the author Jon Meacham writes, “revered for his skill and his bravery in making what was known as the noble experiment of desegregating baseball before Brown v. Board of Education, before the Montgomery bus boycott, before the March on Washington, before Selma.”

But the truth, as told in Robinson’s 1972 autobiography “I Never Had It Made,” is far less simple. Meacham calls the memoir “an illuminating meditation on racism not only in the national pastime but in the nation itself.” [*Read the rest of the essay here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Diversions

* A hungry caterpillar munching on ice cream, a smiling sun peeking over the horizon: [*Scroll through the sweet illustrations*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) of the children’s author Eric Carle.

1. The late-night comedy hosts [*watched a weekend interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in which the Fox News host Chris Wallace challenged Trump.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Any letter in “ROY G. BIV” (five letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. The Times’s deputy Politics editor, Rachel Dry, will speak with Jenniffer González-Colón, who represents Puerto Rico in Congress, and other political experts about the voting power of women a century after the suffrage movement, [*today at 4 p.m. Eastern*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about the rush to develop a coronavirus vaccine. “[*Popcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” remembers Ennio Morricone, the innovative and irreverent composer of film scores who died this month.

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Demonstrators in Portland Monday night. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Caitlin Ochs/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**Body**

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Paula Campbell's house in the Orange Mound neighborhood of Memphis has a brick facade and neatly trimmed evergreens near the door. From the front yard, she can see across the street to her sister's house, her daughter's house and the little blue cottage her grandparents built more than 70 years ago. Campbell, who is in her 50s, with placid eyes and hair she often pulls into a ponytail, grew up on the block and moved away as a young woman. Although Orange Mound has changed in many ways since her youth, this stretch of Cable Avenue has always felt like home, and so 10 years ago she returned for good.

One dreary afternoon, Campbell walked around the corner of her garage, her cardigan hitched above her head against the rain, and gazed at the empty house next door. Mildew flecked the white sideboards and sagging carport; broken lawn furniture littered the yard, and a stray cat slunk through the weeds before disappearing beneath a tilting shed. Campbell and her husband, James, have twice tried to buy the decaying property -- a house she lived in as a child -- so they could clean it up. But they couldn't persuade the absentee owner to sell. ''I've taken pictures of it and sent it to code enforcement,'' she said. She sighed and shook her head. ''I'll just keep doing it, keep taking pictures.''

The house next door is a symptom of a far bigger problem affecting Campbell and other homeowners in Orange Mound -- one of the country's oldest and most storied Black neighborhoods, a community where generations built homes and bet big on the American promise that homeownership would build prosperity. Despite a prime location near gentrifying midtown neighborhoods and the University of Memphis campus, Orange Mound's property values plummeted by 30 percent from 2009 to 2019.

Campbell's house, for example, is 4,000 square feet, with curved interior doorways and 12-foot ceilings. She and James finished building it in 2017. They paid about $300,000 in cash, drawing in part on the retirement savings she earned during her 25 years working as a lieutenant for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office. But it's assessed at only $150,000.

Campbell said that if you took her house ''and dumped it in Germantown or Cordova or Central Gardens,'' which are predominantly white neighborhoods and suburbs, it would be worth twice as much. Campbell didn't build to get rich; she wanted to retire in the community that had nurtured her and her siblings into adulthood. Even so, the numbers rankled. ''I am concerned about the property value, I am concerned,'' she said. ''Not just for us, but for everybody that wants to be here.''

In Memphis, as in America, the benefits of homeownership have not accrued equally across race. United States housing policy has leaned heavily on homeownership as a driver of household wealth since the middle of the last century, and, for many white Americans, property ownership has indeed yielded significant wealth. But Black families have largely been left behind, either unable to buy in the first place or hampered by risks that come with owning property. Homeownership's limitations are especially apparent in Black neighborhoods.

Owner-occupied homes in predominantly African American neighborhoods are worth, on average, half as much as those in neighborhoods with no Black residents, according to a 2018 Brookings Institution and Gallup report that examined metropolitan areas. From 1980 to 2015, homes in white neighborhoods appreciated at twice the rate of those in communities of color, according to another recent study. And these discrepancies cannot fully be explained by objective differences, such as crime rate, poverty levels and neighborhood amenities, according to Andre M. Perry, who co-wrote the Brookings study and wrote a book on the subject, ''Know Your Price: Valuing Black Lives and Property in America's Black Cities.''

Too often, Perry said, we ignore policy choices and patterns of disinvestment, placing the blame for a neighborhood's conditions on the people who live there. ''Black people are not broken, our homes are not broken, but they are devalued,'' Perry says. ''If we can change the narrative that the condition of Black homes is the result of individual decisions, then we can actually get to policy to solve problems.''

For neighborhoods like Orange Mound, the solutions cannot come fast enough. The decline has been crushing for local residents, many of whom struggle to sell homes or borrow against them for critical repairs. Orange Mound has an enviable location near downtown, a rich history and a fierce communal identity. It created strong institutions in its churches and schools. ***Working-class*** strivers, including Campbell's grandparents, raised families and bought homes, viewing property as a path toward equality. So why isn't Orange Mound thriving? Why isn't more than 130 years of homeownership enough?

Before it became a Black neighborhood, Orange Mound was a plantation that grew rich from the labor of enslaved people. Beginning in 1825, John George Deaderick Sr. bought 5,000-odd acres of land just outside Memphis, started farming and built a lavish colonial house. He died shortly after arriving in the region, but his wife and sons continued to manage the land, and they kept buying human beings until the end of the Civil War. Afterward, in 1889, one of Deaderick's heirs sold portions of the property to a white developer named Elzey Eugene Meacham, who in turn made the improbable decision to sell plots to Black people.

That's how Orange Mound, which took its name from the osage orange bushes that grew on its eastern edge, became the first subdivision in the country designed specifically for Black buyers, who hurried to put 50 cents down on $40 lots. When Meacham conceived of Orange Mound, the rural South's formerly enslaved citizens and their children were flocking to cities in search of work. Some newcomers had already settled in the vicinity, and Meacham may have sensed an untapped and ready-made market. Orange Mound had the advantage of being both proximate to Memphis and remote enough -- not yet within the city limits -- to offer refuge from the racial terror roiling many downtowns. Migrants most likely knew about what happened in 1866, when white police officers and regular Memphians attacked a Black neighborhood, burning churches and schools, raping women and killing at least 46 people.

Amid such brutality, Orange Mound emerged as a quietly radical alternative. It gave newly freed Americans and their descendants the chance to own land and build homes, a middle-class rite that was unreachable for a majority of Black Americans at the time. Owning land, as the Princeton scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor has observed, was synonymous with claiming full American citizenship. The first civil rights bill, passed in 1866, made the right to buy and possess property integral to the definition of freedom. The period from 1870 to 1910, which encompassed Orange Mound's founding, coincided with one of the biggest jumps in Black homeownership rates in United States history.

Hazell Glover Jones's parents, who moved from Alabama to Memphis sometime around 1919, were among those who saw the neighborhood as a pathway toward a better life. Her father worked in an ice-cream factory, and her mother was a homemaker. They settled in North Memphis upon arrival, but one day Jones's mother spotted a new, two-bedroom house being constructed on Park Avenue, Orange Mound's central retail corridor. The Glovers bought that house, where Hazell was born in 1945.

''We had a garden, a pear tree, an apple tree in the back yard,'' Glover Jones, 76, recalls. ''I always told people I thought I was rich because we just had so much food.'' She ventured into greater Memphis on occasion, shopping in downtown department stores where she wasn't allowed to try on clothes, or visiting the zoo on Thursdays, the only day it opened to Black people. But she didn't need much in the exclusionary white world because Orange Mound was its own universe: There was a baseball team, the Orange Mound Sluggers; the beloved high school, Melrose; and nightclubs to rival Beale Street, like the W.C. Handy Theater, where Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan and B.B. King performed. ''We were just self-sufficient,'' Glover Jones says. ''We stayed in our own little bubble.''

Today the laws that permitted businesses to ban Glover Jones from their dressing rooms are gone, and yet most Americans still live in neighborhoods primarily composed of people who look like themselves. African Americans, in particular, are likely to live in extremely segregated neighborhoods like Orange Mound, the stubborn legacy of 20th-century policies designed to concentrate Black Americans in certain spaces and exclude them from others. In 1933, the Roosevelt administration created the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (H.O.L.C.) to aid a nation reeling from the Great Depression, and the New Deal poured billions into bailing out banks and homeowners. But Black homeowners were excluded from much of that largess. Instead of seeing Orange Mound as a place ripe for recovery, the H.O.L.C. viewed it and many other Black neighborhoods as lost causes, labeling them as ''hazardous'' on maps that lenders used to make decisions about where and how to risk their money. This now notorious practice of redlining institutionalized discrimination in the housing market, promoted residential segregation and diverted capital from Black neighborhoods.

As Richard Rothstein detailed in ''The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America,'' enforcing segregation became a nationwide project, as commonplace and as poisonous in the Northeast and West as in the former Confederate states. Local, state and federal policies during much of the 20th century included exclusionary zoning laws, race-based deed restrictions, discriminatory rules governing the construction and occupancy of public housing and, perhaps most infamous, race-based lending.

In just one example, the Federal Housing Administration, which in 1934 began insuring mortgages with the intent of helping the middle class afford homes, was so committed to segregation that it withheld mortgage insurance from both Black buyers who might wish to live in an integrated neighborhood and white buyers who planned to rent to African Americans. Rothstein recounts a 1958 case in which a white homeowner in Berkeley, Calif., rented to a Black tenant, only to find himself under investigation by the F.B.I. and permanently barred from receiving another F.H.A.-backed mortgage.

The Fair Housing Act outlawed discriminatory lending in 1968, and the public and private forces maintaining the racial status quo in residential housing became subtler, if not less effective. One such example, from the early 1980s, comes from Memphis itself. The city had closed the northern end of a street that led from a Black neighborhood into a white one, citing a desire to increase safety and reduce ''undesirable traffic.'' Black residents and civic organizations sued, and the case went to the Supreme Court, which reversed a lower court's finding and upheld the city's right to close the street. Thurgood Marshall, the only African American justice at the time, dissented, objecting to the city's coded language, the closure's disproportionate impact on Black residents and the real financial harm that might come to Black property owners.

Marshall saw what the white majority on the court could not: that a so-called ''inconvenience'' was actually a racial penalty with the power to perpetuate segregation and seed lasting psychological and economic disadvantage. What's apparent 40 years later, in Orange Mound and elsewhere, is the crystallization of that disadvantage.

One day Paula Campbell drove me to see a different Memphis neighborhood, one on a very different trajectory from Orange Mound's. Binghampton, to the north, sits beyond the grand historic homes of Central Gardens and near the crown jewel of Overton Park. Like Orange Mound, Binghampton has struggled with poverty, abandoned homes and the ravages of disinvestment. The neighborhood is also majority Black, as is the city of Memphis, although it is far more integrated than Orange Mound, which is more than 90 percent Black; Binghampton, by contrast, is roughly 66 percent Black.

Campbell drove her white pickup past East High School, a baroque masterpiece built for whites during segregation, and soon began to point out some of the repurposed buildings that marked Binghampton's revival. One housed a craft brewery; another had been converted into an ax-throwing gym; a third housed a bar with an arcade and board games. At a strip of tidy storefronts on Broad Avenue, she slowed. ''That's the restaurant,'' she said, pointing at a building trimmed in pink neon where she ate earlier. ''And it's real small and just cozy, you see? You see?'' She crept forward, shaking her head at a coffee shop, a ramen restaurant, a high-end lighting store, gleaming bike lanes. ''You see there, how they're improving?'' she asked. ''We have no signs of improvement.''

Campbell paused outside a storefront with a dark roofline and red awning. ''Look, Broadway Pizza has been there for years, for years,'' she said. ''And they built around it. It just -- it makes me mad. It just really makes me mad. Just look at this, look at the clothing stores. Just a whole row.'' Campbell grew quiet. She turned left across a crosswalk, past a curving bus-stop shelter that doubled as public art. She noticed a wedge of land stretching before her, its reddish soil leveled and covered with stacks of concrete blocks. ''Look at that over there,'' she said softly, as she steered south toward home. ''It's going to be houses.''

The pendulum swung in Binghampton, says Noah Gray, the executive director of the Binghampton Development Corporation, most visibly in the past decade, transitioning from a neighborhood that no one considered a good investment to a place that developers look to eagerly. Homes now sell for as much as $400,000, well above the median home price for the city. Investment has begotten investment and driven philanthropic interest, with Gray's organization poised to help build a $54 million, 219-unit affordable-housing complex. There's commercial activity, residential construction and nonprofit organizations serving youth and working adults.

Progress has nonetheless come with some predictable downsides. Home prices have risen, and long-term residents have faced the prospect of being priced out of both the purchasing and rental markets. As the Memphis daily newspaper, The Commercial Appeal, has reported, Broad Avenue, the centerpiece of the neighborhood's rising fortunes, strikes some residents as ''too white'' and ''not for me.'' Binghampton's celebrated diversity -- the neighborhood has a significant immigrant population -- might already be on the wane. The census block immediately south of Broad is now nearly evenly split between Black and white residents.

But Campbell isn't the only person to view Binghampton's recovery as a potential blueprint. Melvin Burgess, the Shelby County property assessor, whose jurisdiction includes Memphis and the suburbs, is in the early stages of trying to initiate a similar economic recovery for Orange Mound. Burgess, who has a boyish face and gray at his temples, is the son of Memphis's first African American police chief and remembers when Memphis was flush with flourishing Black neighborhoods. About two years ago, he asked his staff to run some numbers on property values. Because Burgess's wife grew up in Orange Mound, he knew the neighborhood's homeowners were most likely in trouble. But the degree of wealth being lost still shocked him.

''It's a no-win situation,'' Burgess said. ''You know and I know that with your home, if you have no equity to borrow against, to send your kids to college, to do some things around the house, or just to have extra cash -- especially in the Black community -- that's the only asset you have, that's the only asset you have to let you be economically stable.''

In April 2020, I joined one of his redevelopment meetings on Zoom. Burgess's task force included politicians, government staff members, nonprofit representatives, business leader and academics. Henry Turley, a powerful developer known for reviving Memphis's downtown, appeared in one rectangle, seated in front of a wall painted with leafy designs. In another, Mark Sunderman, a University of Memphis business and economics professor, peered into his camera from behind glasses and a bushy white beard.

Sunderman talked about creating an inventory of housing stock so that the task force could determine how best to market the neighborhood and meet its varying needs. The average Orange Mound home was 70 years old. Some homes had been abandoned or foreclosed on; others had fallen into disrepair in the hands of multiple heirs who either couldn't afford to make repairs or who were hindered by estate problems. The neighborhood varies at a microlevel, he noted. The ghosts of torn-down houses -- crumbling driveways, concrete steps to nowhere -- dominate some blocks, while other streets still brim with life, full of orderly lawns and basketball hoops where kids play in the afternoons.

Turley, who spoke with a gravelly Southern accent, asked Sunderman if he could calculate the cost of doing nothing in Orange Mound. Turley wanted the professor to quantify not only the lost tax revenues that come with depressed property values but also societal costs, such as unemployment and the price of imprisoning people who commit crime in the area. ''You've got to prove to others that reinvesting in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods is worthwhile,'' he said.

Turley's sense that the task force would struggle to attract investors is well supported. Burgess often talks about the invisible ''economic wall'' that seems to surround and constrain Orange Mound, isolating it from market-driven upswings in adjacent communities. Racial demographics play a significant role in influencing where money is invested across America, according to the Urban Institute. One study in Chicago, for instance, showed that white neighborhoods received 4.6 times as much market investment per household as majority Black neighborhoods. Even when researchers adjust for income levels, the pattern doesn't shift: Capital flows away from communities of color.

People in Orange Mound often describe the neighborhood as a victim of its own success: Integration allowed the well-educated and ambitious children of the civil rights generation to move where they pleased, and the neighborhood hollowed out as the upwardly mobile voluntarily exchanged city life for the suburbs. But it might be more accurate to say that the suburbs were chosen for them. In Memphis, as in much of America, the city's geography is a physical manifestation of racial injustice.

In the early 1970s, when federal courts forced city schools to integrate, white Memphians fled to private schools and suburbs at astonishing speeds. By the fall of 1973 alone, one-quarter to one-third of white students had left city schools. One elementary school's demographics flipped almost entirely in the span of six short years: from 98 percent white to 100 percent African American. White flight is often understood as a psychological phenomenon driven entirely by individual racial fears. But that interpretation minimizes government's complicity in catering to racial anxieties.

As Martavius Jones, a Memphis city councilman, points out, construction outside the city limits was heavily subsidized by city-owned Memphis Light, Gas & Water, which provided new power and gas lines to areas that didn't pay city taxes, generously underwriting the eastward march of wealthy whites fleeing integrated schools. ''My maternal grandmother lived in a little old house on Josephine Street,'' Jones says, referring to an Orange Mound address. ''I think about all the little old ladies and little old men who constantly paid their taxes, and those taxes went to build up the infrastructure outside the city limits of Memphis.''

Americans aren't accustomed to thinking of utilities and other public assets as drivers of residential segregation and inequality, says Louise Seamster, a University of Iowa sociologist who studies racial politics, but these obscure entities and small decisions can play a major role in the distribution of wealth and power across metropolitan regions. ''So many of the rules for development were built around a certain model that implies the creation of a white suburban space and on building through debt, based on this promise of future growth,'' she says. ''Being an already existing Black community doesn't fit that model.''

In the decades following school integration, Memphis became increasingly Black but remained under largely white political control. In the late 1980s and early '90s, Shep Wilbun served as one of three Black City Council members out of 13, and he recalls his sense that the city didn't provide services to Black neighborhoods in the same way that it did for white ones. ''The streets were not being paved, lights were not being kept on,'' Wilbun says. ''The garbage was being picked up, but not in the same way. When garbage was picked up in some neighborhoods, they carried a broom to sweep behind the truck. In Black neighborhoods, they did not.''

Memphis chased its swelling suburbs, approving annexation after annexation. A result is an exceptionally low-density city, with a population similar to that of Detroit -- itself famous for sprawling -- only spread over an area nearly twice as big. The most recent census showed a population decline, creating a context in which it's almost inevitable that some neighborhoods, like Binghampton, will win the economic lottery, while others will lose. With so much available space for so few people, there's scant incentive for private developers or home buyers to take bets on ailing communities.

Memphis's history mirrors a national approach to Black city neighborhoods that the Princeton sociologist Patrick Sharkey describes as a pattern of ''abandonment and punishment'' in which federal policy shifted resources away from people and neighborhoods and into the criminal-justice system. That has been our national approach to urban inequality, Sharkey says, for the past half-century.

Homeownership alone simply isn't sufficient to insulate Black families or communities from these longstanding political and historical forces. ''It's not just about homeownership,'' Sharkey says. ''Communities that could be stable and thriving places to live have not received the basic investments that are taken for granted in most towns and cities across the country. And when a community doesn't receive basic investments, then it becomes vulnerable.'' Indeed, homeownership cannot only fail to deliver wealth; it can bind people to declining neighborhoods, turning the asset that most of us see as the key to financial security into an anchor that limits mobility and ties individual fates more deeply to those of neighborhoods.

In the waning weeks of winter, just before the pandemic began, I pulled up outside a brick house two blocks south of Campbell's home on Cable Avenue, not far from Beulah Baptist Church, an Orange Mound institution known for supporting civil rights activism in the 1960s. The house was occupied by Karita McCulley, who appreciated its wooden floors and the fact that her youngest children, Keirra, who was 18, and Kaylob, who was 10, had their own rooms. Kaylob was doing homework, and McCulley had wrapped her slender figure in a long brown cardigan. Her 4-year-old granddaughter -- the child of an older daughter -- tugged at her sweater sleeve and waved a box of candy. ''The eyes get me,'' McCulley said, opening the box and reluctantly surrendering four sweet-and-sours. ''And she knows it.''

McCulley, who is in her 40s, belongs to the first generation born after the civil rights movement, a group of African Americans who should have benefited tremendously from the opportunity gains of the 1960s. But despite the freedoms of the post-civil-rights era, her generation has experienced relatively little economic mobility.

McCulley arrived in Orange Mound for the first time as a teenager, trailing her mother, a warehouse worker and former Job Corps instructor, who came to the neighborhood for the same reason as those before her: the chance to own property. McCulley's mother bought her house in 1997. She planted a garden and grew greens. On warm evenings, the family would start a grill and sit outside, playing dominoes or spades on a card table, sharing food and conversation with neighbors. But the idyll didn't last. Her mother refinanced to make home repairs and signed an adjustable-rate mortgage. When the payments ballooned, the house went into foreclosure. The next buyer lost the house to the bank as well, and the city eventually razed it.

This experience foreshadowed a mid-aughts subprime-lending crisis in which Memphis emerged as a case study in the ways the housing bubble disproportionately affected Black buyers and communities. In 2009, the City of Memphis and Shelby County sued Wells Fargo, accusing the bank of engaging in lending practices that were deceptive, predatory and discriminatory. The suit's accusations included credit managers who marketed subprime loans by targeting predominantly Black ZIP codes, software that the company used to ''translate'' marketing materials into the ''language'' of ''African American'' and loan officers who joked about ''ghetto loans.''

The flood of foreclosures devastated Orange Mound and similar Memphis neighborhoods, the city and county argued, accelerating the abandonment and neglect of properties -- and leaving a costly mess for homeowners and local government. Wells Fargo reached a settlement that included a payment of $3 million to the city and county, $4.5 million in housing-related grants and a pledge of $425 million more in loans to residents of Memphis and Shelby County. Regulators would later settle with another bank, BancorpSouth, for its dealings in Memphis, alleging the company engaged in modern-day redlining.

The mortgage crisis did more than change the way Orange Mound looked; it robbed it of wealth and of people who felt a sense of ownership over the neighborhood. Researchers at the University of Chicago calculated that in 1990, not long before McCulley first settled in Orange Mound, the neighborhood's rate of homeownership was 53 percent, which may sound modest but is higher than national rates of Black homeownership today. It has now fallen to about 42 percent, according to the assessor's office.

McCulley was among the renters, although she longed to buy the house that she and her family leased. She saw homeownership as a potential bulwark against crises like the one she suffered when her husband died of cancer in 2012, leaving her with a single income and $40,000 in medical debt. The house that McCulley and her husband had been living in, in another Memphis neighborhood, was suddenly too expensive. She briefly relied on food stamps and felt so ashamed that she forbade her children to tell anyone. She became profoundly depressed. She didn't want to work anymore; she didn't feel like doing anything.

But McCulley did work. She got a job as a home health aide, sometimes spending 16 hours a day with her elderly charge. She moved to Orange Mound and started over. Not long after settling into a rental, she was mowing the lawn when a man stopped and insisted on doing it for her. ''Nowhere else in Memphis is somebody going to walk past your house and help you cut your grass,'' she said. ''And for me, that was a big thing.'' People remembered her from her teenage years and would call out to her in passing: ''Hey Miss Karita, how you doing? How's your mama doing?''

McCulley methodically paid down her debt. She also realized that she had a talent for working with the elderly. She liked their wisdom, and she liked helping people. She became a certified nursing assistant and found a job in a hospital, where she worked nights and monitored her kids in the day, attending softball games and majorette performances and remaining active in their education. ''I'm on the P.T.O.,'' she said. ''I'm a Shelby County Schools parent ambassador. I do a lot of things that people don't want to do -- meetings.''

Although the median home price in Orange Mound is around $30,000, ownership remains out of reach for many of the neighborhood's working poor. McCulley had about $8,000 in savings, earned $34,000 a year and received her late husband's Social Security payments; the family was comfortable enough that her children's friends sometimes thought they were rich. But McCulley said she couldn't qualify for a $27,000 mortgage. Her credit wasn't bad, merely insufficient. ''I was raised by a woman, my grandmother, who raised us that you buy it,'' McCulley said. ''You don't rent it, you don't pay a note on it, you buy it.'' She had used only one credit card in her life, and she closed that about a decade ago. Her home health care job paid in cash, and she preferred to pay bills in full.

Yet McCulley had bought the gray sectional on which she sat using a line of credit, a decision made on the advice of a credit counselor. ''I don't have -- what's it called? -- that magic number,'' she said. ''I'm trying to get to 650.'' She was tired of landlord hassles, of begging for repairs or paying for them herself to save the energy.

She rose from the sofa and walked to the dining area, resting her hand atop a bookcase. She'd been acquiring things for the house that she thought might become permanent: a farm-style dining table, a blue M in swooping script for the front door. She salvaged the shelves beneath her palm from a curb, then sanded and refinished them herself. On the wall above, she affixed an adage about second chances.

A little more than two years after Burgess announced his plans for Orange Mound, he had other pressing matters on his mind as assessor, including trying to figure out how to ease the burden on Shelby County homeowners who were facing property-tax increases from a surging real estate market. But he remained optimistic about Orange Mound. ''My goal is to keep doing the work and to have a plan that we can take all over the country to revive these inner-city neighborhoods,'' he said last month, as he drove back from Nashville, where he was working with state legislators on securing funds for the task force. He already helped get a moratorium passed by the Shelby County Board of Supervisors on the sale of county-owned property, a measure designed to prevent investors from buying land while it was cheap, betting on Burgess's eventual success and then pricing residents out. He was also in talks with law-enforcement officials about crime reduction and was courting local entrepreneurs to do business in the neighborhood.

His task force is now officially a neighborhood development corporation, an entity defined under Tennessee state law that is led by community members and nonprofit groups rather than by the assessor's staff. They've drafted a redevelopment plan and connected existing nonprofits, and are pursuing tax incentives designed to attract investors. But residents are impatient, and almost nothing he does comes without criticism. ''The people from the community, they want to see stuff work right away,'' Burgess said. ''It's a heavy lift because you've got so many hurdles.'' In five years, he said, they'll see more commercial activity on the main drags.

And yet his goal has grown even more complicated as the pandemic gives way to an economic resurgence. Home values increased somewhat in the last year in Orange Mound, pushing the poorest families further from owning. What's even more problematic, according to Burgess's staff, is an influx of out-of-state investors who buy single-family homes and put them on the rental market at inflated prices, driving homelessness and creating profits for companies with no attachment to the neighborhood.

The Binghampton comparison helps illustrate just how difficult a goal Burgess had set for the neighborhood. Binghampton's revival struck Campbell as new, but in fact, grass-roots activists had planted the seeds for change as early as 1986, creating a groundswell of interest that would later leverage private dollars, charitable giving and public tax incentives.

If Burgess's task force can succeed in the same fashion, it would represent an overdue triumph but one that's unlikely to be widely replicable without sweeping federal policies aimed at racial and economic inequality. In Memphis, for example, according to a report by the Urban Institute, 20 percent of Black residents live in metropolitan neighborhoods where more than a third of the population is poor, while only about 2 percent of white Memphians do. Brett Theodos, a senior fellow with the Urban Institute, said that improving the fortunes for all neighborhoods of color, rather than just a handful, will require a tenfold increase in municipal, state and federal commitments. ''Otherwise, we're going to keep putting $10 million into a place, which will feel heroic and will feel like a lot, and it won't fundamentally change that place,'' he said. ''Or maybe we will improve this place over here, but meanwhile three other neighborhoods are declining because we're ignoring them.'' Orange Mound, he said, probably needs $1 billion over several decades to transform into the vital place it once was.

Perry, the co-author of the Brookings report, said that equitable redevelopment -- the type that brings economic gains and rising home values without displacing existing residents, especially renters -- requires investing not only in buildings but in people. These neighborhoods need microloans for current homeowners and down-payment assistance for would-be buyers. ''What we should really be talking about is how to get capital into the hands of potential homeowners, business owners, tax credits to current homeowners,'' he said. Many traditional redevelopment policies provide tax benefits to the rich, he said, without addressing historical and present-day biases that inhibit the health and growth of Black people and their communities.

Paula Campbell, for her part, keeps pushing. She has been lobbying the city to install video cameras to catch the illegal dumpers who drown Orange Mound's streets in garbage and used tires; she organizes crews of volunteers who don gloves and bag the trash themselves, even though it reappears at such a pace that she's sometimes discouraged. She is working part time for her niece, who runs a home health care agency but plans to quit by year's end and dedicate more of her time to activism and service. ''I know I can do more,'' she said. ''I need to do more.''

Last month, on an unusually warm Saturday, she took her granddaughters to a festival in Orange Mound Park. There were snow-cone and jewelry vendors, three-on-three basketball games, a free concert. Old friends drifted past. Campbell spotted one of the organizers and flashed her a thumbs-up. The crowd swelled to about 120 people; everyone seemed to be laughing or dancing, and wherever Campbell looked, she was reminded of what Orange Mound is worth.

Vanessa Gregory is a writer based in Oxford, Miss. Her last article for the magazine examined the 1935 lynching of a sharecropper and the ways that crime echoed in the lives of his children and grandchildren. She is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Mississippi and was a 2015 Mississippi Arts Commission fellow. Gioncarlo Valentine is a photographer and a writer whose work focuses on issues faced by marginalized populations, especially the experiences of Black and L.G.B.T.Q. communities.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/18/magazine/real-estate-memphis-black-neighborhoods.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/18/magazine/real-estate-memphis-black-neighborhoods.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Right: Paula Campbell outside her home in the Orange Mound neighborhood of Memphis. Opening pages: Homes and businesses in Orange Mound. (MM41)

Left: Melvin Burgess, the Shelby County property assessor, is seeking ways to attract investors to communities under duress. Above: A commercial strip in Binghampton, a thriving neighborhood in Memphis that is majority Black. (MM42

MM43)

Hazell Glover Jones outside her home in Orange Mound. Her parents moved to Memphis from Alabama around 1919. ''We were just self-sufficient,'' she said. ''We stayed in our own little bubble.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIONCARLO VALENTINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM44-MM45)

**Load-Date:** November 21, 2021

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[***In Kalamazoo, Old High School Classmates Reckon With a Divided Country***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6134-36F1-DXY4-X4TJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The Michigan city, like the state, is a battleground of cultural and racial tensions. I should know: I grew up there.

**Body**

The Michigan city, like the state, is a battleground of cultural and racial tensions. I should know: I grew up there.

From a gauzy distance, Kevin Swift describes his high school years in the 1980s in Kalamazoo, Mich., as a carefree time of basketball games, English classes and beer parties. “We had it great there,” said Mr. Swift, who is Black and grew up in a majority-white neighborhood.

Class divisions seemed far less rigid; the richest kid in town drove a station wagon. Racial tensions were an issue, Mr. Swift said, but he didn’t think they were overwhelming. Most parents didn’t talk politics, or let it divide them. “There was a lot more innocence in the world,” he said.

That was then. In the decades since, Kalamazoo, like the rest of the battleground state of Michigan, has gone through wrenching economic and social changes, driving increased partisanship and hardening the race and class divisions that once seemed malleable, unraveling old friendships and reordering lives in this politically charged era.

Today, southwestern Michigan is a place where Trump and Biden signs festoon lawns in equal number on some blocks, where the governor, Gretchen Whitmer, is such a lightning rod that people wear T-shirts proclaiming their hate or love for her. In 2016, Kalamazoo County was one of the few in Michigan where Hillary Clinton beat Donald J. Trump, yet Representative Fred Upton, a Republican, also prevailed that year, as he had for decades.

Over the summer, there were both Black Lives Matter [*protests*](https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/kalamazoo/news/1575644474761/black-lives-matter-protest-large-crowd-gathers-in-kalamazoo) and a Proud Boys [*rally,*](https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/kalamazoo/news/1575644474761/black-lives-matter-protest-large-crowd-gathers-in-kalamazoo) and the ensuing violence led to the Kalamazoo police chief [*resigning.*](https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/kalamazoo/news/1575644474761/black-lives-matter-protest-large-crowd-gathers-in-kalamazoo) More recently, [*one of the men arrested for plotting*](https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/kalamazoo/news/1575644474761/black-lives-matter-protest-large-crowd-gathers-in-kalamazoo) to kidnap Ms. Whitmer hails from Plainwell, 10 miles to the north.

These cultural and economic shifts are of deep interest to me, and not just because I am a reporter: I grew up with Mr. Swift around those kegs, in a once reliably blue state that helped make Mr. Trump president.

Over phone calls, Zoom chats and text exchanges, some of my former classmates from Loy Norrix High School described the shifting sands — and in some cases their own evolving politics — in our home city, which now seems deeply divided.

Moderate to liberal to deeply conservative, resigned to vote, excited to vote or undecided about their vote, they represent a lot of Americans, but they do not fit into convenient stereotypes. Rather, they illustrate a truism about modern politics: that as partisan as we have become, most Americans’ views are more kaleidoscopic than polychrome, which makes understanding them a complex exercise of listening to them, voice by voice.

Chris Kooi

Chris Kooi is, on paper, the kind of voter who helped Mr. Trump win Michigan in 2016: white, non-college educated, late-Gen Xer, male. In 2003, he moved from Kalamazoo to a rural county 20 miles west, the sort of place where Mr. Trump ran up the numbers.

Like many people, Mr. Kooi, 52 and a sales manager at Spectrum Business, a telecom provider, has grown more conservative with age. Mortgages, college payments for his two daughters and bills affect his political calculus. “I once thought of myself as more liberal, more open minded,” said Mr. Kooi, a 1986 graduate of Loy Norrix. But later when he ran a business, “I realized I probably shouldn’t be.”

And yet he also represents the sort of voter who kept Michigan blue for so long: He voted for both Clintons and Barack Obama (though he also voted for both Bushes).

So where does that put him in 2020? “I’m very confused this election,” he said. He is unnerved by Mr. Trump’s rhetoric, he said, and adds that the president’s economic policies have not particularly benefited his family. “His tax cuts affected me and my family negatively,” he said. “His cookie-cutter program took my ability to itemize my tax returns and in turn cost me money by eliminating write-offs that I had taken previously.”

Nevertheless, he believes the president may be better for the economy. “I don’t know what will happen to the economy here if Biden wins,” he said. “I don’t know if it’ll affect me, the middle class, here.”

Mr. Kooi tunes out the president as much as he can, he said. But he has internalized Mr. Trump’s knocks on Mr. Biden’s acuity. “What scares me about Biden,” Mr. Kooi said, “is I think he’s starting to lose it a little bit.”

Mr. Kooi said he thinks the president is a racist, and that Mr. Trump’s views are part of a general deterioration of tolerance that seems to have spread across the nation since Mr. Kooi’s high school years.

“It seems to me like the races are keeping to themselves,” said Mr. Kooi, who now lives in Paw Paw, a mostly white suburb. “We are segregated as a community and that is all of our faults.” His boss is Black, and he gets along with his Black co-workers but added with resignation, “I can probably safely say that within my circle, I don’t have any Black friends.”

Kevin Swift

The years right after high school were difficult for Mr. Swift, and he struggled to find a career. In the past, he, like some of the parents of our high school friends, might have found work with General Motors, which had a plant in Kalamazoo. But the company shut it down in 1999, part of a statewide decline in good-paying blue-collar jobs. Eventually, he moved to Lansing to take a job at a G.M. plant there.

Along the way, Mr. Swift watched as competition for jobs and tensions over local and national politics soured the region’s more harmonious vibes that he says he felt as a high school student. A growing racial divide even invaded his personal life, leading to tense encounters with one-time white friends.

“I give Trump a lot of credit for one thing,” Mr. Swift, 55, said. “He has shown me more about my friends than I ever knew.”

Turnout among Black voters like Mr. Swift dropped [*12 points*](https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/kalamazoo/news/1575644474761/black-lives-matter-protest-large-crowd-gathers-in-kalamazoo) in Michigan between the 2012 and 2016 elections, and the lack of those voters is believed to have played a central role in Mrs. Clinton’s loss in the state.

Democrats are hoping to re-energize Black voters over issues like police brutality and the Trump administration’s failure to stop the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, which has hit the state’s Black population hard. But Mr. Swift, for one, sees government as part of the problem for ***working-class*** Black people.

“The fight is the government against Blacks, not whites against Blacks,” he said. “Our government in recent years has fined several banks for unfair lending practices, and after fining them $30 million, they did nothing to change the conditions of those loans. Redlining is a government program.”

He is also cynical about the Black Lives Matter movement, which he believes has been overtaken by opportunists trying to make money off activism.

Mr. Swift will vote for Mr. Biden, but without relish. “To me, the Republican and Democratic parties are opposite ends of the same plane that 98 percent of us can’t get on,” he said.

Donna and Rob Keller

Over the past 30 years, the job base in Kalamazoo, a city of roughly 76,000 people, has diversified away from manufacturing into health care and hospitality. The city’s population has diversified as well: As in much of the rest of the Michigan, its Hispanic population [*rose*](https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/kalamazoo/news/1575644474761/black-lives-matter-protest-large-crowd-gathers-in-kalamazoo) over 40 percent in the past decade. And with a growing college-age population, the city of Kalamazoo has grown more liberal, even as the surrounding areas have reddened.

Though crime is high in some neighborhoods, downtown is booming. In 2005, anonymous donors created the Kalamazoo Promise, a college scholarship program for graduates of public high schools, which helped stymie a population drop and the city’s general fortunes. “Kalamazoo is a city that for the most part works,” said Mr. Upton, who represents the area in Congress.

For Donna and Rob Keller, who are both white and graduated from Loy Norrix in 1986, all of these are reasons to stick around: Their twins went to Loy Norrix as well, and they now attend Kalamazoo College.

“Now there’s no reason not to buy a house in Kalamazoo as opposed to Portage or Texas township or somewhere else,” said Mr. Keller, referring to the outlying suburbs.

But economic development did not shore up political comity. “My parents were both pretty strong Democrats,” Ms. Keller recalled, noting that her father was instrumental in getting a Planned Parenthood building rebuilt after it had been destroyed in 1986 by [*arsonists*](https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/kalamazoo/news/1575644474761/black-lives-matter-protest-large-crowd-gathers-in-kalamazoo), and was friendly with local elected Democrats.

“He had Republican friends and they ribbed each other; he absolutely loved to talk to people about politics,” she said, recalling his bipartisan running group that met daily for 20 years.

“This was before it was terribly divisive,” she continued. “When we were little, we had plenty of friends whose parents were Republicans. And I don’t know my kids could come up with any.”

Both Kellers remain stalwart Democrats, but not as far to the left as some friends or their own children.

“There are limitations to my progressive nature,” Mr. Keller said. “We are both centrist Democrats, sort of Bill Clinton Democrats. And that drives our kids crazy.”

Jamie Denison

Jamie Denison, who played in Invasion, a high school cover band, said he was “a youthful progressive but always had a more conservative mind-set than most.” He is all for Mr. Trump.

Mr. Denison, 54, has stayed around to take advantage of the Kalamazoo Promise for his four children. He has grown angered by what he sees as violence by liberal activists and a political orthodoxy that he calls “seething indoctrination.”

At one point, his oldest child’s school had a sanctioned walkout to protest gun violence, which his daughter did not want to participate in, he said. “I never thought Kalamazoo was a seething liberal boiling pot,” Mr. Denison, who is white, said.

Black Lives Matter has unnerved him still more. “I think Black lives matter as much as any other life,” he added. “I don’t agree with the movement because they are a fascist organization. Since the lockdown, a lot of my Black friends from church have gone off on me from Facebook,” in response to his posts, he said. “When we get back to church maybe we will be able to talk about that.”

Mr. Denison, who left his banking job to pursue a career in voice-over work and is a few credits shy of an M.B.A., said the Trump administration had been good for his family’s financial situation, largely because “the optimism he gives us allowed us to change gears and restructure.”

Mr. Trump’s handling of the coronavirus has done nothing to dent his appeal for Mr. Denison, who often repeats some of the conspiracy theories trafficked by some of the president’s followers. “It is tragic that a man-made, intentionally released, politically motivated virus has taken innocent lives,” he said. “It is even more tragic that the same people responsible for creating and releasing it are still trying to use it to win the upcoming election.”

At a recent visit to a more rural area, Mr. Denison said he was happy to see Trump yard signs and flags, which he won’t put in his own yard. “There is no way I would ever hang that at my house,” he said. “I would never want to fight someone for throwing a Molotov cocktail at it.”

Chris Kooi poses with his family, from left, Emma, Tammi, and Chloe. He has grown more conservative with age. ELAINE CROMIE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES Kevin Swift and his family moved to Kalamazoo when he was in elementary school. He said Trump showed him things about his friends he never knew. Jamie Denison with his family, clockwise from left, Ava, Marissa, Oliver, Skyler and Eliza. Mr. Denison is all in for Trump, saying his administration has been good for his family’s financial situation. Loy Norrix High School in Kalamazoo, Mich. Since the author’s graduation, the city has gone through wrenching economic and social changes. Donna Perry Keller and Rob Keller. “We are both centrist Democrats, sort of Bill Clinton Democrats. And that drives our kids crazy,” Mr. Keller said.

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2020

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[***Biden Cut Field in Half, But It's Still a Long List Of Vice President Picks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YG4-JH21-JBG3-60XF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Discussions with 60 Democratic officials found that three former candidates -- Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar -- were their leading choices, followed by Stacey Abrams.

WASHINGTON -- With former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. now holding an all but insurmountable lead over Senator Bernie Sanders in the presidential primary contest, many Democrats have shifted their attention to a favorite quadrennial parlor game: the vice-presidential search.

Mr. Biden has shown his hand in a big and unusual way for a front-runner, saying he would pick a woman as a running mate. That has opened the path for Democratic officials to start picking favorites -- from a socially safe distance.

In discussions with The Times since Mr. Biden's big primary victories on Tuesday, 60 Democratic National Committee members and congressional and party leaders most frequently proposed three former rivals of Mr. Biden as his running mate -- Senator Kamala Harris of California, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. Next up was Stacey Abrams, a former state House leader whose defeat in 2018 Georgia governor's race remains disputed by many in the party.

Other popular suggestions included Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada and Representative Val Demings of Florida. The Democrats interviewed also proposed seven other women, including Govs. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico.

While de facto presidential nominees typically keep their list of potential running mates closely held, Mr. Biden has helped fuel speculation by eagerly rattling off names for months -- nearly all of them women. Even his wife, Jill, offered her take in a private fund-raiser earlier this month, praising Ms. Klobuchar and criticizing Ms. Harris's debate stage attack on her husband last summer.

Mr. Biden, at various points, has suggested he might choose Ms. Abrams, Ms. Klobuchar, Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire or Sally Q. Yates, the former assistant attorney general whom President Trump fired three years ago.

A female vice president would be historic: Only two women -- Representative Geraldine Ferraro of New York in 1984 and Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska in 2008 -- have been nominated, and none have ever served in the White House. That barrier-breaking appeal could give Mr. Biden's candidacy a shot of energy, an acknowledgment of the role women have played in boosting the party during the Trump era.

Prominent Democratic activists, officials and leaders have been vocal with their desires that the ticket include a woman, after the demise of the last major female candidate, Ms. Warren, who ended her campaign two weeks ago.

''I've been predicting a woman on the ticket since 2017 and demanding it since Warren dropped out,'' said Christine Pelosi, a D.N.C. member from San Francisco who is the daughter of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. ''It's really important to have the ability to lead America in the depression we will enter if we don't flatten the curve and find a cure. The best pick is the woman Joe or Bernie trusts the most to be president and commander-in-chief.''

Some of the party's most liberal members and supporters of Mr. Sanders suggested that choosing Ms. Warren, a fellow liberal, would help Mr. Biden appeal to the progressive and young voters who have backed the Vermont senator in the primary. Choosing a moderate like Ms. Klobuchar, they say, would dampen general election enthusiasm.

''Whoever ends up the nominee should pick Senator Warren,'' said Tefere Gebre, a D.N.C. member from Maryland who is executive vice president of the AFL-CIO. ''I would be less enthusiastic if it's the senator from Minnesota.''

Yet, with the coronavirus upending every part of American society, including the presidential campaign, Mr. Biden may be forced to deviate from the standard playbook.

Mr. Biden's running mate pick will be viewed through the lens of a public health and economic crisis, perhaps raising the stock of candidates who have more experience, or pushing him to consider someone from outside of government.

''You could imagine some highly successful person from a different walk of life being considered, and that could expand the list a lot,'' said John Podesta, who as Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman was involved in her vice-presidential search. ''A college president or a medical professional, somebody who would send a pretty powerful signal that what you care about is strength, performance, a commitment to facts and sound decision-making.''

Mr. Biden's campaign said it was beginning to build a team to conduct a ''vigorous vetting process.'' Some close to the campaign say the team is in the early stages of compiling a list of potential running mates and then will vet them. Beyond his own experience as Barack Obama's vice president, Mr. Biden has a deep bench of aides to consult. One of his closest advisers, Ron Klain, helped do vice-presidential vetting for Al Gore in 2000.

Mitt Romney cut his campaign's list of about 80 potential running mates to 20 in early April 2012. By late July, the list had been narrowed to five men, after the one woman under serious consideration, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, declined the campaign's invitation to be vetted. (Mr. Romney eventually chose Representative Paul Ryan.)

Donald Trump's 2016 vetting process was less streamlined, but among those he interviewed during his search was Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa.

Mrs. Clinton started with a list of 40 possible candidates, which was narrowed to nine who underwent a process of serious vetting, an interview and a campaign appearance with the candidate. While she considered a number of women to be vice president, only Ms. Warren advanced to the final stages of the process.

For Mr. Biden, 77, a much younger woman could assuage concerns about his age and critiques about a primary process that started with the most diverse field in history and ended with two white men.

Mr. Biden's campaign hopes the early announcement that he would select a woman will give his operation a shot of enthusiasm from voters, even as the presidential election heads into a deep freeze because of the coronavirus. On Thursday, his campaign sent a fund-raising appeal asking supporters to ''commit to standing with'' Mr. Biden and his future female running mate.

By announcing he will pick a woman, Mr. Biden is aiming to give his ticket a modern-day balance in a party focused on issues of racial and gender representation. Past nominees have chosen running mates who provided geographic diversity (Lloyd Bentsen in 1988) or offered the promise of winning a key state (Mr. Ryan, from Wisconsin, in 2012). Mr. Obama, just four years into his Senate term, chose Mr. Biden in 2008 to ease concerns about his own relative lack of experience and help appeal to white ***working-class*** voters.

Choosing Ms. Harris, 55, would not only provide not a gender balance but also would add a black woman to the ticket after black voters helped revive Mr. Biden's campaign in February. But as Jill Biden's recent criticism indicated, the memory of Ms. Harris's debate stage attack may hinder her chances.

''I have to tell you that I'm a little torn in terms of my choices,'' said Alma Gonzalez, a D.N.C. member from Florida. ''If it were me and if I was Joe Biden, I would say to Senator Harris, 'Do you want to be on the Supreme Court or be my vice president?'''

Presidential candidates rarely place public restrictions on their pick, preferring to keep options open so they can pivot their selection to suit the shifting dynamics of the campaign. Veterans of past vice-presidential searches said the most important elements have been how comfortable the nominees are with their would-be partners.

And while past campaigns spent months vetting candidates and agonizing over running-mate strategy, there's very little academic research suggesting that the vice-presidential pick has a huge impact on winning the general election.

''The first and most important criteria is, can this person help you win in November and will they at least not hurt you in November,'' said Mr. Podesta.

For Mrs. Clinton, that meant ruling out candidates from states with Republican governors, like Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio. If she won, her team feared that Mr. Brown could be replaced in the Senate by a Republican and shift the balance of the chamber away from her future administration.

Unlike any nominee since Mr. Gore, Mr. Biden has a unique view into the selection process, having gone through it himself. While Mr. Obama started with a list of 20 candidates, he faced pressure to select Mrs. Clinton as his running mate and create a ''unity ticket.'' After Mr. Obama rejected that idea, the choice came down to a ''coin toss'' between Mr. Biden and Senator Evan Bayh of Indiana. Mr. Biden was more energetic and enthusiastic in his interview, according to aides.

In an interview earlier this month, Mr. Biden cited his close relationship with Mr. Obama as a model for his selection process, saying the president was able to trust him with key pieces of his agenda.

''For me, the most important thing in choosing a vice president is whether or not the person is simpatico with me in terms of where I want to take the country,'' he said. ''It's really important that the next president is able to do what Barack was able to do with me.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Some of Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s former Democratic rivals are now among those in the mix to be his running mate, including Senator Kamala Harris of California, top, and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ALYSSA SCHUKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***2020 and the Climate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CH-15X1-DXY4-X3DJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

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**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. New virus cases keep surging. Georgia’s governor sued Atlanta’s mayor to block a mask requirement. And the politics of climate change appear to shifting.

Climate change has been a tricky political issue for the Democratic Party for a long time. The party doesn’t seem to have won over many swing voters in recent years with its promise to slow global warming. Instead, some ***working-class*** voters — worried about higher energy costs or losing fossil-fuel jobs — [*have flipped to the Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

The clearest sign of the difficulties came early in Barack Obama’s presidency. On other issues — health care, economic stimulus and Wall Street reform — congressional Democrats stayed largely united. On climate policy, they did not.

But the politics of climate may be shifting.

Gallup’s polls have shown [*a gradually rising share of Americans*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) concerned about the environment since the early 2000s. Roughly 60 percent now say that the quality of the environment is poor or only fair; that it is getting worse; and that the federal government is doing too little to protect it. And more than 70 percent favor tougher restrictions for power plants and vehicle emissions, as well as a push to develop clean-energy alternatives, [*according to Pew*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

This week, President Trump and Joe Biden have [*staked out dueling positions on the climate*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Biden proposed a $2 trillion plan to attack climate change. Trump has continued weakening environmental rules and said Biden’s plan would “kill our energy totally” and force 25 percent of U.S. companies to close.

In past campaigns, this contrast would have made some Democrats nervous, especially during an economic downturn. Today, though, party leaders increasingly believe that the climate is politically helpful to them. John Podesta, the longtime Democratic official, told me he thought Trump was walking into a trap by continuing to highlight the issue.

A coalition of progressive groups [*released a poll yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that asked if people supported “spending trillions of dollars to invest in clean energy infrastructure.” About 55 percent of voters said yes. Even larger majorities of Hispanic and younger voters said so — and Podesta said he thought that emphasizing climate issues could lift turnout among those groups (which is below average).

There is still one big political risk for Democrats on the issue: the possibility that addressing climate change will raise energy costs. But the party [*seems to have learned some lessons there*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

While Democrats in the past have emphasized measures to increase the cost of dirty energy — like a cap-and-trade system — Biden is not. He is instead largely ignoring the potential cost increases and focusing on more popular consequences, like cleaner air and an increase in green-energy jobs.

Related: In the Book Review, [*the economist Joseph Stiglitz writes about a new book by Bjorn Lomborg*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a Danish writer who has long argued that environmental activists are exaggerating the risks of climate change.

And the Times columnist David Brooks [*imagines Biden’s first day as president*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

THREE MORE BIG STORIES

1. Cutting corners in the vaccine race

As countries race to develop the first coronavirus vaccine, Russia is trying to [*steal research*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) from medical groups in Britain, Canada and the United States, the three countries said yesterday.

U.S. officials blamed Cozy Bear, a hacker group that has ties to Russian intelligence and that apparently broke into Democratic Party servers before the 2016 election.

In other virus developments:

* The U.S. shattered its single-day record for new cases on Thursday, [*with more than 75,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

1. Gov. Brian Kemp of Georgia [*filed a lawsuit*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to block the mayor of Atlanta from requiring masks inside city limits.
2. While public schools announce plans to start the fall with online classes, many private schools — which often have more flexibility and more money — [*are opening*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

2. A trial balloon for reparations

The protests over George Floyd’s killing have rekindled a national conversation over what America owes its Black citizens. In Asheville, N.C., a unanimous City Council vote this week provided one answer: [*reparations*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Asheville will fund programs aimed at increasing homeownership, providing career opportunities and building wealth for Black residents, though the city stopped short of offering direct payments. Other places — including Providence, R.I., and the state of California — have also recently signaled an openness to reparations.

3. Iraq’s toxic twilight

In Iraq, flaring — the process of burning away the natural gas that bubbles up from oil wells — [*bears a devastating cost*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). In addition to polluting the environment, the practice is making people sick across the country’s south. “Imagine that in the town you come from every family has someone who has cancer,” a resident of one village said. “This is the situation.”

It’s also a wasted resource — the burned gas is enough to power 3 million homes in a country that faces chronic power shortages.

Here’s what else is happening

* Both parties are limiting their presidential nominating conventions next month because of the pandemic. Democratic officials are instructing members of Congress and delegates [*not to attend the Milwaukee event in person*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and Republicans are [*limiting in-person attendance*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) at their convention in Jacksonville, Fla.

1. Fifteen women who worked for the Washington Redskins [*told The Washington Post*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) that they had been sexually harassed by team executives and other employees over the past dozen years.
2. It has been more than three weeks since New York’s primary election, and [*tens of thousands of mail-in ballots remain uncounted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
3. Lives Lived: “I wanted to write children’s books and be successful at it, but this is something else altogether,” Joanna Cole said when sales of her bizarre but educational “Magic School Bus” series hit 10 million copies. The books, as one publishing executive said, “made science both easy to understand and fun.” [*Cole has died at 75*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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IDEA OF THE DAY: The next monuments

What should replace the monuments — of Confederate generals and others — now coming down?

[*In a Times Op-Ed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), David Blight — a historian who wrote a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Frederick Douglass — argues that the issue needs leadership. He calls on Joe Biden to create a task force of historians and others that would link localities with artists and resources, study how other countries have (or have not) confronted their own dark pasts, and propose ways to memorialize history beyond statues.

Other recent suggestions include:

* Honor “people who have significantly helped move this country forward,” as the historian [*Keisha Blain*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) told Fast Company last month. She suggests statues of Harriet Tubman and Fannie Lou Hamer, the Black voting-rights activist.

1. Memorialize the victims of state violence. In Louisville, Ky., some residents have suggested a monument to Breonna Taylor, a Black woman fatally shot by police earlier this year, and David McAtee, who was shot when police and National Guardsmen confronted curfew violators, [*Salon’s Ashlie Stevens*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) reports.
2. Choose patriots. [*Brent Staples of The Times’s editorial board*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) has argued for renaming military bases after the Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, who ordered land set aside for formerly enslaved families, and the Civil War surgeon Dr. Mary Walker.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, JEOPARDY!

A light summer appetizer

Looking for something that doesn’t involve using the oven? [*These Vietnamese summer rolls*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) paired with a black bean garlic dipping sauce are cold, refreshing and easy to make with kids.

Watch something … stuck in a loop

Our weekly suggestion from Gilbert Cruz, The Times’s Culture editor:

Every day is like the one before. Stuck in the same general geographic area, you try to come up with new things to do, but each morning you wake up and say, “Again? Still?”

Am I describing pandemic life? (Am I just describing life?) It’s definitely the situation in which Nyles (Andy Samberg) finds himself in the new movie “[*Palm Springs*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing),” trapped in a “Groundhog Day”-esque time loop at a desert wedding. I adore the work of Samberg and his creative partners — “S.N.L.” digital shorts, the perfectly titled “Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping” — and while this film is less outlandishly absurd than that work, it’s pleasant and funny in the best ways.

For more recommendations (suggested by a vastly better writer than me), [*subscribe to The Times’s Watching newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Our critic Margaret Lyons watches more TV than anyone I know — and it’s all so she can find the best stuff to tell us about three times a week.

The man with all the answers

Alex Trebek swears a lot. He has survived a car crash, two heart attacks and brain surgery. He was almost expelled from boarding school. And his favorite drink is low-fat milk (or chardonnay, depending on the mood).

The “Jeopardy!” host’s memoir comes out next week, a day before his birthday. In a new profile, [*Trebek reflects on his decades-long career*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), his struggle with cancer and the “comfort that comes from knowing a fact.”

‘Father Soldier Son’

Brian Eisch — an Army sergeant and single father — returned from Afghanistan in 2010 with a serious leg injury. Over the next 10 years, two Times reporters, Catrin Einhorn and Leslye Davis, followed Eisch’s struggles and joy, and the result is [*a documentary now available on Netflix*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

The goal, Leslye says, is to remind Americans of the consequences of a war that’s nearing its 20th anniversary. Catrin adds: “Lots of video clips have gone viral of service members reuniting with their children. We wanted to understand the before and after.”

Diversions

* In [*this week’s Modern Love*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a writer delves into feeling unworthy of love while working for a dating app.

1. [*The late-night hosts reacted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)to this week’s shake-up in Trump’s campaign team.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Iconic red symbol of London (three letters).

Or try [*this week’s news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. The word “deathfluencers” appeared for the first time in The Times yesterday — in an article about the [*booming business of death planning*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — as noted by the Twitter bot [*@NYT\_first\_said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” revisits a woman who lost her grandfather to the coronavirus.

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Solar panels in El Centro, Calif. earlier this year. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bing Guan/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 17, 2020

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[***Joe Biden Has Support From Older Black Voters. Is It Enough?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W2G-N051-JBG3-623P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** Mr. Biden is the early pacesetter in the South Carolina primary, buoyed by his long ties to elected officials there. But some question whether his support will endure.

**Body**

WEST COLUMBIA, S.C. — In most respects it was a typical first Sunday at Brookland Baptist Church. The minister delivered a raucous sermon, communion was distributed and the choir closed the service with the gospel classic “Order My Steps,” which admonishes Christians that “Satan is busy, God is real.”

But when the benediction was completed, the rush of congregants to the front pew signaled that this Sunday was unique: The honored guest was former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., and everyone wanted a photo.

“He was with President Obama and you know what that means, he has a head start in my book,” said Barbara Cain Seabrook, a 58-year-old member of Brookland Baptist. “I think he has the community at heart.”

Nearly every Democrat in South Carolina agrees that Mr. Biden is the early pacesetter in the state’s critically important primary, buoyed by his longstanding relationships with elected officials here and [*support from black voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html), who make up almost 60 percent of the Democratic electorate.

But black leaders and strategists are divided over whether that backing will endure over the next year. One camp believes his experience and appeal to older voters will make him an electoral juggernaut among the black community, while another sees him as a paper tiger whose appeal is generational and who may be overly reliant on his ties to Mr. Obama.

[[*Sign up for our politics newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html) and join the conversation around the 2020 presidential race.]

Black voters will represent a crucial segment of the primary electorate in many states, and Mr. Biden’s ability to build lasting support among them will be essential to determining the strength of his candidacy. He has emerged as the pacesetter in a crowded field in large part because of [*sky-high polling numbers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html) among black voters, support he never enjoyed during two previous presidential runs.

“Obama is gone, and we’re trying to get to the future,” said Representative Jim Clyburn, the state’s most powerful Democrat and the party’s third-ranking member of the House. Mr. Clyburn, who worked closely with Mr. Biden during his years in the White House, said the former vice president has to “lay out what his vision is, and it’s yet to be seen whether it coincides with black people’s dreams and aspirations.”

Those more bullish on his chances cite his slew of early endorsements in South Carolina (more than 20 announced Monday, including pastors, state legislators and school board members), the association with Mr. Obama, and the hiring of Kendall Corley, a prized Democratic organizer who specializes in field operations and turned down several other campaigns to serve as Mr. Biden’s South Carolina state director.

In states like South Carolina, Mr. Biden’s advantage with black voters not only helps him amass delegates ahead of the Democratic convention, but helps counter the widespread perception that he is a candidate running on a bygone appeal to the white ***working class***.

“He has a message that’s not just for black people, but for everyone,” said Terry Davenport, 52, who attended Mr. Biden’s rally in South Carolina over the weekend. He and several other attendees made a similar point — Mr. Biden is the person with the longest relationship with black communities but can also win white votes.

Mr. Biden “can’t assume he has the black vote,” Mr. Davenport said. “But we do know he’s better than that guy in the White House.”

Others, like, Jarrod Loadholt, a Democratic political strategist in the state, are skeptical of Mr. Biden’s ability to maintain his lead with black voters. Mr. Loadholt cites the 2007 primary, when the Democratic front-runner, Hillary Clinton, also enjoyed robust support among black Americans in several polls. Mr. Obama overtook her in a shift that swung the primary.

Mr. Loadholt also questioned Mr. Biden’s ability to get beyond the obvious campaign stops in the state and do the hard work needed to reach more rural black voters.

“Joe Biden is only going to campaign in the South Carolina cities that have a Marriott,” Mr. Loadholt said. “And every person in South Carolina knows those five cities: Columbia, Charleston, Greenville, Myrtle Beach, Hilton Head. But where I’m from, where the primary is really won — your phone doesn’t work.”

“They like Barack Obama, and they know Joe Biden,” he said. “But do they like Joe Biden? He has to work for that vote.”

Mr. Biden has structured the early weeks of his campaign [*almost singularly around President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html), casting himself as a racial unifier in a time of division. He stressed that over the weekend in South Carolina.

But Mr. Biden, who served for years as a Senator from Delaware before becoming vice president, has a legislative record littered with divisive stances on issues relating to black people. He was an early opponent of busing programs aimed at school desegregation, and he played an integral role in the punitive crime reduction efforts of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which helped lead to the explosion of incarceration rates among black Americans.

Mr. Biden has [*expressed some remorse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html) for the crime legislation, and for his   [*treatment of Anita Hill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html) when she appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee during Justice Clarence Thomas’s confirmation hearings. But surrogates, and many voters, have repeatedly downplayed both incidents, and said they believe voters will judge him through his most recent actions in Mr. Obama’s administration.

“Everybody makes mistakes,” said Kenneth Webb, a 73-year-old black South Carolina resident who attended Mr. Biden’s rally in Columbia. “This is South Carolina. We’ve seen people like Strom Thurmond and Fritz Hollings change their views. This isn’t anything new to us.”

Through a spokesman, Mr. Biden declined a request for an interview for this article, but he told Charleston’s Post and Courier [*this weekend*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html), “I think the African-American community nationwide knows who I am.’’

“I’m not saying the others aren’t qualified, I’m just saying I’ve been there,” he said.

Several of Mr. Biden’s primary opponents have also tried to make outreach to black communities in the early months of their presidential campaigns, a testament to the importance of this [*reliable Democratic voting bloc*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html), and the desire among 2020 candidates to recreate Mr. Obama’s winning coalitions from 2008 and 2012.

[Who’s in? Who’s out? [*Keep up with the 2020 field with our candidate tracker.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html)]

However, each of those candidates has their own struggles. Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts earned [*rave reviews*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html) at the She The People forum on women of color, but the crowd was largely activists and political operatives, not the rank-and-file Democrats where she has yet to break through.

The race’s two black senators, Cory Booker of New Jersey and Kamala Harris of California, are still relatively new to the national stage, [*and must contend*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html) with the perception among even some black voters that several of the white candidates are better suited to defeat Mr. Trump.

“The ballgame for Biden is South Carolina,” said [*Antjuan Seawright*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html), another state Democratic strategist who has forged close relationships with Mr. Biden’s team. “But I’ll tell you this: This is not 2008 and this is not 2016. The mood of our party is different. People are just motivated to win.”

Bakari Sellers, the former state legislator who has endorsed Ms. Harris, said the race is in the early stages right now, but “when school starts” in the fall, Mr. Biden will be under more intense scrutiny.

“Joe don’t have no plan for improving rural hospitals, Joe don’t have no plan for combating black maternal mortality,” said Mr. Sellers, using rhetorical flourish. “He don’t have no plan for H.B.C.U.s. He won’t have a plan for black homeownership. Joe’s plan is to run against Donald Trump.”

Research from other liberal groups also suggests that Mr. Biden’s relationship with black voters may be generational. Data For Progress, the progressive group aligned with more left-leaning candidates, conducted [*several focus groups*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html) about Mr. Biden’s “electability,” and tracked how different populations responded to negative statements about Mr. Biden’s past, including his positions on crime and law enforcement. Among black Americans, millennials were almost twice as likely to back away from Mr. Biden than black voters overall, which indicates his support with older black Americans is more fixed.

Mr. Biden’s candidacy is in some ways a test of which candidate has the measure of the black electorate in South Carolina and nationwide. Younger black Democrats driven by grass-roots ideology want to rally around issues like inequality and criminal justice, and they see Mr. Biden as emblematic of an old guard that has mistreated black communities.

But many state elected officials and political operatives, pointing to early polling, believe the former vice president’s “return to normalcy” message will resonate more than any rigid ideological framework.

At his rally at a community center in Hyatt Park Saturday, Mr. Biden came on stage after a performance by an all-black gospel choir and marching band. He also played a [*new campaign advertisement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html), which splices together autobiographical clips and Mr. Obama’s speech about Mr. Biden at the Presidential Medal of Freedom ceremony in 2017. He offered few policy details, but one attendee, Carlton Boyd, left feeling good, saying, “Trump casts a shadow of uncertainty, while Joe Biden is security.”

At Brookland Baptist on Sunday morning, Ms. Cain Seabrook, the church member, said there was nothing more Mr. Biden needed to do to earn her vote — not a policy agenda, or a campaign visit, or good performances in the Democratic debates.

She repeated her earlier points: She planned to vote for Mr. Biden because he served with Mr. Obama. And, in a bonus, she said, he seemed to clap on beat to the music.

PHOTOS: Joe Biden at a church service in West Columbia, S.C. Black voters make up almost 60 percent of the Democratic electorate in the state, where Mr. Biden has a lead.; A church service in South Carolina. For some, Mr. Biden’s ties to President Obama were enough. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Related Articles**

* [*Biden Makes First Campaign Appearance in South Carolina, Key Primary State*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html)

1. [*Joe Biden Announces 2020 Run for President, After Months of Hesitation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html)
2. [*For Democrats, South Carolina Already Looms Large for the 2020 Race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/us/politics/joe-biden-black-breakfast-club.html)

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2020

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[***Transcript: Rogé Karma Interviews Nicholas Mulder for ‘The Ezra Klein Show’; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654D-0SC1-JBG3-63H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 12737 words

**Highlight:** A conversation with the historian.

**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode, guest-hosted by Rogé Karma and featuring Nicholas Mulder. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: I’m Ezra Klein, and this is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

Hey, this is Ezra. I am off today. But sitting in behind the mic is our staff editor, Rogé Karma. Rogé is centrally responsible for a huge amount of the prep on the show, of our editorial direction. So today, he’s sitting down with Nick Mulder to talk about sanctions as a tool of war and sanctions in this war. I’m excited for it and I hope you are, too.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROGÉ KARMA: It’s really hard to overstate the severity of the sanctions imposed on Russia right now. The country has been functionally cut off from the global financial system. The majority of its central bank assets have been frozen. Hundreds of private companies from Visa to Shell to McDonald’s have pulled out indefinitely. And that’s just a partial list.

And here’s the thing — we know from experience— we know what sanctions like this do to countries. Living standards collapse. Inflation surges to levels that are hard for us in the West even to imagine. People end up bartering for basic necessities like medicine and fuel. One Russian political scientist recently described the impact of the sanctions on the country as, quote, “30 years of economic development thrown into the bin.”

I want to be really clear here. This is economic war. And, in particular, this is economic war aimed directly at civilians, directly at those who had the least say in the decision to invade Ukraine in the first place. All of this, of course, is meant to pressure Putin. And here’s the thing, it very well may be working. I am not going to deny that.

But we should be clear-eyed about what it is, in part, because this has become such a standard tool of America’s foreign policy arsenal. Just in the last few years, we’ve levied devastating sanctions on the populations of Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan. We continue to maintain a decades-long embargo against Cuba. And in many of those cases, there’s no real indication that the pain and immiseration we’re inflicting is actually achieving much of anything.

Nick Mulder is a historian at Cornell University and the author of the terrifyingly relevant new book, “The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War.” The book is a history of the last period of time when economic warfare was waged at this kind of scale — that being the period between the world wars. And for that reason, it has some real lessons for our own time.

So this is a conversation about what kind of weapon sanctions are, whether they actually work in achieving their outcomes, and how they could shape the future of this conflict and the world for that matter. Like always, you can contact the show with feedback or guest suggestions at [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com)

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Nick Mulder, welcome to the podcast.

NICHOLAS MULDER: Thanks for having me on, Rogé.

ROGÉ KARMA: The way we tend to think about sanctions today is as an alternative to war. But that’s not how they’ve always been thought of. So tell me how did the architects of the modern sanctions regime understand their power?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Initially, the challenge that sanctions were created to solve was how to avoid a conflict on the scale of World War I or World War II from breaking out. And it’s in the aftermath of World War I that internationalists came together and wanted to find something that had the power to potentially stop war in its tracks before it even got going.

And what they found was that if you could find some sort of force that would affect a nation in its entirety — not just the elite, not just the army, but the nation as an entire unit — you might have an instrument in your hands that could persuade that nation from not embarking on war. And sanctions initially came out of that realization, that in a world that was very globalized, where there was a lot of trade and finance and cross-border interaction, you could actually threaten to cut off all that access at once.

And in that sense, sanctions really are a total weapon. They are a creation of the era of total war. And that’s the history that I try to tell in the book, which shows that at the time before even the word sanctions came to be used, people refer to this instrument of the ability to impose a blockade on an entire country in peacetime as the economic weapon. So they were very open about the fact that this was a weapon. It was meant to be used as such. And it was considered so powerful that it had a potential war-stopping or war-dissuading capacity.

ROGÉ KARMA: Let’s dig into this, because I think at first it’s hard to even imagine that sanctions, the economic weapon — whatever you call it, it’s hard to imagine that it could be anywhere close to as terrible as actual war. So what do sanctions do to a country? How do they impact the economies they’re wielded against and the people who depend on those economies?

NICHOLAS MULDER: So if you look at sanctions in the world today, some of the effects of them include incredibly severe shortages of essential goods and a kind of immediate crisis of the economy of the ability of countries to get what they need from the rest of the world that translates into high prices, into basic essentials and necessities — food, fuel, medicine — becoming not just more expensive but sometimes even entirely impossible to find.

And if you do want to find those things in countries under sanctions, you oftentimes have to be closely connected to political powers. So obtaining basic necessities for your family becomes a game of political patronage and political connections. Corruption increases. Elites, on the whole, have better connections, and so they tend to basically insulate themselves.

But if you’re an ordinary working person in a society under sanctions, you’re not just dealing with inflation, you’re dealing with shortages, inability to get money from the bank, very likely your employer or the place your work will go out of business or will be forced to cut your pay. So this would be a very grave economic crisis in many ways. I think that’s an all-encompassing shock to every material facet of your livelihood. I think that’s really what you can see in societies that are under serious sanctions today.

ROGÉ KARMA: I want to hold on something you mentioned there, which is inflation. I think that it’s easy for those of us who have never experienced sanctions like this to misunderstand the actual lived experience of it. But something we’ve all become pretty familiar with in the U.S., at least over the past year, is what it’s like to operate in an inflationary economy. And one way to understand the impact of sanctions is that they essentially weaponize inflation.

There’s a really great paper on this that I’ll link to the show notes that uses Iran as a case study for this dynamic. But you could apply it to countries like Russia where we’ve deployed similar kinds of sanctions. And the basic point is that what these sanctions end up doing is they create massive supply chain disruptions. The number of suppliers willing to sell goods to a country, the number of logistics firms willing to transport those goods, the number of banks willing to process those transactions— all of that just shrivels up.

And as we know all too well from our own supply chain issues, that causes prices to skyrocket. But we’re not talking about 6 or 7 percent year-over-year increases here. Based on the latest numbers, the annual inflation rate for health and medical services in Iran is running at about 40 percent. Food and beverage inflation is at over 50 percent.

So I’m wondering if you could talk a little bit about that dynamic of sanctions. And let me ask the question this way— what would the experience of the U.S. economy be like if another country were able to do to us what we’ve done to Russia or Iran?

NICHOLAS MULDER: That’s a really great question. So this is, of course, hypothetical, because we don’t really know what the effects on the United States would be. But a possible scenario — something like this — the prices of your basic necessities go up dramatically. And not just a little bit, like you mentioned 6 or 7 percent like what we have now, but 15 to 20 percent as a baseline. So that’s the inflationary level that the United States in the 20th century has only really seen for any prolonged period of time in the 1970s.

But that’s the baseline. So like you said, it can go much, much higher than that. And what that does is that it really creates a pervasive anxiety and a sense of insecurity that everyone in not just the ***working class***, but middle class families, are perpetually on the brink of a potential ruinous situation to their household finances. They need to operate every single connection that they have in order to obtain things that ordinarily would be very easy to find.

And the government in many of these sanctioned countries — so the U.S. government might then step in and still try and provide some goods — but rationing will very quickly become a necessity in some sectors where there just isn’t enough to go around. And in order to preserve public order, the government needs to prioritize who gets these goods first.

On the whole, I think then you can also start to experience that the quality of what does become available is going to be very poor because either these are things that have been sourced through the black market and many people will have to resort to the black market. So it becomes much more difficult to get people to purchase and sell you things fairly. You will not really have legal recourse like you do in most transactions in the United States.

So much of our experience in the U.S. of buying, consuming, living and spending money I think will become much more fraught with all sorts of problems. It’s a very difficult thing for the vast majority of the population — at least 70 or 80 percent of the population would see an immediate collapse in their standard of living. And even for people in the elite that are used to all sorts of conveniences, things would become much harder.

ROGÉ KARMA: This gets to me to what feels like one of the cruelest aspects of sanctions, which is that we have all of these rules that are supposed to make conventional war more humane. Civilians are supposed to be off limits. Threatening basic necessities like food supplies is supposed to be off limits. And those rules aren’t always followed. The U.S. has violated them many times. But at least we try or pretend to hold ourselves to those. And we become outraged when other countries, like Russia right now, is violating them.

But the whole idea of sanctions is to make regular people suffer. And that’s a pretty radicalizing thought. The journalist Spencer Ackerman had this line in his newsletter that I can’t stop thinking about, which is, quote, “To recognize that sanctions are war by other means is to recognize that economic weapons make the equivalent of war crimes scalable.” I’m wondering what you think of that description.

NICHOLAS MULDER: I think it’s important to recognize that that’s what sanctions in the most severe case can do, right? Not all sanctions are like that. But if you keep increasing the severity of sanctions, then that is definitely where you will end up. And part of the reason why we find it much easier to impose sanctions is because there’s not the kind of directness that you see in war where bombs are dropped or munition is fired, explosions happen and people are killed. It’s an extremely obvious cause and effect chain.

Sanctions have a lot more things happening in between because they pass on these effects through an entire society through the price mechanism in the case of the phenomenon of inflation, like you just mentioned, but also through shortages, through what people are able to buy, and then as a result how they are able to fend for themselves and fashion their own lives. So all of that becomes much more difficult, but it’s not immediately clear what the cause of it is.

And that also, I think, is what people designing sanctions sometimes hope for that by creating this sense of unease and damage in civilian societies, pressure on governments to do something and change course to do what the sanctioning countries want them to do will increase. And that’s, I think, a very difficult thing because it all depends on the circumstances in which you impose sanctions, the avenues and the mechanisms that ordinary people have to change their government’s behavior, which aren’t always there and in many countries are really underdeveloped or even absent. So that’s what makes sanctions both very easy to use but it makes them also, I think, morally pretty difficult and fraught with all sorts of problems, particularly when you have sanctions that are capable of creating that sort of damage to ordinary civilians.

ROGÉ KARMA: I want to talk about that question of whether sanctions work because I think the response you’ll get to this conversation is, sure, sanctions have all these terrible effects but the ends justify the means. The world is full of bad guys and we need a way to stop them from waging war or to punish them when they do. So let’s talk about that. You gestured at it there. But what’s the theory of how sanctions are supposed to work?

NICHOLAS MULDER: So the theory is, at a basic level, that you create an economic shock, the shock creates discontent or a desire for political change, and that political desire for change then translates into, ultimately, a change in behavior. That’s the very basic theory. But the way that that actually works can be thought of in different ways. So you, in a democracy, do that through elections. But in many countries, it’s not that easy to change the government by vote. Certainly, in a large amount of countries around the world that are autocracies, or authoritarian states, or illiberal democracies, it becomes quite difficult to do that quickly.

And in those cases, they’re still sometimes a hope by the people designing sanctions that the sanctions will work because unrest is unrest. It doesn’t really matter if there’s an electoral system through which that discontent can be translated into different political government. If people who are impoverished by sanctions begin to truly riot, even an authoritarian government is going to at some point consider whether the course that is causing it to be the target of sanctions is really worth it. So I think those are the two basic ideas through the population.

And then there’s another variety which is how sanctions are supposed to work in countries where there isn’t a direct link between what the population wants and what the government does, where the regime really has a lot of distance from the population and can even afford not to really care about riots and about people’s simmering discontent. In those cases, there’s still a theory that sanctions might work if you hit very powerful business people and people in the economic elite of the country hard enough, because if the population is not the group that has the ear of the rulers, potentially the business elite will have it— so corporate and financial elites.

And no country really, in the long run, can afford not to care about some basic level of material prosperity. So if you hit those elites, they’re much more proximate to power. They’re much closer to the regime. They oftentimes are pillars of various authoritarian regimes. So if you can hit them, then that way sanctions can still force insiders in the regime, basically, to push for a change in behavior. I would say those are the three broad ways in which sanctions are supposed to work, depending on which country you use them against.

ROGÉ KARMA: So I want to tag here that if Russia and the language around sanctioning oligarchs, Biden’s comment over the weekend that was interpreted as a call for a regime change — if that’s all in the back of your mind right now, we are going there. But first, I want to talk about how these different theories actually play out in the real world. So we have these different theories of how sanctions are supposed to work. Do they actually work? What’s the empirical track record of sanctions?

NICHOLAS MULDER: If you put all the uses of sanctions together — and political scientists and international relations scholars and economists have now quite a lot of data in the last 100 years how this has gone — they find that studies have different numbers, but usually they come up with a percentage somewhere between about 10 to 30 percent of the time do sanctions work, at least somewhat, to achieve one of their stated goals. So that’s the kind of range of chances of success most of the time.

But the most important question we should ask at the beginning is, work to do what? And so what’s the goal of sanctions, right? And there it’s very clear, from historical experience, that sanctions that have more ambitious aims are less likely to succeed. So the more modest the aim, changing only a small policy that’s not a vital interest to a government, that’s much easier to get accomplished through sanctions than to try and demand a very big policy change, like something about the essential national security interests of a country, let alone, of course, trying to entirely get rid of a certain regime.

One of the hopes in the early 20th century when sanctions were designed to stop war — that was their goal — was that they would work as a deterrent. So you would threaten sanctions to any country that would break treaties and begin a war, any country that would commit an act of aggression, and the hope was front-load the damage, make it really, really severe from the beginning, and that way no country will even consider really doing it. And even if it is at the point where it might consider it, then restating that threat and showing that an entire international organization, a large part of the international community is behind it, will work to deter.

So deterrence did work— and we can get into some of those cases in a minute— in the 1920s, in particular. But the other aim of sanctions is compellence. So trying to make a country do something that it wasn’t intending to do, trying to make them pursue a certain course of action. For example, if a country wants to really develop nuclear weapons, making them not do that and making them pursue instead a civilian nuclear program. That’s also what we’ve used sanctions to do in the past. So that is, in general, more difficult.

And another great example of compellence is the situation right now, which is where we’re using sanctions to try and actually make Putin stop his invasion of Ukraine. He’s already embarked on this course and we’re trying to move him away from it towards an end to the war, cease fire, peace and withdrawal. That, in general, has proven in history to be more difficult to do than trying to deter a country from doing something that intends to do in the future.

ROGÉ KARMA: I want to talk more about the current sanctions on Russia. But before we do, I just want to tag something that we’re going to come back to throughout this conversation or at the very least is going to be present in the background, which is, to our earlier discussion, sanctions inflict all kinds of truly terrible economic pain on civilians. And at the same time, as you just pointed out, the chances of them actually working are just abysmal.

And I really just want to emphasize that dissonance — the pain that these sanctions cause on the one hand and the lack of actual outcomes that they produce on the other — because it’s one that I think should make us really ponder and think deeply about how we use this weapon moving forward. But you mentioned the ongoing sanctions against Russia and I do want to talk about those. You’ve called this a watershed moment in global economic history. Tell me about that. What’s unique about these sanctions from a historical perspective?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Well, there’s a few different ways of measuring the importance of these sanctions. One is the number of countries imposing them. That’s been really pretty significant for sanctions in the last few decades. At this point, there’s at least 37 countries that are all committed to a pretty unified sanction strategy against Russia. Moreover, those 37 countries have about 55 percent of the world’s gross domestic product. So —

ROGÉ KARMA: Wow.

NICHOLAS MULDER: —that’s a really — yeah, that’s a really significant group. They’re pretty much all of the advanced industrial democracies in the world. That’s one way of measuring it — who’s involved. But also, of course, what are the measures that they’ve taken. They’ve gone from a pretty low level of sanctions, which they had imposed against Russia since 2014, to a now very serious level of sanctions. I would say definitely about 8 out of 10 in terms of how intense and severe these current sanctions are. Not at the absolute maximum, but very far along this spectrum.

And what makes that intensity even more significant and really a watershed is that it’s being imposed against an economy of the size of Russia, which is a $1.5 trillion economy. It’s the 11th largest in the world. It’s a G20 economy. So if you add those three things together, I think you have a pretty multidimensional understanding of why this is a major moment that really doesn’t have any precedent in recent history.

ROGÉ KARMA: In the days following the announcement of the big Western sanctions package, there was an immediate impact on the Russian economy. The ruble collapsed in value. Corporations were pulling out left and right. There were predictions of a major G.D.P. contraction. It’s been about a month since then. How would you assess the state of the Russian economy today?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Well, Russia has most definitely undergone a really severe economic shock. It was also magnified by the fact that it didn’t just suffer from the immediate effects of the sanctions imposed by Western governments. There was also a private sector reaction to those sanctions and to the war breaking out. 400 companies, at least now I think as of the last counting, have left Russia. That’s billions and billions of dollars of foreign investment, of foreign capital that will not probably return anywhere in the near future. So in the medium and long-run, the growth prospects of the Russian economy, which already weren’t that good, have now become really dismal.

But in the shorter-term, there’s also been a significant set of effects in Russia on the price level. So again, inflation you start to see is really picking up. Russia has now all of a sudden almost overnight lost the ability to import many things from the West, because the West either will refuse to sell those things — particularly, high-tech goods — but the Russians have also lost some of the reserves that they previously used to purchase those things.

What all of that means is that all of a sudden overnight Russians now have way less access to foreign goods, not just luxuries like handbags and cars and watches, but also really essential things for their own standard of living, for production in their most important industries, for know-how and expertise. And on top of that, a lot of these foreign workers have left and there’s now also a big brain drain happening from Russia.

So the overall effect of the sanctions on Russia I think has bee really quite severe. There are some areas where in the short-term, the Russian government’s been able to stabilize the situation. So the exchange rate of the ruble against the dollar is slowly improving again because of the total collapse almost of imports. And the Russian central bank has also prevented foreigners from pulling out some money from the stock market, particularly, and it’s really imposed a number of controls that prevent ordinary free market mechanisms. So that explains why the ruble hasn’t suffered a sustained collapse. It’s kind of recovered.

The other thing that contributes somewhat to that short-term stabilization is the fact that there is still Russian energy that’s being sold, particularly oil and gas on world markets. Energy prices are extremely high. So Russia is continuing to earn foreign currency — euros and dollars — by selling oil and gas. And as that comes in, it can replenish little by little some of this big pile of reserves that was confiscated, or frozen at least, by Western governments in late February.

So that’s how I would assess the state of the impact on the Russian economy. It’s a really dismal picture. Not an utter collapse but a very severe shock, that if it extends will really reduce Russian G.D.P. by an enormous amount. I think the realistic estimates now are at least 15 percent or so this year. And in the long run. It’s also going to absolutely crater Russia’s growth prospects.

ROGÉ KARMA: I think there’s a way in which the language we use to describe the effects of sanctions here really masks the brutal reality of them. If you read descriptions of the war in the streets right now, it’s about dead civilians, bombs exploding, refugees fleeing. The suffering of the war is really front and center. But the financial war we’re waging is cloaked in an almost economistic, technocratic aesthetic. We’re talking here about currency valuations, about G.D.P.

I want to pierce through that for a minute, because I think that this language can sometimes get in the way. So let me ask it this way: If you’re an ordinary Russian, how does your life look different today than it did a month ago? How have these sanctions impacted your day-to-day reality?

NICHOLAS MULDER: For one thing, you will have lost a lot of access to ordinary consumption goods. Shortages in all the shops, big lines to get food, and the ability to get medicine is all of a sudden really impaired. There’s cancer treatments that are only produced by Western pharmaceutical companies that Russia needs to import. Those might not be available or only against the price where no ordinary Russian could afford them.

So in a whole variety of ways, life has all of a sudden gotten a whole lot tougher. And then also there are layoffs, there are companies that have to close up shop or stop production. So people go unpaid, go without wages. And there’s quite a small and modest social security net in Russia. The social safety net is not amazingly sophisticated. It’s certainly not compared to Western Europe. So this is hitting the standard of living of ordinary Russians really severely.

ROGÉ KARMA: What do we know about how Moscow views these sanctions at this point?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Well, I think that that’s an open question. And there are different things that the Russians are saying about the sanctions. They definitely don’t like them. And they call them illegitimate. They call them acts of war against Russia. But they also at the same time seek to play them down. The question for them, I think, is whether these sanctions are going to be in effect for as long as Putin himself is in power?

So are these sanctions going to be permanently in place to try and cause regime change in Russia, an end to Putinism and some new kind of political order? Or are they really narrowly aimed at ending the war in Ukraine, and if that war ends, if Russia ceases to pursue active military operations, will some of these sanctions then be lifted? And if they withdraw, particularly will these sanctions be lifted? So can Putin and Lavrov and the Putin regime expect a future— can they envision a future in which they are free of some of these sanctions, perhaps even all of them, but certainly some of them? That’s the question.

And I think that’s the significance of Biden’s remark, and also other heads of state have said this or hinted at this at least that in the West right now, I think, there’s an ongoing debate about whether these sanctions should be lifted if there is an improvement in the situation and if there is a cease-fire and a Russian withdrawal, or whether these sanctions now are going to have to remain in place for as long as Putin’s in power? So are these sanctions aimed at compellence and the breaking off of this war, the ending of this war, or are they aimed at the more ambitious goal of regime change?

So that’s an open question, I think, for Putin, although perhaps given his suspiciousness and paranoia, he has already decided that they’re going to remain in place forever. That wouldn’t be good probably if he does believe that. But that’s, I think, the issue that we’re dealing with right now. And Western governments have been debating this but haven’t given a single unified message yet. They’ve hinted that sanctions relief is on the table. So Blinken said this. And Liz Truss, the U.K. Foreign Secretary, has also mentioned that some lifting should be possible.

The question, however, also is do Western electorates, does the audience in the West, the population in the West, accept a future in which there are not going to be sanctions against Russia anymore because the war has ended, or do they now think Putin is so unreliable and so dangerous to the world that they will want to keep those sanctions in place permanently? There’s all sorts of open questions here.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROGÉ KARMA: Something I find really striking about that answer is just how much hinges on the way Russia sees and interprets these sanctions. And depending on that interpretation, you can imagine a whole range of responses, right? Putin’s initial response to the sanctions was to raise Russia’s nuclear alert level, which is definitely not something the West anticipated.

And that gets to one of the core lessons, I think, from the history here and of your book, which is that the impact of sanctions is fundamentally unpredictable. We really just don’t know what’s going to happen when a sanctions regime of this scale, of this severity, collides with the ideologies and the myths and the political dynamics of a given country.

And I think this is a place where the history can be really helpful here for helping us think about different models of how this could play out. And one of the examples that really stood out to me from the book is how Germany and Japan responded to Western sanctions in the lead-up to World War II. Can you talk about a bit of that history?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Absolutely. So the temptation is that as we start to use sanctions more and more as a really serious instrument of pressure, we also start to think of them as similar in their employment as other weapons and as direct military kinetic weapons. When you fire a missile or drop a bomb, there’s a very direct relation between the action and the outcome.

But sanctions work in a much more complex environment. There’s many more layers between the imposition of the restriction and the political outcome that you’re seeking to achieve. In between those two things is an entire civilian society, the entire world economy, all sorts of markets, institutions, people, each of which can act in different ways. So that’s why they’re so unpredictable.

In the 1930s, sanctions had been relatively recently designed. So using the power to economically isolate countries in peacetime was something that only really began in the aftermath of World War I with the League of Nations. In the ’20s, it had been used twice but only as a threat. Once against Yugoslavia in 1921 and another time against Greece in 1925. But Yugoslavia and Greece were small countries. They didn’t have large armies. So it was fairly easy and straightforward for great powers of the day, particularly Britain and France, to threaten a severe blockade and a severe economic isolation against them and make them back down.

But that began to change in the 1930s when a whole new group of countries, much larger, really middle powers, medium-sized powers began to revolt against the international order that had been created after World War I. These were countries— Italy, Germany and also Japan — that were pretty significant industrial powers. And in those situations, when the League of Nations and the liberal powers threatened sanctions against these countries and imposed sanctions against these countries, these countries had another option.

They didn’t necessarily have to back down the way Yugoslavia and Greece had backed down in the 1920s. They could and they did because they were already very inclined to do this. Because they were radical nationalists and fascist regimes, they could turn inward. They could try and build up reserves and become much more self-sufficient and even— and this was the ultimate escalatory move — conquered territory from neighboring countries that did have crucial resources that they didn’t have.

So both Nazi Germany, which had this memory of having been the victim of economic blockade in World War I and many of the Nazis were very obsessed with this memory, which was a big trauma to them — I should say, however, that this was a very highly ideologically-charged and distorted memory, also, of course, tied in with all sorts of anti-Semitism, and it was an entirely radical thing to conclude, but they were responding to a memory within Germany that was real and that had been held alive by nationalists. And that became this thing that they were trying to avert in the future.

And in Japan, there was a similar situation which had to do mainly with the fact that Japan, even more so than Germany, is very poor in natural resources. And this creates the possibility of using economic pressure against Japan, which the West began to use in the late 1930s, first kind of gently by stopping and revoking commercial treaties, and then steadily more and more as Japan became more aggressive in China, where it had launched a big war against the Chinese nationalists.

And as it became more and more aggressive in China, it actually started to become more and more dependent on imports from the British Empire and the United States. So this gave FDR in the United States, particularly, a lot of leverage that he could use against Japan. And he did begin to use this, particularly in 1939, 1940. And ultimately, in 1941, he increases the goods that are under embargo.

He first starts with things like aviation fuel to prevent the Japanese Air Force from flying. Then it expands it to iron ore and scrap metal to stop the Japanese steel industry and weaken it. And finally, in the summer of 1941, he freezes all Japanese assets in the United States, which are a very important thing that Japan needs to pay for its own imports from abroad. And he bans, together with Britain and the Dutch government, in what’s now Indonesia, the export of all oil to Japan.

So this now means that Japan has no more access to a large part of its foreign assets, has lost almost all ability to import the key raw materials for its vital industries, cannot really fly its Air Force beyond only a few months or operate its Navy beyond a few months of the fuel that it has stored. And so it’s basically confronted with a future in which it will be completely immobilized by everything that the West has done. But it’s still not officially at war with any of the countries or with the United States.

And this is the moment where Japan takes the final radical step and embarks on a war, which even the Japanese, I think, didn’t really think that they were going to win. But they saw no other option but to try and take the fight to the enemy, try and secure these resources in Southeast Asia and conquer a large part of Southeast Asia where they could find these things— oil, rubber, coal, tin, et cetera. And that really is the whole story of the run-up to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the radicalization of Japan and its decision for war in late 1941.

ROGÉ KARMA: I have to say I find that Japan example, in particular, really chilling. One thing I really worry about is that as we continue to strangle the Russian economy and especially given the possibility of a truly devastating European energy embargo looming in the background here, I worry that we’re going to back Putin into a corner and cause him to lash out in the same way that Japan lashed out with the terrifying difference being Russia’s massive stockpile of nuclear weapons. So I just want to flag that possibility now.

But there’s another more optimistic scenario that’s possible here and that I want to talk about, which is that, in recent weeks, Russia seems to be scaling back its war aims. It’s no longer talking about regime change in Ukraine. It seems more open to negotiations. And for some I think that’s pretty compelling evidence that sanctions could help to de-escalate this conflict. So I’m wondering how you think about that theory of how sanctions are working or could work.

NICHOLAS MULDER: Yeah, well, the other factor in this conflict, which makes it, I think, very difficult to answer that question with any degree of certainty is that this is a war in which there is actually an enormous amount of real fighting going on. In Ukraine, the Ukrainians are very bravely defending their own country against the Russian invasion. And it seems to me that if Russia is now scaling back its war aims, that must, to a significant degree, have something to do with its own military failure in the field.

Because there was a threat of sanctions beforehand already on the table, so sanctions didn’t deter this invasion. It is perhaps possible indeed that they are having an effect on his long-term thinking. So I definitely don’t think that they have no effect. They are very likely now creating a picture in the Kremlin of a long-run outcome where if Russia doesn’t manage to achieve any of its objectives or defeat the Ukrainian army, then it’s going to be struck with a much smaller and weaker economy, no ability to really replenish some of its vital high-tech military supplies because of loss of access to things like semiconductors and important electronics and sensors that it gets from the West and that have now been placed under sanctions.

So they’re definitely a contributing factor. Are they the main factor? I don’t know. And I would actually say that in this sense, kinetic force in the field remains probably the more dominant direct influence, particularly because it seems like that’s really the thing that Putin and the Russian elite have been focusing on from the beginning, because they didn’t really heed the threats of sanctions that the West made in the months before this invasion began.

ROGÉ KARMA: Whether or not sanctions have contributed so far to the change in tone from Moscow, there’s still a possibility that they could be used as leverage to bring about a negotiated settlement. And the example here, which is the, I think, opposite of the Japan example that’s often used is the Iran nuclear deal. So can you talk a little bit about how U.S. sanctions contributed to that deal and whether you think it’s possible to use sanctions in a similar way with Russia today?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Yeah, so just to continue actually from my answer to your previous question, Rogé, I think that sanctions could be very effective in bringing this war to an end. So I think that there is a potential future role for them that could be quite positive. But that depends, indeed, on, as you say, finding a way to tie them in to a negotiated settlement and end to the war that, of course, guarantees Ukrainian independence. It now even seems that Russia might not have an objection to Ukraine joining the EU, which is already I think real progress.

And the Iran deal could serve as an example there because that’s been the most recent case in which serious sanctions pressure from the United States was something that went hand-in-hand with a real good faith effort at a diplomatic settlement. So Obama and Kerry pursued talks in this special format in Vienna and Geneva and elsewhere and were able to convince the Iranians that they were better off in a world where they gave up their pursuit of nuclear weapons, but they would, under the nonproliferation treaty, get their right to civilian nuclear enrichment.

So there was also a concession that was made. It’s a right that Iran has under international treaties. And so by showing that they were willing to make concessions in addition to the sanctions and really promised to also lift them if Iran opened itself up to IAEA inspections, a U.N. agency that could do the verification, both sides made concessions. Iran gave up its program. The U.S. gave up its opposition to Iranian civilian nuclear energy.

So the broader lesson, I think, from the Iran deal is sanctions will work if you are making a bona fide effort at diplomacy, diplomatic negotiations. You’re prepared to concede on things that aren’t key to securing your vital interests. So you are not completely rigid in all your demands. You’re willing to prioritize between more and less important demands and make concessions on the less important ones. And unfortunately, the Iran deal was torn up by the Trump administration, which withdrew from it and since we’re still right now in negotiations to try and have some sort of interim agreement or a new deal.

And one of the tragic things about the Russia/Ukrainian war is that it’s actually placed in question whether that renewed Iran deal can be negotiated by the Biden administration right now. And one of the sticking points is can the U.S. commit in the future to not only lifting sanctions as part of a renewed deal, but keeping them lifted as long as Iran is in compliance. Because this is what went wrong in 2018 when Trump came in and tore up the deal.

So in order to make sanctions work, you should negotiate, you should make concessions. But both sides should be able to credibly promise that they are going to, on the one hand, refrain from the behavior that the sanctions were imposed to stop, but on the side of the United States or the West, the countries using the sanctions, they must really commit to being able to keep those sanctions away in the future if there’s full compliance. That’s the tricky thing. And if that could work to end the war between Russia and Ukraine, and help guarantee Ukrainian independence most of all, that would be a great outcome. But it will be a difficult path to get there.

ROGÉ KARMA: I want to get into why this could be so difficult, though. Putting aside how serious Putin is about being willing to negotiate on the basis of the removal of sanctions, because neither of us can read his mind, I do want to focus on the West here. Something you really hit on in that answer was that in order for sanctions to work as leverage in a negotiation, you have to also be willing to make concessions. You have to be willing to make sacrifices.

And that gets to a real worry of mine, which is these sanctions aren’t just being used as a strategic tool at this point. They’ve also become the central signal of Western values in this conflict. They’ve become a projection, a symbol of the US standing up for democracy and autonomy and the Ukrainian people. And so the question I’ve been wrestling with is even if it’s strategically wise for the West to make these kinds of concessions, to attach conditions to sanctions removal, is it politically possible for Western leaders to do that, considering the extent to which these sanctions are now bound up with values which are much harder to sacrifice, which are much harder to compromise on than strategic interests?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Yeah, that’s really where the rub, I think, lies. Because at this point, Western leaders are really committed to maintaining full pressure. And I think right now there’s again a movement to increase pressure further, particularly to move towards a full embargo on Russian energy exports. They’re really committed to pushing that pressure further for as long as Russia continues to fight and continues to inflict these terrible atrocities on Ukraine and on civilians in the war. So that’s one connection that’s now been made in the mind of many Western publics.

The reason why that is, indeed, like you say, a problem, is because it creates a kind of dynamic where public opinion is going to push for further punishment. And I think in this case, it’s extra strong— that desire— because there is no conventional military response to Russia really that we can directly take. NATO’s already ruled out that it’s going to do anything that even gets near the risk of a direct military confrontation with Russia, such as imposing a no-fly zone or providing direct fighter jets to Ukraine.

So there’s a very strong desire, I think, from the political and military elites of the West not to have a direct confrontation with Russia, which is, of course, a nuclear-armed state. For that reason, a lot more expectation has come to be attached to the sanctions, for lack of a better alternative. And that’s an issue here, because it means that all of the moral outrage but also all of our hopes for an end to this conflict and a better future have now been channeled into a pretty specific set of instruments.

Whereas, I think ultimately the solution here lies in using the full range of instruments. Militarily, because it’s really key to support Ukraine’s ability to resist and fight Russia to a standstill, as it now seems to be doing, definitely economic pressure to send a signal and show that Russia cannot continue to access the rest of the world’s resources without limit while it is pursuing such a war of aggression, but also diplomatic. You want to use the full spectrum of resources, basically.

And I think the issue now is that it seems our desire and our attempt to expand military aid have run up against a natural limit. We can continue to give aid but we cannot really go further in terms of direct military involvement as the West. We, for moral and ideological reasons, also have decided that we just don’t really want to deal with Putin. I think many people don’t really think that he’s reliable. He may well not be reliable at all. I think that that’s a perfectly reasonable thing to think.

But the consequence of thinking that is that your tools on the total spectrum of foreign policy and strategic tools to deal with this war and this crisis narrow and sanctions become the main thing that we have now. So then, like you said, the lifting of them might be very difficult to sell to Western publics, because unless it’s seen to be offset by some other way that we keep the pressure on, it will seem like a concession. That’s very hard to justify unless there’s something to show for it.

ROGÉ KARMA: One of the possibilities that worries me here is that we continue to escalate the stakes of this through our sanctions, not de-escalate it. And the most obvious way that the West could step up sanctions right now would be, as you gestured at, a European embargo on Russian energy. And that would just be a devastating blow to a Russian economy that is already suffering.

And so the big debate right now in Europe is can European countries do this? Can they afford to transition away from Russian energy in the near term? But a question I haven’t heard talked about nearly as much is should Europe do this? And this is where the Japan example is really lingering in the back of my head. Because something that stood out there is that an oil embargo, a cutting off of energy — and I know it was different between imports and exports — but that was really the final straw that pushed Japan into a corner and caused them to lash out.

And one thing I worry about that’s being missed in this conversation about European energy sanctions is the possibility that they push Putin into a similar corner, that they risk causing Russia to lash out in some unexpected way. I’m wondering how you think about that possibility and how you think about that question more broadly. Not can Europe do this, but should they?

NICHOLAS MULDER: So there is very much a risk of that. I think that we shouldn’t deny that that’s there. And some people I think try and minimize that risk and say, well, we have been escalating sanctions for the last month and Russia, while having increased the aggressiveness of its attack on Ukraine, targeting civilian areas much more, hasn’t directly lashed out at the West yet.

But there does come a point certainly where I think it would. And the difficult thing is that we just do not know where that point is. But I think it would be irresponsible not to presume that it does exist somewhere. And we probably haven’t reached it. We’re probably some way away from it. But are we right up against it or are we still quite far away from it, that’s the big question.

And I also think that there’s an interest in trying to find a speedy end to this war, because the longer conflicts tend to persist, the more entrenched they become. If they are usually not ended within the space of a few weeks or a low number of months, wars do tend to last much longer. They acquire a momentum of their own. People have an interest in perpetuating them. And in this kind of situation, that means a permanently elevated risk of escalation. I mean, I’ll leave it to the military experts, again, to lay out what options for escalation by Russia there are, but it definitely seems to me like this is the last main foreign currency-generating sector of their economy.

And one reason maybe to be a bit more optimistic is that, like you said, Japan was totally dependent on importing oil. For Russia, this is its export. So Russia will still have fuel. There will still be things to power cars and to keep the lights on in Russia. Russia also still will have food, which it is self-sufficient in. But it’s going to be lacking a lot of other things. It’s going to basically lack all the money that it would earn from oil and gas in ordinary times with which it would pay for essential imports.

It could probably sell a bunch to India and China and to Asian countries. And I actually think that is not insignificant, that that could be a lifeline because those countries aren’t part of the Western sanctions. But that will have to be expanded. And Asian countries, I think, are going to have to be buying more than they’re buying now if that is to be a long-run lifeline to Putin. So I still would rate the chances of escalation lower than in 1941, but I do still think that that risk is there and we would be foolish not to consider it quite seriously.

ROGÉ KARMA: I agree and that is definitely the question that I think we’re all going to be keeping our eyes on. I want to get to the global picture in a minute and how this is affecting the rest of the world. But first, I actually want to go back to something we talked about earlier, which you mentioned two of the different theories of how sanctions are supposed to work.

One is something we’ve mentioned a few times, which is regime change. Either people rising up under the face of economic pain and overthrowing a regime, or an inner group of elites who are pressured to the point where they decide that they need to oust the leader in charge. And both of these have been thrown out as possibilities when it comes to Russia. The latter one especially has been taken seriously. If we put enough financial pressure on these oligarchs who have basically built their wealth in concert with the Russian state, if we put enough economic pressure on them, maybe they can force Putin out.

I’m wondering just how you think about those two theories in the context of Russia. Is there any validity to or possibility that we could see these sanctions end up creating some kind of regime change, as taboo as it is to talk about for someone like Joe Biden?

NICHOLAS MULDER: The impression, I think, that’s fairly unanimous from the Russia expert community is that the sanctions on oligarchs and the expectation of popular protests are difficult to see as mechanisms that are going to lead in the very short-term to forces that will force Putin to change course. And the reason for that is that Russia under Putin has been repressing its political opposition, systematically imprisoning it, driving it out of the country.

The massive brain drain and huge exodus of skilled and liberal-minded young Russians right now also towards the rest of the world is considerable. That is a natural constituency for an anti-Putin opposition. That’s weakening. So the people that are left that you would ordinarily rely on to be the backbone of political opposition are less strong than they were before. That doesn’t inspire great confidence.

On the oligarch side of the picture, I think here you need to think about what sort of an oligarchy Russia is. There’s a great book by the political theorist Jeffrey Winters called “Oligarchy.” And he distinguishes several types of oligarchy. But Russia, in his theory, is a so-called sultanistic oligarchy, an oligarchy in which the power of the wealthy and the assets of the wealthy are protected by a single uber oligarch, or sultan, who is able to discipline all of them but provide for the protection of their wealth as a class against threats, particularly from below, from the mass of the population, but also from external actors.

That seems to approximate quite closely the sort of political economy of wealth in Russia in the last few years and in the last decade. In the 1990s, it used to be different. But Putin, in the 2000s, steadily pushed out the oligarchs that were political opponents. And he, in a sense, rewrote the contract between the very wealthy in Russia and the national security state such that if you want to be one of the oligarchs today and if you want to be truly wealthy, you cannot but do so by accepting the basic ability of Putin and his security henchmen around him to control foreign policy and control the essential affairs of state.

So this is a kind of regime in which the oligarchs are there but they are not the puppet masters behind political power as you would expect in some other oligarchies where a ruler truly rules by the grace, so to speak, of the truly wealthy. The truly wealthy here are, it seems, below the security elites in the Kremlin that really is in charge of this policy. And from also most of the reports that we have, they seem to be largely suffering enormous losses to their assets, but suffering in silence because they do not have, by and large, that many avenues to voice their opposition. Again, it could very well be that eventually something changes. But this seems to be the read right now that I see among the majority of Russia watchers.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROGÉ KARMA: Let’s look at the global picture now, because the impact of these sanctions hasn’t just been limited to Russia and the West. So for most of us in the West, the place we’re feeling this war the most is the spike in energy prices. But these sanctions have impacted a much wider set of commodity markets.

And this has been on my mind a lot recently as someone who has a lot of family in places like Lebanon and Palestine who are being hit really hard right now by a conflict and a sanctions regime they had nothing to do with. So can you talk about some of the spillover effects this is having in the global South, in particular?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Yes, the main conduit for those spillover effects are, like you said, commodities markets. So Russia and Ukraine together export a large amount of the total exported amount of cereals and food grains— corn, wheat, sunflower oil, et cetera— to many countries. And particularly in North Africa and in the Middle East, they’re very dependent on exports from Russia and Ukraine.

So what this war and the sanctions that the West has used in order to try and stop Putin’s war have done is that the war itself has closed Ukrainian ports — major ports like Odessa, Mariupol, Verdansk are now no longer easily accessible by cargo ships — and Mykolaiv. So those become inaccessible. And normal exports from Ukrainian farmland to the rest of the world have been stopped.

But the sanctions on Russia as well have had a supercharging effect on that access issue. Because if it was simply Ukraine that could not export, we would certainly be seeing a spike in food prices. Ukrainian exports are significant. But Ukrainian and Russian exports put together — Russia has quite a bit more still exports in those key sectors than Ukraine — those two shocks put together — the war shock to Ukraine and the sanctions shock to Russia — now mean that there’s a significantly reduced supply of food for export in global markets.

Food prices are already higher than they were in 2008 and in 2011. In 2008, there was a major global wave of political unrest and riots. And in 2010, 2011, these bread riots in North Africa, particularly around the Middle East, were one of the main contributing factors that kicked off the Arab Spring. They weren’t the reason that people revolted. It was also because of political repression and corruption and all sorts of grievances that had built up. But food riots were a trigger for them.

And this is what happens in a complex globalized world economy. And that’s, I think, why these sanctions are such a massive turning point and also why their consequences I think should be taken really seriously — intended, but especially also unintended — because the likelihood in this fragile world economy that’s been hit by 2008 and Covid and is slowly recovering — in the global South, people are still dying en masse from Covid-19 as well and they continue to not get waivers for Covid vaccines — IP waivers. So the West continues to protect the intellectual property of its own pharmaceutical companies in many cases.

These countries have not gotten also as much debt relief as they would have wanted from the IMF. So they have had a number of grievances already, a number of issues where they asked for help from the industrialized developed world, didn’t get it, and now they’re also, on top of that, suffering from the spillover effects of this war and these sanctions.

So it’s really important, I think, that we take very seriously the damage and the effects that this is having on the global South and that we try and put in place, as soon as possible, stabilizing policies by governments through fiscal spending, by central banks to backstop some of these commodity markets to make sure there’s less volatility, that the prices aren’t bouncing up and down, and that we invest very targetedly, but in large amounts and rapidly, in specific places to expand port capacity, available infrastructure, ramp up shipbuilding so we have extra shipping tonnage to move this stuff around, and, of course, release grain and other food supplies from strategic reserves, which are very large in many O.E.C.D. countries.

So there’s a lot of things that we can do. But there seems to be very little public pressure in the West to do them. Because in the West, this is largely a story about energy prices. But in the global South, even before that already right now, there’s a very severe food crisis that’s beginning to take shape. And the consequence of that for political stability we will know by the end of the year. But they are definitely not going to be positive.

ROGÉ KARMA: I want to pick up on that theme of possible political instability, because a core theme of the book and a real lesson of the history of sanctions that you discuss is that they don’t only have economic ripple effects. They really do have these political effects throughout the world. And obviously we can’t predict the future here. But I’m interested in your perspective. Looking at this current global environment, what historical parallels feel the most relevant for you right now? And is there anything you think we can learn from them for our own time?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Well, the book and also my professional background as a historian is as a specialist of the interwar period. So I have to say I’m a little professionally inclined probably to always look for parallels there, which is probably too restrictive. But one positive thing that came out of the interwar period is a sense that globalization is fragile and that it requires concerted cooperation and effort to stabilize it.

The thing that is worrisome — and the thing that the Great Depression in the ’30s also teach you — is that in that environment of mistrust, some countries are going to take an illiberal route. And there are better and worse ways of dealing with that. But I feel that we’re still at such a moment right now where it is possible to try and emphasize areas where we can cooperate, even with authoritarian and illiberal powers, in the interest of global stability.

We have way more issues. We have climate change. We have major inequality and international issues, like tax avoidance, corruption. Those are all areas in which countries can collaborate. Restraining cyber warfare and cybersecurity. There’s a lot of domains in which we could embark on new treaties and new stabilizing institutions.

But we also need to have both the confidence that we could do something better, that we could create something new, and, in a sense, the wherewithal and the courage to do these things, even though right now I realize in the West, particularly, the tendency is to want to only band together with countries that share our values. What the interwar period teaches you is that that might be, politically, entirely justified, but it is geopolitically sometimes also dangerous because it burns some bridges that particularly right now I think we should try and keep them open.

In the 1930s, there was a threat of fascism and it was ultimately very justified that the West and countries went to war against it. And there was no really sharing the world with fascism that was really possible. But today, I think we have much larger challenges. And we’re not yet at the point where that existential ideological confrontation is happening. We’re dealing with a pretty old problem, which is simply that there are freer and less free countries.

So it seems to me that the absence of some of that ideological strife of the early 20th century is an asset today and hopefully we can look beyond some of those differences and think about what sort of global governance institutions can you preserve even as you stand confidently and steadfastly for your own values. You don’t need to agree. You don’t need to approve of every action of every other government. This is not a reason to take away criticism. It is, however, an argument to prioritize where will you criticize and compete and force laws and where will you also preserve and talk across differences and try and manage common global problems.

ROGÉ KARMA: We’ve been talking a lot about Russia, for obvious reasons, but the U.S. is currently employing sanctions against a lot of countries around the world. Could you just give me an overview of the current U.S. sanctions landscape beyond the sanctions on Russia that people are probably familiar with right now?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Yeah, so the sanctions against Iran, of course — we already mentioned it — are still in effect. And these are not just very long and old sanctions. But the sanctions that the Trump administration imposed, the Biden administration has, by and large, preserved against Iran. So those are still in effect.

The other important sanctions regimes are the ones against Venezuela, which is under sanctions that might even be more severe than those against Russia. It has had its assets frozen — foreign assets. But it also has seen large sanctions against its major oil sector, the main revenue-earning sector of its economy. That as an effect that Venezuela has undergone one of the most dramatic peacetime collapses of an economy in the last 150 years.

I think there’s maybe only one or two other cases that have been as severe. But something like 75 percent of its 2013 G.D.P. has evaporated as a result of the sanctions. So Venezuela remains a real nadir of economic outcomes in terms of exposure to sanctions.

North Korea, of course. We also I think have displaced that somewhat, even as Kim Jong-un has continued to really provocatively fire all of these ballistic missiles. But that, too, is a country that the West and the U.N. even has with sanctions tried to restrain for many years now and it hasn’t really worked.

And then one other important one that I think is important to mention here — Syria against the Assad regime where from 2012 onwards, the West started to demand that as part of any resolution of the Syrian Civil War, Assad had to go and it would keep these sanctions in place until he did. And it is a very contentious topic right now. Because the question is — Assad has largely defeated the political opposition in a very brutal way but does that mean that this country, including many of the people living in it, are still victims of his regime, should continue to also live in economic penury and cannot rebuild their country after this war ever either?

ROGÉ KARMA: You mentioned earlier in the conversation that there are studies showing that sanctions have about a one in three success rate of achieving or at least partially achieving their goals. But that list — that list is really disconcerting. We have sanctions on Syria and Venezuela. Assad and Maduro are still in power.

We have sanctions on North Korea and Iran. They haven’t stopped North Korea from developing a bomb. If anything, Iran is closer to developing a nuclear weapon today than when the Trump maximum pressure campaign started. It’s a really dismal set of outcomes. And I think that’s particularly worrisome because of the pain that they’re inflicting.

And I want to focus actually on a country you didn’t mention, which is Afghanistan, because that’s a country that I think demonstrates this dichotomy between efficacy and economic pain. Because Afghanistan right now is undergoing a genuine humanitarian crisis. And it’s one that our sanctions policies bear some real responsibility for. According to the most recent estimates, 95 percent of Afghans don’t have enough to eat. We’re talking about 9 million people who are at risk of starvation. Could you talk me through the crisis right now in Afghanistan and the role that U.S. sanctions have played in it?

NICHOLAS MULDER: So that’s a very important case that you bring up, Rogé, because we, since the military withdrawal from Kabul in August of 2021, have considered the war in Afghanistan over. The Taliban are now back in power. They took over at an unexpected speed at the end of last summer. And one of the things that the U.S. Treasury decided to do in response was to freeze about $7 billion worth of assets belonging to the Afghan central bank held in American financial institutions.

ROGÉ KARMA: So this is similar to the central bank freeze we just did on Russia, right?

NICHOLAS MULDER: Exactly. Yeah. $7 billion, right? Russia wouldn’t even bat an eyelid about it. But for an economy of the size of Afghanistan, which is tiny in G.D.P. terms, but the population of Afghanistan is actually very large — it’s more than 33, 34 million — for an economy that is very poor and that has a large population to feed, even being deprived of access to just a few low single digit billion dollars is devastating.

And over the winter now, the International Crisis Group, the United Nations have warned about one of the largest famines in recent history. And Biden has taken the decision, I think, about a month or two ago to unfreeze half of these assets and give them in a small drip feed to Afghanistan in the form of humanitarian aid and to release the other half and pay off the families of 9/11 victims who have pursued lawsuits against the Afghan government.

So the US government basically has now taken control of the foreign reserves of Afghanistan and is determining what can happen with them. And I think that besides the ethical questions that that raises, the real long-run outcome being produced by it — we should ask ourselves questions about it. The whole reason for militarily intervening in Afghanistan in the first place was to prevent it from being a safe haven for terrorists and extremist groups.

And that was partially because Afghanistan in the 1990s had come out of a decade of war with the Soviet Union, then went through a decade of Civil War, and was so poor and underdeveloped by the end of it that it was very much a seed bed for those fundamentalist groups. And it had a governance problem. It couldn’t control all parts of the countryside. So it was easy for groups to settle there and find local support. Those are the exact conditions that these Western sanctions and the U.S. freeze is now recreating in Afghanistan.

So it’s imperative not just for humanitarian and ethical reasons to help the Afghans, who we have been trying to help in some way for 20 years, to actually follow through and end this economic war on them, but also I think to make sure that we don’t create the very problem that we originally went into Afghanistan to try and solve. So I think those are two pretty strong arguments for trying to restore those reserves and really increase humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

ROGÉ KARMA: I want to end, before book recs, by talking about where all this leaves us. Because it sometimes feels like the only alternatives to sanctions are either go to war or do nothing. And neither of those are really good options either. So are there alternatives to sanctions or maybe a better way of designing sanctions that could help us achieve better outcomes here without having some of these truly brutal devastating effects on civilian populations?

NICHOLAS MULDER: So, interestingly, in the interwar period, there was a strong sense that sanctions were only part of the way that you could weaponize the economy. You could negatively weaponize the economy in the form of sanctions by cutting off access to resources and depriving economies of them. But you could also positively weaponize the economy and that was by pooling resources. By securing them from places, pooling them together, and then providing them to the victims of aggression. So in this case, that would be Ukraine.

And they definitely do need a lot of economic aid but also, eventually to create a positive sum dynamic in the world economy where if you had large enough coalitions pooling resources and distributing them to those in need, there would be less distrust and less geopolitical uncertainty and instability to begin with. So this would, in the long run, even have war-reducing effects — war which has become less prevalent if there was more prosperity and more proactive economic and financial and logistical aid to begin with.

Now, people might say that that’s Utopian and countries will continue to have differences. And that’s doubtless true. But even so, I think if we complement our use of sanctions much more with thinking about positive aid, that would be a powerful thing. How can we not only sweeten the carrot? How can we make the reasons for pursuing good behavior and getting sanctions lifted more compelling to the countries that are under them? But also, how can we, after the sanctions are lifted and good behavior returns, help those societies that have been through something approximating economic war?

If we take that comparison seriously, I think that should lead us to also take the next step and say, well, if a war ends, afterwards there’s a reconstruction process that takes place. Economic war should be followed by economic reconstruction. So countries after having been exposed to sanctions, they have all sorts of problems — corruption, major forms of damage to the social fabric to institutions, to the ability of markets and economic activity in life and investment to operate. Companies need to be convinced to move back — that’s another thing. So this is an international private sector challenge as well.

If we think about those things — so sanctions relief and post-sanctions reconstruction — as something where we can really put a lot of our best and brightest and most sophisticated economic tools to work, I think we could go some way towards both expanding the tool kit that we have to deal with international crises and also hopefully making sure that the damage to ordinary people is going to be less.

ROGÉ KARMA: I think that’s a good place to come to a close. So I’m going to ask you the final question we always ask on the podcast, which is, what are three books that have influenced you that you’d recommend to the audience?

NICHOLAS MULDER: I’ll start with one that’s very topical right now. And it’s a book by Vladislav Zubok called “Collapse.” It just came out in November with Yale University Press. And Zubok is a historian at the LSE, the London School of Economics. And he’s written this really fantastic and very gripping book on the end of the Soviet Union. So it’s all about the late ’80s and the early ’90s.

But for anyone, I think, looking to find some good background on why this war and this enmity between Russia and Ukraine already goes back three decades, and in a way it was actually the consequence of unresolved tensions from that period — I think this is a great place to start. And it will really put a lot of things that I think listeners might be familiar with from that period from having lived through it into a new light. So “Collapse” by Vladislav Zubok is one.

The second book I’d like to recommend is Victoria de Grazia’s “The Perfect Fascist.” Victoria de Grazia is a historian at Columbia, and she’s specialized across her entire career in Italy. And she’s written this phenomenal book, which is about one of the main henchmen in Mussolini’s regime — the head of Mussolini’s Black Shirts in fascist Italy — and his wife who was a Jewish-American opera singer from the Upper West Side of New York City.

And she married him and it’s a story about their marriage, but also about why people became fascists and how that affected people in their private lives and the public responsibilities of being in this authoritarian regime versus people’s private doubts and idiosyncrasies. So it’s a wonderful book at the intersection of public and private life. And it’s also very much about what is life under fascism and how did Americans and Italians deal with that in the early 20th century. So I very strongly recommend that. “The Perfect Fascist” by Victoria de Grazia.

And the final book I’d like to recommend is actually a memoir. It’s by Aleksander Wat — W-A-T — and it’s called “My Century.” And Wat was a Polish-Jewish writer and poet and a modernist literary figure in interwar Poland. And he had an incredibly difficult life. He describes his experience of the ’30s and ’40, which he spent a large amount of in imprisonment by the Soviet Union. And he narrowly escaped death several times.

And if you, I think, want— we’re living through tumultuous times. I’ve already compared it to the interwar period in some ways. It is very fruitful also to read a highly articulate and interesting person document their experiences in that period, what it’s like to read Marcel Proust in Lubyanka, the headquarters of the KGB, for example, or the NKVD. Wat talks about all of that.

But mainly, despite the fact that he went through enormous sufferings, never lose his sharpness in observation, never loses sense for humanity and beauty and the small moment. So in terms of memoir, I highly recommend that. So I think those would be my three recommendations.

ROGÉ KARMA: Nick Mulder, your book is “The Economic Weapon.” I cannot recommend it highly enough for trying to make sense of the moment we’re living through. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

NICHOLAS MULDER: Thank you very much, Rogé. Absolute pleasure to have this conversation.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROGÉ KARMA: “The Ezra Klein Show” is a production of New York Times Opinion. It is produced by Annie Galvin, Jeff Geld and me, Rogé Karma. This episode was fact checked by Michelle Harris, Mary Marge Locker and Kate Sinclair. Mixing and engineering by Jeff Geld. Original music is by Isaac Jones. Our executive producer is Irene Noguchi. Audience strategy by Shannon Busta. And a special thanks to Kristina Samulewski and Kristin Lin.

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[***‘Faster: How a Jewish Driver, an American Heiress, and a Legendary Car Beat Hitler’s Best,’ by Neal Bascomb: An Excerpt***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YFG-9WC1-JBG3-60NG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** An excerpt from “Faster: How a Jewish Driver, an American Heiress, and a Legendary Car Beat Hitler’s Best,” by Neal Bascomb

**Body**

Prologue

“We Will Write the History Now”

The beast, long lurking in plain sight while the Allies stood idle, pounced at last. On May 10, 1940, wave after wave of German bombers, their supercharged engines in high pitch, swept across the dawn sky while armored columns rumbled overland. Into Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg the Nazis advanced, shattering the morning quiet. Their paratroopers severed communication lines and captured essential bridges. Commandos dropped from glider planes and seized critical fortresses before they could stall any advance. In short order, panzer divisions barreled deep into foreign territory. When French and British forces hurried northeastward to Belgium to stem the attack, they fell straight into the trap of expectations entrenched from the First World War.

To their east, the main thrust of the German juggernaut charged through the seventy-mile stretch of the Ardennes, forested hills once considered as impenetrable as the concrete fortifications of the Maginot Line that ran along the border between France and Germany. Within days, the Nazi spearhead, supported by artillery barrages and aerial attacks, crossed the Meuse River in France, forcing the Allies to retreat. By May 15, the French prime minister, Paul Reynaud, despaired over the telephone to his British counterpart, Winston Churchill, that the war was all but lost.

The French had some fight left in them, but it was at best panicked going up against what one witness called “a cruel machine in perfect condition, organized, disciplined, all-powerful.”

[ Return to the review of [*“Faster.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/books/review/faster-neal-bascomb.html) ]

At the news of the Germans’ rapid advance, Parisians took flight, particularly from the toniest quarters of the city. Railway stations were crowded with passengers desperate for tickets on sold-out trains, while overstuffed cars and buses jammed the roads leading south from the city. At the same time, forlorn refugees from Belgium poured into Paris from the north. “With bicycles and bundles and battered suitcases, holding twisted birdcages, and dogs in stiff arms,” observed Life magazine, “they came and came and came.”

Fearing an invasion for more than a year, the French had safeguarded many of their finest treasures. In Paris, monuments were sandbagged, and the stained-glass windows of Sainte-Chapelle had been removed. Curators at the Louvre denuded its walls of masterpieces such as the Mona Lisa and its floors of priceless sculptures. Convoys of nondescript trucks hauled these artworks to chateaus across the country. Likewise, French physicists evacuated their supplies of heavy water and uranium, instrumental to the pursuit of a nuclear bomb. Priceless art and rare substances were not the only items squirreled away as the German blitzkrieg threatened Paris. Across the city, people stashed family heirlooms in cellars and buried them wrapped in oilcloth. One Parisian hid a batch of diamonds in a jar of congealed lard that he left on his pantry shelf.

In the Delahaye factory on the rue du Banquier in the ***working***- ***class*** heart of the city stood four 145s. The manufacturer’s production chief intended to see his creations secured away, whether by dismantling them into parts, hiding them in caves outside the city, or, like those diamonds in the lard, masking them in the open, their engines and chassis covered up with new bodies — or none at all — and their true provenance concealed. These masterpieces could not be lost in the rage of war, nor found by the Nazis. There was little doubt that Hitler wanted them seized and destroyed.

In late May, the Germans drove back the Allied forces into northern France, where they were forced to evacuate the continent at Dunkirk. Then the invading army wheeled toward Paris. Reynaud exhorted his countrymen to fight to the death to hold the Somme, while his feckless war committee debated where to move the government when Paris fell. His staff collected secret papers to be sunk in barges in the Seine or burned in ministry yards.

While the police were armed with rifles to thwart any fifth-column attack and an antiaircraft gun was placed atop the Arc de Triomphe, many Parisians maintained an oblivious calm. Then, on June 3, the Luftwaffe hit Paris. Likened by one child to a “swarm of bees,” Stuka planes dropped over a thousand bombs, targeting most intensely the Renault and Citroën factories in western Paris, which had transitioned to war production, much as their German counterparts, most notably Daimler-Benz and Auto Union, had done years before. The attack killed 254 and wounded triple that number.

The exodus from Paris accelerated.

Two days later, the Germans launched the second half of their campaign to take France. At the Somme, they ruptured the French line, their panzer divisions overpowering the courageous but doomed army. The door to Paris was ajar, and Reynaud and his government abandoned the capital.

Onward the Wehrmacht pressed.

In the capital, the growing numbers of routed French soldiers with unkempt beards and muddied uniforms portended the inevitable. Finally, on June 14, motorized columns of the German army — including heavy trucks, armored vehicles, motorcycles with sidecars, and tanks— entered an undefended city. Soldiers clad in gray and green followed on foot. The streets were so empty before them that at one intersection a herd of untethered cows aimlessly wandered past.

The Germans fortified positions at key arteries across the city, but there was no reason for such caution. Residents were helpless to launch a revolt when their armies had already retreated to the south. Instead, from windows and half-open doorways, they gaped at the rows of Germans marching past in their heavy boots.

By the afternoon, swastikas flew from the Arc de Triomphe and the ministry of foreign affairs. An enormous banner was strung to the Eiffel Tower that read, in block letters, “deutschland siegt an allen fronten” (germany is everywhere victorious). Trucks fitted with loudspeakers threaded throughout the city streets, demanding obedience and warning that any hostile act against the Third Reich’s troops would be punishable by execution.

On June 18, General Charles de Gaulle broadcast his own message to his countrymen from his offices in exile at the BBC in London. “Is the last word said? Has all hope gone? Is the defeat definitive? No. Believe me, I tell you that nothing is lost for France. One day— victory . . . Whatever happens, the flame of the French resistance must not die and will not die.”

Marshal Philippe Pétain, the newly installed French prime minister, maintained the opposite conviction. He pleaded for surrender, and on June 21, Hitler rolled into the Forest of Compiègne in an oversized Mercedes to deliver his demands. Surrounded by his highest officials, including General Walther von Brauchitsch, commander of all German forces, Hitler emerged from his car. Never one to shy from symbols, he forced the French to sign the terms of capitulation in the same train carriage in the same clearing where the Kaiser’s emissaries had surrendered on November 11, 1918.

Fifty miles away in Paris, the Germans solidified their control of the capital, targeted its Jewish population, and began expropriating whatever they wanted. “They knew where everything was,” was the common refrain: the best hotels, the finest galleries, the richest houses, and even the most popular bordellos.

On the Place de la Concorde, the German army commandeered the famously elegant Hôtel de Crillon and its neighboring colonnaded mansion, which was owned by the Automobile Club de France (the ACF). Founded in 1895, and the first such club of its kind, the club organized the French Grand Prix. Its membership included some of the wealthiest, most influential men in the city. Spread out over 100,000 square feet in a pair of buildings constructed during the reign of Louis XV, the club’s quarters were well suited to its prestige.

One day early in the occupation, a Gestapo officer accompanied by several subordinates strode through the arched entryway of the ACF. The club’s mahogany-paneled bars, its private bedrooms, and its shaded terraces were of no interest to him. Neither was he there to dine in one of its chandeliered, gold-trimmed restaurants, nor to swim in its palatial pool surrounded with statues like a Roman bath. Instead, the officer headed straight to the library, a cavernous, book-filled space that also held the ACF archives and records of every race held in the country since 1895. They were an invaluable and unique resource, chronicling remarkable French wins and ignoble defeats alike.

“Bring me all the race files,” the Nazi ordered the young ACF librarian. The voluminous records were boxed up and brought out on a cart. While his subordinates hauled them away, the Gestapo officer turned to the librarian. “Go home and never return here, or you’ll be arrested. We will write the history now.”

The tale of René Dreyfus, his odd little Delahaye race car, and their champion Lucy Schell was one of the stories that Hitler would have liked struck from the books. This is its telling.

[ Return to the review of [*“Faster.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/books/review/faster-neal-bascomb.html) ]

FASTER How a Jewish Driver, an American Heiress, and a Legendary Car Beat Hitler’s Best By Neal Bascomb 344 pp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. $28. Copyright 2020 © by Neal Bascomb Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

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[***How the Real Estate Boom Left Black Neighborhoods Behind***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:643S-NR21-DXY4-X19D-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 6074 words

**Byline:** Vanessa Gregory

**Highlight:** While homeownership has been an engine of prosperity for white Americans, home values in places like Orange Mound in southeast Memphis have languished. What would it take to catch up?

**Body**

Paula Campbell’s house in the Orange Mound neighborhood of Memphis has a brick facade and neatly trimmed evergreens near the door. From the front yard, she can see across the street to her sister’s house, her daughter’s house and the little blue cottage her grandparents built more than 70 years ago. Campbell, who is in her 50s, with placid eyes and hair she often pulls into a ponytail, grew up on the block and moved away as a young woman. Although Orange Mound has changed in many ways since her youth, this stretch of Cable Avenue has always felt like home, and so 10 years ago she returned for good.

One dreary afternoon, Campbell walked around the corner of her garage, her cardigan hitched above her head against the rain, and gazed at the empty house next door. Mildew flecked the white sideboards and sagging carport; broken lawn furniture littered the yard, and a stray cat slunk through the weeds before disappearing beneath a tilting shed. Campbell and her husband, James, have twice tried to buy the decaying property — a house she lived in as a child — so they could clean it up. But they couldn’t persuade the absentee owner to sell. “I’ve taken pictures of it and sent it to code enforcement,” she said. She sighed and shook her head. “I’ll just keep doing it, keep taking pictures.”

The house next door is a symptom of a far bigger problem affecting Campbell and other homeowners in Orange Mound — one of the country’s oldest and most storied Black neighborhoods, a community where generations built homes and bet big on the American promise that homeownership would build prosperity. Despite a prime location near gentrifying midtown neighborhoods and the University of Memphis campus, Orange Mound’s property values plummeted by 30 percent from 2009 to 2019.

Campbell’s house, for example, is 4,000 square feet, with curved interior doorways and 12-foot ceilings. She and James finished building it in 2017. They paid about $300,000 in cash, drawing in part on the retirement savings she earned during her 25 years working as a lieutenant for the Shelby County Sheriff’s Office. But it’s assessed at only $150,000.

Campbell said that if you took her house “and dumped it in Germantown or Cordova or Central Gardens,” which are predominantly white neighborhoods and suburbs, it would be worth twice as much. Campbell didn’t build to get rich; she wanted to retire in the community that had nurtured her and her siblings into adulthood. Even so, the numbers rankled. “I am concerned about the property value, I am concerned,” she said. “Not just for us, but for everybody that wants to be here.”

In Memphis, as in America, the benefits of homeownership have not accrued equally across race. United States housing policy has leaned heavily on homeownership as a driver of household wealth since the middle of the last century, and, for many white Americans, property ownership has indeed yielded significant wealth. But Black families have largely been left behind, either unable to buy in the first place or hampered by risks that come with owning property. Homeownership’s limitations are especially apparent in Black neighborhoods.

Owner-occupied homes in predominantly [*African American neighborhoods are worth, on average, half as much*](https://www.brookings.edu/research/devaluation-of-assets-in-black-neighborhoods/) as those in neighborhoods with no Black residents, according to a 2018 Brookings Institution and Gallup report that examined metropolitan areas. From 1980 to 2015, homes in white neighborhoods appreciated at twice the rate of those in communities of color, according to another recent study. And these discrepancies cannot fully be explained by objective differences, such as crime rate, poverty levels and neighborhood amenities, according to Andre M. Perry, who co-wrote the Brookings study and wrote a book on the subject, “Know Your Price: Valuing Black Lives and Property in America’s Black Cities.”

Too often, Perry said, we ignore policy choices and patterns of disinvestment, placing the blame for a neighborhood’s conditions on the people who live there. “Black people are not broken, our homes are not broken, but they are devalued,” Perry says. “If we can change the narrative that the condition of Black homes is the result of individual decisions, then we can actually get to policy to solve problems.”

For neighborhoods like Orange Mound, the solutions cannot come fast enough. The decline has been crushing for local residents, many of whom struggle to sell homes or borrow against them for critical repairs. Orange Mound has an enviable location near downtown, a rich history and a fierce communal identity. It created strong institutions in its churches and schools. ***Working-class*** strivers, including Campbell’s grandparents, raised families and bought homes, viewing property as a path toward equality. So why isn’t Orange Mound thriving? Why isn’t more than 130 years of homeownership enough?

Before it became a Black neighborhood, Orange Mound was a plantation that grew rich from the labor of enslaved people. Beginning in 1825, John George Deaderick Sr. bought 5,000-odd acres of land just outside Memphis, started farming and built a lavish colonial house. He died shortly after arriving in the region, but his wife and sons continued to manage the land, and they kept buying human beings until the end of the Civil War. Afterward, in 1889, one of Deaderick’s heirs sold portions of the property to a white developer named Elzey Eugene Meacham, who in turn made the improbable decision to sell plots to Black people.

That’s how Orange Mound, which took its name from the osage orange bushes that grew on its eastern edge, became the first subdivision in the country designed specifically for Black buyers, who hurried to put 50 cents down on $40 lots. When Meacham conceived of Orange Mound, the rural South’s formerly enslaved citizens and their children were flocking to cities in search of work. Some newcomers had already settled in the vicinity, and Meacham may have sensed an untapped and ready-made market. Orange Mound had the advantage of being both proximate to Memphis and remote enough — not yet within the city limits — to offer refuge from the racial terror roiling many downtowns. Migrants most likely knew about what happened in 1866, when white police officers and regular Memphians attacked a Black neighborhood, burning churches and schools, raping women and killing at least 46 people.

Amid such brutality, Orange Mound emerged as a quietly radical alternative. It gave newly freed Americans and their descendants the chance to own land and build homes, a middle-class rite that was unreachable for a majority of Black Americans at the time. Owning land, as the Princeton scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor has observed, was synonymous with claiming full American citizenship. The first civil rights bill, passed in 1866, made the right to buy and possess property integral to the definition of freedom. The period from 1870 to 1910, which encompassed Orange Mound’s founding, coincided with one of the biggest jumps in Black homeownership rates in United States history.

Hazell Glover Jones’s parents, who moved from Alabama to Memphis sometime around 1919, were among those who saw the neighborhood as a pathway toward a better life. Her father worked in an ice-cream factory, and her mother was a homemaker. They settled in North Memphis upon arrival, but one day Jones’s mother spotted a new, two-bedroom house being constructed on Park Avenue, Orange Mound’s central retail corridor. The Glovers bought that house, where Hazell was born in 1945.

“We had a garden, a pear tree, an apple tree in the back yard,” Glover Jones, 76, recalls. “I always told people I thought I was rich because we just had so much food.” She ventured into greater Memphis on occasion, shopping in downtown department stores where she wasn’t allowed to try on clothes, or visiting the zoo on Thursdays, the only day it opened to Black people. But she didn’t need much in the exclusionary white world because Orange Mound was its own universe: There was a baseball team, the Orange Mound Sluggers; the beloved high school, Melrose; and nightclubs to rival Beale Street, like the W.C. Handy Theater, where Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan and B.B. King performed. “We were just self-sufficient,” Glover Jones says. “We stayed in our own little bubble.”

Today the laws that permitted businesses to ban Glover Jones from their dressing rooms are gone, and yet most Americans still live in neighborhoods primarily composed of people who look like themselves. African Americans, in particular, are likely to live in extremely segregated neighborhoods like Orange Mound, the stubborn legacy of 20th-century policies designed to concentrate Black Americans in certain spaces and exclude them from others. In 1933, the Roosevelt administration created the federal Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (H.O.L.C.) to aid a nation reeling from the Great Depression, and the New Deal poured billions into bailing out banks and homeowners. But Black homeowners were excluded from much of that largess. Instead of seeing Orange Mound as a place ripe for recovery, the H.O.L.C. viewed it and many other Black neighborhoods as lost causes, labeling them as “hazardous” on maps that lenders used to make decisions about where and how to risk their money. This now notorious practice of redlining institutionalized discrimination in the housing market, promoted residential segregation and diverted capital from Black neighborhoods.

As Richard Rothstein detailed in [*“The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/20/books/review/richard-rothstein-color-of-law-forgotten-history.html) enforcing segregation became a nationwide project, as commonplace and as poisonous in the Northeast and West as in the former Confederate states. Local, state and federal policies during much of the 20th century included exclusionary zoning laws, race-based deed restrictions, discriminatory rules governing the construction and occupancy of public housing and, perhaps most infamous, race-based lending.

In just one example, the Federal Housing Administration, which in 1934 began insuring mortgages with the intent of helping the middle class afford homes, was so committed to segregation that it withheld mortgage insurance from both Black buyers who might wish to live in an integrated neighborhood and white buyers who planned to rent to African Americans. Rothstein recounts a 1958 case in which a white homeowner in Berkeley, Calif., rented to a Black tenant, only to find himself under investigation by the F.B.I. and permanently barred from receiving another F.H.A.-backed mortgage.

The Fair Housing Act outlawed discriminatory lending in 1968, and the public and private forces maintaining the racial status quo in residential housing became subtler, if not less effective. One such example, from the early 1980s, comes from Memphis itself. The city had closed the northern end of a street that led from a Black neighborhood into a white one, citing a desire to increase safety and reduce “undesirable traffic.” Black residents and civic organizations sued, and the case went to the Supreme Court, which reversed a lower court’s finding and upheld the city’s right to close the street. Thurgood Marshall, the only African American justice at the time, dissented, objecting to the city’s coded language, the closure’s disproportionate impact on Black residents and the real financial harm that might come to Black property owners.

Marshall saw what the white majority on the court could not: that a so-called “inconvenience” was actually a racial penalty with the power to perpetuate segregation and seed lasting psychological and economic disadvantage. What’s apparent 40 years later, in Orange Mound and elsewhere, is the crystallization of that disadvantage.

One day Paula Campbell drove me to see a different Memphis neighborhood, one on a very different trajectory from Orange Mound’s. Binghampton, to the north, sits beyond the grand historic homes of Central Gardens and near the crown jewel of Overton Park. Like Orange Mound, Binghampton has struggled with poverty, abandoned homes and the ravages of disinvestment. The neighborhood is also majority Black, as is the city of Memphis, although it is far more integrated than Orange Mound, which is more than 90 percent Black; Binghampton, by contrast, is roughly 66 percent Black.

Campbell drove her white pickup past East High School, a baroque masterpiece built for whites during segregation, and soon began to point out some of the repurposed buildings that marked Binghampton’s revival. One housed a craft brewery; another had been converted into an ax-throwing gym; a third housed a bar with an arcade and board games. At a strip of tidy storefronts on Broad Avenue, she slowed. “That’s the restaurant,” she said, pointing at a building trimmed in pink neon where she ate earlier. “And it’s real small and just cozy, you see? You see?” She crept forward, shaking her head at a coffee shop, a ramen restaurant, a high-end lighting store, gleaming bike lanes. “You see there, how they’re improving?” she asked. “We have no signs of improvement.”

Campbell paused outside a storefront with a dark roofline and red awning. “Look, Broadway Pizza has been there for years, for years,” she said. “And they built around it. It just — it makes me mad. It just really makes me mad. Just look at this, look at the clothing stores. Just a whole row.” Campbell grew quiet. She turned left across a crosswalk, past a curving bus-stop shelter that doubled as public art. She noticed a wedge of land stretching before her, its reddish soil leveled and covered with stacks of concrete blocks. “Look at that over there,” she said softly, as she steered south toward home. “It’s going to be houses.”

The pendulum swung in Binghampton, says Noah Gray, the executive director of the Binghampton Development Corporation, most visibly in the past decade, transitioning from a neighborhood that no one considered a good investment to a place that developers look to eagerly. Homes now sell for as much as $400,000, well above the median home price for the city. Investment has begotten investment and driven philanthropic interest, with Gray’s organization poised to help build a $54 million, 219-unit affordable-housing complex. There’s commercial activity, residential construction and nonprofit organizations serving youth and working adults.

Progress has nonetheless come with some predictable downsides. Home prices have risen, and long-term residents have faced the prospect of being priced out of both the purchasing and rental markets. As the Memphis daily newspaper, The Commercial Appeal, has reported, Broad Avenue, the centerpiece of the neighborhood’s rising fortunes, [*strikes some residents as “too white” and “not for me.”*](https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/money/business/development/2019/02/21/broad-avenue-memphis-binghampton-growth/2614073002/) Binghampton’s celebrated diversity — the neighborhood has a significant immigrant population — might already be on the wane. The census block immediately south of Broad is now nearly evenly split between Black and white residents.

But Campbell isn’t the only person to view Binghampton’s recovery as a potential blueprint. Melvin Burgess, the Shelby County property assessor, whose jurisdiction includes Memphis and the suburbs, is in the early stages of trying to initiate a similar economic recovery for Orange Mound. Burgess, who has a boyish face and gray at his temples, is the son of Memphis’s first African American police chief and remembers when Memphis was flush with flourishing Black neighborhoods. About two years ago, he asked his staff to run some numbers on property values. Because Burgess’s wife grew up in Orange Mound, he knew the neighborhood’s homeowners were most likely in trouble. But the degree of wealth being lost still shocked him.

“It’s a no-win situation,” Burgess said. “You know and I know that with your home, if you have no equity to borrow against, to send your kids to college, to do some things around the house, or just to have extra cash — especially in the Black community — that’s the only asset you have, that’s the only asset you have to let you be economically stable.”

In April 2020, I joined one of his redevelopment meetings on Zoom. Burgess’s task force included politicians, government staff members, nonprofit representatives, business leader and academics. Henry Turley, a powerful developer known for reviving Memphis’s downtown, appeared in one rectangle, seated in front of a wall painted with leafy designs. In another, Mark Sunderman, a University of Memphis business and economics professor, peered into his camera from behind glasses and a bushy white beard.

Sunderman talked about creating an inventory of housing stock so that the task force could determine how best to market the neighborhood and meet its varying needs. The average Orange Mound home was 70 years old. Some homes had been abandoned or foreclosed on; others had fallen into disrepair in the hands of multiple heirs who either couldn’t afford to make repairs or who were hindered by estate problems. The neighborhood varies at a microlevel, he noted. The ghosts of torn-down houses — crumbling driveways, concrete steps to nowhere — dominate some blocks, while other streets still brim with life, full of orderly lawns and basketball hoops where kids play in the afternoons.

Turley, who spoke with a gravelly Southern accent, asked Sunderman if he could calculate the cost of doing nothing in Orange Mound. Turley wanted the professor to quantify not only the lost tax revenues that come with depressed property values but also societal costs, such as unemployment and the price of imprisoning people who commit crime in the area. “You’ve got to prove to others that reinvesting in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods is worthwhile,” he said.

Turley’s sense that the task force would struggle to attract investors is well supported. Burgess often talks about the invisible “economic wall” that seems to surround and constrain Orange Mound, isolating it from market-driven upswings in adjacent communities. Racial demographics play a significant role in influencing where money is invested across America, according to the Urban Institute. One study in Chicago, for instance, showed that [*white neighborhoods received 4.6 times as much market investment per household as majority Black neighborhoods.*](https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/chicago-access-capital-depends-your-neighborhood) Even when researchers adjust for income levels, the pattern doesn’t shift: Capital flows away from communities of color.

People in Orange Mound often describe the neighborhood as a victim of its own success: Integration allowed the well-educated and ambitious children of the civil rights generation to move where they pleased, and the neighborhood hollowed out as the upwardly mobile voluntarily exchanged city life for the suburbs. But it might be more accurate to say that the suburbs were chosen for them. In Memphis, as in much of America, the city’s geography is a physical manifestation of racial injustice.

In the early 1970s, when federal courts forced city schools to integrate, white Memphians fled to private schools and suburbs at astonishing speeds. By the fall of 1973 alone, one-quarter to one-third of white students had left city schools. One elementary school’s demographics flipped almost entirely in the span of six short years: from 98 percent white to 100 percent African American. White flight is often understood as a psychological phenomenon driven entirely by individual racial fears. But that interpretation minimizes government’s complicity in catering to racial anxieties.

As Martavius Jones, a Memphis city councilman, points out, construction outside the city limits was heavily subsidized by city-owned Memphis Light, Gas &amp; Water, which provided new power and gas lines to areas that didn’t pay city taxes, generously underwriting the eastward march of wealthy whites fleeing integrated schools. “My maternal grandmother lived in a little old house on Josephine Street,” Jones says, referring to an Orange Mound address. “I think about all the little old ladies and little old men who constantly paid their taxes, and those taxes went to build up the infrastructure outside the city limits of Memphis.”

Americans aren’t accustomed to thinking of utilities and other public assets as drivers of residential segregation and inequality, says Louise Seamster, a University of Iowa sociologist who studies racial politics, but these obscure entities and small decisions can play a major role in the distribution of wealth and power across metropolitan regions. “So many of the rules for development were built around a certain model that implies the creation of a white suburban space and on building through debt, based on this promise of future growth,” she says. “Being an already existing Black community doesn’t fit that model.”

In the decades following school integration, Memphis became increasingly Black but remained under largely white political control. In the late 1980s and early ’90s, Shep Wilbun served as one of three Black City Council members out of 13, and he recalls his sense that the city didn’t provide services to Black neighborhoods in the same way that it did for white ones. “The streets were not being paved, lights were not being kept on,” Wilbun says. “The garbage was being picked up, but not in the same way. When garbage was picked up in some neighborhoods, they carried a broom to sweep behind the truck. In Black neighborhoods, they did not.”

Memphis chased its swelling suburbs, approving annexation after annexation. A result is an exceptionally low-density city, with a population similar to that of Detroit — itself famous for sprawling — only spread over an area nearly twice as big. The most recent census showed a population decline, creating a context in which it’s almost inevitable that some neighborhoods, like Binghampton, will win the economic lottery, while others will lose. With so much available space for so few people, there’s scant incentive for private developers or home buyers to take bets on ailing communities.

Memphis’s history mirrors a national approach to Black city neighborhoods that the Princeton sociologist Patrick Sharkey describes as a pattern of “abandonment and punishment” in which federal policy shifted resources away from people and neighborhoods and into the criminal-justice system. That has been our national approach to urban inequality, Sharkey says, for the past half-century.

Homeownership alone simply isn’t sufficient to insulate Black families or communities from these longstanding political and historical forces. “It’s not just about homeownership,” Sharkey says. “Communities that could be stable and thriving places to live have not received the basic investments that are taken for granted in most towns and cities across the country. And when a community doesn’t receive basic investments, then it becomes vulnerable.” Indeed, homeownership cannot only fail to deliver wealth; it can bind people to declining neighborhoods, turning the asset that most of us see as the key to financial security into an anchor that limits mobility and ties individual fates more deeply to those of neighborhoods.

In the waning weeks of winter, just before the pandemic began, I pulled up outside a brick house two blocks south of Campbell’s home on Cable Avenue, not far from Beulah Baptist Church, an Orange Mound institution known for supporting civil rights activism in the 1960s. The house was occupied by Karita McCulley, who appreciated its wooden floors and the fact that her youngest children, Keirra, who was 18, and Kaylob, who was 10, had their own rooms. Kaylob was doing homework, and McCulley had wrapped her slender figure in a long brown cardigan. Her 4-year-old granddaughter — the child of an older daughter — tugged at her sweater sleeve and waved a box of candy. “The eyes get me,” McCulley said, opening the box and reluctantly surrendering four sweet-and-sours. “And she knows it.”

McCulley, who is in her 40s, belongs to the first generation born after the civil rights movement, a group of African Americans who should have benefited tremendously from the opportunity gains of the 1960s. But despite the freedoms of the post-civil-rights era, her generation has experienced relatively little economic mobility.

McCulley arrived in Orange Mound for the first time as a teenager, trailing her mother, a warehouse worker and former Job Corps instructor, who came to the neighborhood for the same reason as those before her: the chance to own property. McCulley’s mother bought her house in 1997. She planted a garden and grew greens. On warm evenings, the family would start a grill and sit outside, playing dominoes or spades on a card table, sharing food and conversation with neighbors. But the idyll didn’t last. Her mother refinanced to make home repairs and signed an adjustable-rate mortgage. When the payments ballooned, the house went into foreclosure. The next buyer lost the house to the bank as well, and the city eventually razed it.

This experience foreshadowed a mid-aughts subprime-lending crisis in which Memphis emerged as a case study in the ways the housing bubble disproportionately affected Black buyers and communities. In 2009, the City of Memphis and Shelby County sued Wells Fargo, accusing the bank of engaging in lending practices that were deceptive, predatory and discriminatory. The suit’s accusations included credit managers who marketed subprime loans by targeting predominantly Black ZIP codes, software that the company used to “translate” marketing materials into the “language” of “African American” and loan officers who joked about “ghetto loans.”

The flood of foreclosures devastated Orange Mound and similar Memphis neighborhoods, the city and county argued, accelerating the abandonment and neglect of properties — and leaving a costly mess for homeowners and local government. Wells Fargo reached a settlement that included a payment of $3 million to the city and county, $4.5 million in housing-related grants and a pledge of $425 million more in loans to residents of Memphis and Shelby County. Regulators would later settle with another bank, BancorpSouth, for its dealings in Memphis, alleging the company engaged in modern-day redlining.

The mortgage crisis did more than change the way Orange Mound looked; it robbed it of wealth and of people who felt a sense of ownership over the neighborhood. Researchers at the University of Chicago calculated that in 1990, not long before McCulley first settled in Orange Mound, the neighborhood’s rate of homeownership was 53 percent, which may sound modest but is higher than national rates of Black homeownership today. It has now fallen to about 42 percent, according to the assessor’s office.

McCulley was among the renters, although she longed to buy the house that she and her family leased. She saw homeownership as a potential bulwark against crises like the one she suffered when her husband died of cancer in 2012, leaving her with a single income and $40,000 in medical debt. The house that McCulley and her husband had been living in, in another Memphis neighborhood, was suddenly too expensive. She briefly relied on food stamps and felt so ashamed that she forbade her children to tell anyone. She became profoundly depressed. She didn’t want to work anymore; she didn’t feel like doing anything.

But McCulley did work. She got a job as a home health aide, sometimes spending 16 hours a day with her elderly charge. She moved to Orange Mound and started over. Not long after settling into a rental, she was mowing the lawn when a man stopped and insisted on doing it for her. “Nowhere else in Memphis is somebody going to walk past your house and help you cut your grass,” she said. “And for me, that was a big thing.” People remembered her from her teenage years and would call out to her in passing: “Hey Miss Karita, how you doing? How’s your mama doing?”

McCulley methodically paid down her debt. She also realized that she had a talent for working with the elderly. She liked their wisdom, and she liked helping people. She became a certified nursing assistant and found a job in a hospital, where she worked nights and monitored her kids in the day, attending softball games and majorette performances and remaining active in their education. “I’m on the P.T.O.,” she said. “I’m a Shelby County Schools parent ambassador. I do a lot of things that people don’t want to do — meetings.”

Although the median home price in Orange Mound is around $30,000, ownership remains out of reach for many of the neighborhood’s working poor. McCulley had about $8,000 in savings, earned $34,000 a year and received her late husband’s Social Security payments; the family was comfortable enough that her children’s friends sometimes thought they were rich. But McCulley said she couldn’t qualify for a $27,000 mortgage. Her credit wasn’t bad, merely insufficient. “I was raised by a woman, my grandmother, who raised us that you buy it,” McCulley said. “You don’t rent it, you don’t pay a note on it, you buy it.” She had used only one credit card in her life, and she closed that about a decade ago. Her home health care job paid in cash, and she preferred to pay bills in full.

Yet McCulley had bought the gray sectional on which she sat using a line of credit, a decision made on the advice of a credit counselor. “I don’t have — what’s it called? — that magic number,” she said. “I’m trying to get to 650.” She was tired of landlord hassles, of begging for repairs or paying for them herself to save the energy.

She rose from the sofa and walked to the dining area, resting her hand atop a bookcase. She’d been acquiring things for the house that she thought might become permanent: a farm-style dining table, a blue M in swooping script for the front door. She salvaged the shelves beneath her palm from a curb, then sanded and refinished them herself. On the wall above, she affixed an adage about second chances.

A little more than two years after Burgess announced his plans for Orange Mound, he had other pressing matters on his mind as assessor, including trying to figure out how to ease the burden on Shelby County homeowners who were facing property-tax increases from a surging real estate market. But he remained optimistic about Orange Mound. “My goal is to keep doing the work and to have a plan that we can take all over the country to revive these inner-city neighborhoods,” he said last month, as he drove back from Nashville, where he was working with state legislators on securing funds for the task force. He already helped get a moratorium passed by the Shelby County Board of Supervisors on the sale of county-owned property, a measure designed to prevent investors from buying land while it was cheap, betting on Burgess’s eventual success and then pricing residents out. He was also in talks with law-enforcement officials about crime reduction and was courting local entrepreneurs to do business in the neighborhood.

His task force is now officially a neighborhood development corporation, an entity defined under Tennessee state law that is led by community members and nonprofit groups rather than by the assessor’s staff. They’ve drafted a redevelopment plan and connected existing nonprofits, and are pursuing tax incentives designed to attract investors. But residents are impatient, and almost nothing he does comes without criticism. “The people from the community, they want to see stuff work right away,” Burgess said. “It’s a heavy lift because you’ve got so many hurdles.” In five years, he said, they’ll see more commercial activity on the main drags.

And yet his goal has grown even more complicated as the pandemic gives way to an economic resurgence. Home values increased somewhat in the last year in Orange Mound, pushing the poorest families further from owning. What’s even more problematic, according to Burgess’s staff, is an influx of out-of-state investors who buy single-family homes and put them on the rental market at inflated prices, driving homelessness and creating profits for companies with no attachment to the neighborhood.

The Binghampton comparison helps illustrate just how difficult a goal Burgess had set for the neighborhood. Binghampton’s revival struck Campbell as new, but in fact, grass-roots activists had planted the seeds for change as early as 1986, creating a groundswell of interest that would later leverage private dollars, charitable giving and public tax incentives.

If Burgess’s task force can succeed in the same fashion, it would represent an overdue triumph but one that’s unlikely to be widely replicable without sweeping federal policies aimed at racial and economic inequality. In Memphis, for example, according to a report by the Urban Institute, 20 percent of Black residents live in metropolitan neighborhoods where more than a third of the population is poor, while only about 2 percent of white Memphians do. Brett Theodos, a senior fellow with the Urban Institute, said that improving the fortunes for all neighborhoods of color, rather than just a handful, will require a tenfold increase in municipal, state and federal commitments. “Otherwise, we’re going to keep putting $10 million into a place, which will feel heroic and will feel like a lot, and it won’t fundamentally change that place,” he said. “Or maybe we will improve this place over here, but meanwhile three other neighborhoods are declining because we’re ignoring them.” Orange Mound, he said, probably needs $1 billion over several decades to transform into the vital place it once was.

Perry, the co-author of the Brookings report, said that equitable redevelopment — the type that brings economic gains and rising home values without displacing existing residents, especially renters — requires investing not only in buildings but in people. These neighborhoods need microloans for current homeowners and down-payment assistance for would-be buyers. “What we should really be talking about is how to get capital into the hands of potential homeowners, business owners, tax credits to current homeowners,” he said. Many traditional redevelopment policies provide tax benefits to the rich, he said, without addressing historical and present-day biases that inhibit the health and growth of Black people and their communities.

Paula Campbell, for her part, keeps pushing. She has been lobbying the city to install video cameras to catch the illegal dumpers who drown Orange Mound’s streets in garbage and used tires; she organizes crews of volunteers who don gloves and bag the trash themselves, even though it reappears at such a pace that she’s sometimes discouraged. She is working part time for her niece, who runs a home health care agency but plans to quit by year’s end and dedicate more of her time to activism and service. “I know I can do more,” she said. “I need to do more.”

Last month, on an unusually warm Saturday, she took her granddaughters to a festival in Orange Mound Park. There were snow-cone and jewelry vendors, three-on-three basketball games, a free concert. Old friends drifted past. Campbell spotted one of the organizers and flashed her a thumbs-up. The crowd swelled to about 120 people; everyone seemed to be laughing or dancing, and wherever Campbell looked, she was reminded of what Orange Mound is worth.

Vanessa Gregory is a writer based in Oxford, Miss. [*Her last article for the magazine examined the 1935 lynching of a sharecropper and the ways that crime echoed in the lives of his children and grandchildren.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/25/magazine/a-lynchings-long-shadow.html) She is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Mississippi and was a 2015 Mississippi Arts Commission fellow. Gioncarlo Valentine is a photographer and a writer whose work focuses on issues faced by marginalized populations, especially the experiences of Black and L.G.B.T.Q. communities.

PHOTOS: Right: Paula Campbell outside her home in the Orange Mound neighborhood of Memphis. Opening pages: Homes and businesses in Orange Mound. (MM41); Left: Melvin Burgess, the Shelby County property assessor, is seeking ways to attract investors to communities under duress. Above: A commercial strip in Binghampton, a thriving neighborhood in Memphis that is majority Black. (MM42; MM43); Hazell Glover Jones outside her home in Orange Mound. Her parents moved to Memphis from Alabama around 1919. ‘‘We were just self-sufficient,’’ she said. ‘‘We stayed in our own little bubble.’’ (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIONCARLO VALENTINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM44-MM45)

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**Body**

An exhibition of Italian Radical design showcases household objects that energetically defied good taste.

This article is part of our latest special report on Design, which is about getting personal with customization.

The tumultuous period remembered as the '60s (although it extended well into the 1970s) was half a century ago, as far removed from 2020 as World War I was from Woodstock. Nonetheless that era's cultural awakening -- an unwieldy hodgepodge of social, political and aesthetic insurgencies -- has begun to seem fresh again, relevant (as they used to say) and potentially of practical use for navigating the turmoil of our present moment.

So it is entirely apropos that the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, has mounted an exhibition called ''Radical: Italian Design 1965-1985, the Dennis Freedman Collection.'' (The show runs until April 26 and will travel to Yale University's School of Architecture in 2021.)

Mr. Freedman, a New York-based creative consultant to fashion houses, publications, galleries and museums, has made it his life's mission to immerse himself in the output of the Italian branch of the counterculture.

The movement, in which young graduates of architecture schools in Florence, Milan and Turin organized themselves into collectives with comic book names like Superstudio, Archizoom and UFO, offered a means for expressing boundless political outrage through aesthetic contrarianism. The passions that famously drove the Bauhaus, a love of mass production and functionalism, were anathema to this generation.

Andrea Branzi, a founder of Archizoom, based in Florence, told the exhibition's curator, Cindi Strauss, in an interview for the catalog that his compatriots were ''snobs and Stalinists'' with a profound desire to undermine Modernist rationalism with a pop sensibility and replace the notion of ''good design'' with a messy irreverence. Franco Raggi, who had worked in Milan with Alessandro Mendini at Casabella, the leading publication of the Radical moment, recalled that the goal was to ''destroy bourgeois culture and thought'' and force a re-examination of the ''capitalistic nature of society.''

The Radicals worked in every possible medium to advance their ideas. They generated conceptual drawings of ethereal imaginary cities, staged happenings (like one in which Mr. Mendini set fire to his Monumentino da Casa, a chair atop a stepped pedestal) and tried, through an educational effort called Global Tools, to reinvent basic concepts like work and design. However, much of what remains of the Radicals' output is in the form of furniture and light fixtures, which would be bourgeois if it wasn't all so outré.

The work of the Radicals is curiously confounding. While the movement rejected the industrial aesthetic associated with the Bauhaus -- and the very idea of mass production -- it embraced industrial materials, most notably foam rubber and plastic. And most of its work appears to be in calculated defiance not of capitalism, exactly, but of good taste.

Take, for example, a 1964 sideboard called Cielo, Mare, Terra, a claw-footed walnut cabinet topped with a metal spike and, instead of the customary glass doors, a pair of pink Fiat doors (equipped with mounds that resemble breasts). It seems to reside in no explicable aesthetic universe but makes a certain amount of sense if you are trying to shake up the world by throwing out the rules.

In 1998, Mr. Freedman made his first purchase of Radical design, a big hunk of polyurethane foam shaped like the top of an Ionic column. The Capitello, by Studio 65, a group of art and architecture graduates of Turin's Polytechnic University (who also edited the magazine ***Working Class***) was intended as a lounge chair.

Mr. Freedman was attracted to, among other things, the work's patina, a quality not generally associated with foam rubber. ''The age creates a surface that is not unlike porcelain,'' he said, describing the effect of a polyurethane-specific varnish called Guflac. ''It develops a crackle finish that is stunningly beautiful.''

While the Capitello has a cartoonish appearance, Mr. Freedman says he believes its political and philosophical message is unmistakable: ''Literally your ass is on one of the pillars of classical Greek architecture. It's an act of defiance.''

What philosophy can be expressed by squishy column fragments, or sideboards with car doors, or gargantuan blades of polyurethane grass meant to be used as a free-form lounge chair? It is hard to see this as Stalinism or even something more avant-garde, like Dadaism. Instead, it appears to represent a broad, indeterminate approach to making trouble, one object at a time.

If there was consensus among the Radicals about the nature of their collective undertaking, it had something to do with mutability. The Radicals seemed to agree that we should all be able to alter our personal environments however we would like. There is a broad swath of the Radical thinking that was dedicated to the power of rearrangement.

In the landmark 1972 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, ''Italy: The New Domestic Landscape,'' a precursor of sorts to the Houston show, the Radicals were largely represented as designers of conceptual environments. Ettore Sottsass, for example, the Milan-based polymath who later became famous as the progenitor of Memphis design, contributed a residential interior consisting of a set of nearly identical multipurpose ''containers'' that satisfied all possible household needs and could be endlessly moved around.

Much of the Radical furniture advanced the idea that you could live anywhere and create your own environment. Inflatables were popular (for seating and also for protest props). And Archizoom created the 1966 Superonda sofa, a pair of lightweight, wave-shaped, configurable puzzle pieces, often photographed outdoors, as if they were part of the landscape.

Such furnishings signaled ''a liberated lifestyle, a freedom,'' suggested Andrew Blauvelt, the director of the Cranbrook Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. More than a decade ago, he set out to mount a show for the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, where he was then a curator, on the Italian Radicals. That exhibition ballooned into a much broader 2015 survey called ''Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia,'' in which he traced countercultural projects across borders.

Mr. Blauvelt's own interest in the Radicals was driven by the connections he saw between that movement and today's socially minded designers. The way they worked, the fact that they were ''very multidisciplinary and very nonhierarchical'' with artists, architects and technicians commingling, is particularly inspiring for creative troublemakers today, he said.

There's another aspect of the Radical approach that today's aesthetic insurgents might find rousing. While other 1960s rebels were going back to the land and immersing themselves in nature, the Italian Radicals took the fruits of capitalistic society, the synthetic materials that were everywhere, and repurposed them to furnish their own little cosmos, not a world that was more in harmony with nature, but one that felt more natural to them.

A new generation of radical designers might easily do the same, appropriating today's technologies, like those intended to optimize, to make everything smoother and more predictable, and subverting them to craft an aesthetic that accentuates the bumps, surprises and outrages.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/style/italian-radical-design-furniture.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/style/italian-radical-design-furniture.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from above, Archizoom's 1966 Superonda sofa, made of two versatile puzzle pieces. Dennis Freedman, whose collection is featured at the show, wears a jacket by Riccardo Tisci for Givenchy with details from the technology of sound. A 1964 sideboard by Fabio De Sanctis and Ugo Sterpini has Fiat doors. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARIO BARTOLINI/CENTRO STUDI POLTRONOVA ARCHIVE

TODD SPOTH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (F16)

MIES CHAIR, ARCHIZOOM ASSOCIATI, 1969: This ultraminimalist steel triangle, with a rubber sling seat and cowhide pillows, has been in uninterrupted production by Poltronova since its debut. The idea was to ridicule the truism that ''less is more'' by pushing minimalism to the extreme.

PRATONE, GRUPPO STRUM, 1971: An oversize patch of polyurethane greenery, intended as a free-form lounge chair, it is a work of pop art with a serious side. The manufacturer Gufram describes it as ''temporary, unstable, always to be conquered due to the elasticity of the material.''

QUADERNA 2600, SUPERSTUDIO, 1970: The grid (here a laminate applied to a wooden table) was central to the vision of Superstudio. Dennis Freedman described Quaderna as a visual representation of egalitarianism: ''The thing about the grid is that every point on the grid is equal to another.''

CHIOCCIOLA, STUDIO 65, 1972: A more subtle offshoot of the Capitello chair, this polyurethane one is called snail, but has also been interpreted as a riff on the acanthus leaf commonly found on the Corinthian column. The snails could be lined up to make a long, snaking ''never-ending sofa.''

B.T.2, STUDIO A.R.D.I.T.I., 1971: In Italian, the studio initials stand for Association of Totally Integrated Reactionary Designers. Opposed to consumerism and capitalist society, it vowed to make design more democratic. This table lamp was an experiment with low-voltage lights

magnets hold tiny bulbs in place. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENT PELL/THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON)

ZABRO CHAIR, ALESSANDRO MENDINI, 1984: Alessandro Mendini, who died in 2019, championed Radical design from his position as editor in chief of Casabella. His Zabro design is a more recent work, usually regarded as an example of postmodernism. The round back flips down, transforming the chair into a table. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAD BRIDGER/THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON) (F17)

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[***Child Care Crisis Threatens Plans For a Recovery***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B6-M6M1-JBG3-62SB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The decision to only reopen New York City's public schools part time in September illustrates the looming threat to businesses.

When New York City decided to reopen its school system, the nation's largest, on a part-time basis in September, it set off a new child care crisis that could seriously threaten its ability to restart the local economy and recover from the coronavirus outbreak.

Business and union leaders say the city needs to mount a kind of Marshall Plan-like effort to find child care for many of the system's 1.1 million students when they are not in classrooms. They said there was no way the economy -- from conglomerates in Midtown Manhattan to small businesses in Queens -- could fully return to normal if parents had no choice but to stay at home to watch their children.

The concerns reflected a growing recognition across the nation that the reopening of schools could be the linchpin in the broader effort to undo the severe economic damage from the outbreak. New York City alone is facing its worst financial crisis since the 1970s, with an unemployment rate hovering near 20 percent.

''There is no discussion of this right now that's serious,'' said Kathryn S. Wylde, chief executive of the Partnership for New York City, whose members include the city's biggest private-sector employers. ''There is not a serious solution. Which means that people will not be able to go back to work.''

Under the plan announced by Mayor Bill de Blasio this week, classroom attendance would be limited to only one to three days a week in an effort to protect public health. The city's approach is similar to that being followed by many school districts, which are concerned that crowded schools might intensify the outbreak.

The decisions on school reopenings are also fueling a contentious political debate over whether elected officials, educators and public health experts are moving forward too cautiously, even as the number of virus cases soars in the United States.

President Trump and his aides are putting pressure on state and local officials to bring children back to classrooms full time this fall, saying the fate of the economy depends on it.

''Parents have to get back to the factory,'' Alex Azar, the federal health and human services secretary, said this week. ''They've got to get back to the job site. They have to get back to the office. And part of that is their kids, knowing their kids are taken care of.''

But some educators and public health experts said they were worried that fully reopening the schools before the outbreak is contained could recklessly lead to the spread of the virus.

A flurry of recent announcements on school reopenings has left families grappling with the harsh reality that they may not be able to fully return to work until there is a vaccine or effective treatment.

Children in Seattle will likely return to school only one or two days a week, and students in Los Angeles County, home to the country's second-largest school system, may not be able to return to classrooms at all next month if cases continue to increase in the region.

In New York, Jane Meyer, a mayoral spokeswoman, said that the city had begun reaching out to the business community and that it would announce child care options in the coming weeks.

''We know working families are trying to put the pieces together and make this work, and we are laser-focused on providing solutions,'' she said.

The school reopening plan will add to the complexities businesses face in juggling work and child care. Big companies have been scrambling to make workplaces safe and sanitary, but many have said that creating space in their buildings for schoolchildren would raise too many liability issues.

Some employers said they did not expect most parents to return to work without a normal school schedule. Leaders of the city's big labor unions said many members had been looking after the children of those whose jobs were considered essential. Before many of the others could return to work, union leaders said, they would need safe spaces for their own children.

Steven James, New York City chief executive of the Douglas Elliman real-estate brokerage, said the schools plan would not allow for a normal return for nearly 1,000 employees based at the company's Midtown office.

''It throws a bit of a wrench in it,'' Mr. James said. ''It's not going to be, 'I'll drop you off at 8:30 on my way to the office and pick you back up at 3.' It won't be like that.''

While employees who have been working from home during the pandemic might have some flexibility, that is not the case for many low-income families and essential workers.

Unions that represent essential workers say many members face child care difficulties in normal times and now are being forced into an even worse predicament.

''Many of our members live in households where all of the adult members work staggered schedules to deal with child care,'' said Kyle Bragg, president of 32BJ SEIU, which represents 85,000 building cleaners, security guards, doormen and airport workers in New York.

Public school parents will not learn what days their children can attend school until August, so it will be difficult for working families to let their employers know before late summer when they can show up in person.

Working parents have expressed confusion and anxiety about the prospect of a part-time return to schools without a child care plan.

David Segal, a sanitation worker who lives in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, said he and his wife had been ''pulling out our hair trying to figure out child care'' for their two young children. His older child was set to start pre-K this fall.

If Mr. Segal's son can attend school only once or twice a week, his wife, who works in a clothing store, would have to significantly reduce her hours.

''I'm not sure how we will pay the bills,'' Mr. Segal said, adding that a private day care could cost more than his wife's annual income. ''It's insane that no political leaders have any answers for ***working-class*** parents.''

About 40 percent of New Yorkers think a full-time return to school this fall is a good idea, according to a recent Marist poll.

Jose Maldonado, secretary-treasurer of Unite Here Local 100, said 15,000 employees in his 18,000-member union were laid off because of the coronavirus and were eager to get back to work.

Many of those members had jobs serving food in cafeterias, delis and airports. Those who have kept working have had laid-off workers care for their children, Mr. Maldonado said.

Mr. Maldonado, who is recovering from Covid-19, has a daughter, Cristina Cerezo, who is a guidance counselor at Public School 333 in the Bronx. Ms. Cerezo said she and some of her students' parents were wary about the feasibility of the mayor's plan.

''We're flying this plane as we build it,'' she said.

''There's a child care crisis coming,'' said Michael Mulgrew, president of the city's teachers union, which represents about 75,000 classroom teachers.

Thousands of teachers who have spent months juggling remote learning for their students and their own children will now have to figure out how to return to school full time while their children go back only a few days a week.

''Every way that you look at it, it feels impossible'' to plan for fall, said Emily James, a mother of two who teaches high school English in Brooklyn.

''The city has to come up with some way to provide child care instead of trying to make everything work through the schools,'' Ms. James said, adding that she was nervous about whether teachers would be safe returning to buildings.

Some experts say they worry that the flexibility some companies offered on child care in the spring will wane come fall. This week, a woman in California sued her former employer, claiming she was fired because her young children made noise during calls while she was working at home.

''As we start talking about reopening, there's almost this compassion fatigue, that I've put up with you and your lack of child care long enough,'' said Brigid Schulte, who runs the Better Life Lab at New America, a research group.

The city's employers are also desperate for clarity on school reopening and child care.

Miriam Milord, owner of BCakeNy, a bakery in the Prospect Heights section of Brooklyn, said, ''It would be great for employees to have child care.''

This summer, a teenage girl from the neighborhood has been supervising Ms. Milord's 12-year-old son and a few of her employees' children at her house while the parents bake and sell cakes.

Ms. Milord said she laid off 10 of her 16 workers, but had brought four of them back. Some are single mothers who would need child care on the days their children are not in the classroom.

''We definitely would like to hire back one or more of them,'' Ms. Milord said. ''But what's the plan?''

Ms. Wylde said she had heard suggestions about how the private sector could pitch in to provide space for students when they are not in school, including using empty hotel ballrooms and auditoriums, and even vacant storefronts.

But she said those ideas seemed unrealistic given the huge number of students involved and the potential liabilities. Finding enough space would require a sweeping plan -- one, she said, that would rival the Marshall Plan, which provided aid to Western Europe after World War II. Such an endeavor would also dwarf the largely successful effort in 2014 to create space for universal pre-K.

City officials have not yet formally proposed any of these ideas to the business community, she said.

For now, working families are left in limbo, fearful for their own livelihoods and for the city's future.

Mia Pearlman, a mother of two who lives in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn, lost her income when the pandemic hit. Her family has been living on federal unemployment checks and her husband's teacher salary, and she does not know what her family will do if the government help dries up.

The mayor's school plan, she said, ''does not accommodate the reality of having kids in New York City.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/10/nyregion/nyc-school-daycare-reopening.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/10/nyregion/nyc-school-daycare-reopening.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Emily James, a high school English teacher, with her daughters Natalie, 7, and Alessandra, 5. She doesn't know how she can return to school full time if her daughters are going only part time. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Miriam Milord, right, and Dara Roach run BCakeNy in Brooklyn. A teenager has been watching Ms. Milord's children. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NAIMA GREEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A7)

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[***The Oracle Of The Upper West Side***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:647D-RN91-DXY4-X1TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Tony Kushner, Oracle of the Upper West Side

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''MY FAVORITE QUOTE,'' Tony Kushner says, ''is from an American anarchist named Voltairine de Cleyre.''

It's a warm Tuesday in October, and we're talking on a bench in a quiet patch of Central Park, right behind John Quincy Adams Ward's statue of William Shakespeare, which has stood since 1872 at the bottom of the park's Literary Walk, a popular promenade dedicated to writers. Kushner is an enthusiastic quoter, citing famous and obscure people from the past as if they were old friends; de Cleyre, an associate of the turn-of-the-20th-century American revolutionary Emma Goldman, was a fervent advocate for workers' rights and sexual equality -- exactly the kind of little-known but nonetheless consequential figure that occasionally shows up in Kushner's writing. The sentence in question, it will turn out, may or may not be from de Cleyre, and may or may not be exactly as Kushner cites it -- we were on a park bench, after all, not in a library -- but whoever said it first, it's now among my favorite Kushner quotes: ''Dare to participate in the great historical mistake of your time.''

The particular mistake he has in mind is ''West Side Story,'' a new movie, directed by Steven Spielberg, based on the beloved, problematic 1957 Broadway musical set among the white ethnic and Puerto Rican youth gangs of Manhattan. The screenplay, which revises Arthur Laurents's original book, is by Kushner, who has been collaborating with Spielberg for nearly 20 years, through ''Munich'' (2005), ''Lincoln'' (2012) and other unconsummated and upcoming films.

Kushner doesn't mean that he regrets the project. On the contrary, he's intensely proud of the ways he, Spielberg and the rest of the creative team have reimagined a show that's itself a reimagining of William Shakespeare's ''Romeo and Juliet.'' Citing de Cleyre seems to be his way of acknowledging the risks and contradictions inherent in any ambitious work of art that tackles the thorny American realities of race, class, immigration and identity. But he's also, in the spirit of the present time, anticipating some of the criticism that might greet a 65-year-old white man's attempt to tell a story largely about Latino teenagers.

Before we move on from de Cleyre, we're interrupted by one of those New York encounters that are the city's way of mocking the idea of coincidence. ''Hey, there's Tony,'' someone calls out. I also go by Tony, so Kushner and I turn our heads in unison to see a distinguished-looking couple approaching, accompanied by an equally distinguished-looking dog. For a moment, I think the silver-haired man with the neatly trimmed beard is one of my in-laws or former editors but, in fact, it's Steven Spielberg, out on a stroll with his wife, the actress Kate Capshaw, in town from California to celebrate their 30th anniversary.

A few days before, Spielberg and Kushner had been in Los Angeles, wrapping production of ''The Fabelmans,'' a story based on Spielberg's own childhood. They had written the script together on Zoom over eight weeks in late 2020. ''The fastest Tony Kushner has ever written anything in his entire life,'' Spielberg says by phone a week later, describing the process for their previous collaborations: ''Tony and I would meet about a story, I would download my entire position on the story and how I felt about it and Tony would go away and he'd write. He'd come back in seven years or five years with a script.''

''Very Steven Spielberg'' is a famous line from ''Angels in America,'' the two-part, more-than-seven-hour play that established Kushner as one of the leading dramatists of our time. ''Angels'' premiered in 1991, long before his creative partnership with Spielberg began; in the play, the filmmaker's name is invoked to signal that something spectacular and cinematic is happening onstage -- the arrival of a literal angel in America. The sudden appearance of Spielberg himself in Central Park strikes me, by contrast, as very Tony Kushner.

He has an imagination that brings to vivid life characters from history and fantasy, whether the 16th president Abraham Lincoln, the ghost of the 20th-century convicted Soviet spy Ethel Rosenberg in ''Angels'' or even a singing 1960s-era washing machine in ''Caroline, or Change,'' his 2004 Broadway musical that returned this season after Covid-19 delayed the revival's opening last year. These characters' presence makes the world feel at once bigger and smaller, as the grand dramas and abstractions of history and politics settle into ordinary human interactions. The moment in Central Park feels similar: Here's the most important living American playwright and the most successful living American filmmaker conversing in the shadow of the greatest writer in the English language. But it's also just four people chatting in the park -- about politics, movies, family, the weather -- while a dog at their feet studies the pigeons and the passing toddlers doze in their strollers.

CENTRAL PARK LIES adjacent to the Upper West Side of ''West Side Story,'' where, six decades of urban renewal and gentrification later, Kushner lives with his husband, the film historian and journalist Mark Harris. They met at a party -- and also, around the same time, in an AOL chat room -- in 1998, then married in 2007. (Harris and I are professional acquaintances and share a book editor, and he contributes to this magazine.) In its in-between, mid-80s incarnation, Central Park figures prominently in ''Angels in America''; the last scene, a poignant, defiant invocation of resilience and solidarity in the face of AIDS, takes place at the Bethesda Fountain, at 72nd Street midway between the East and West Sides, where the 19th-century sculptor Emma Stebbins's eight-foot bronze statue, ''Angel of the Waters,'' seems to float above the surface.

''Angels,'' despite its continent-spanning title and scenes set in Utah and heaven, is a quintessential New York play. It draws on the specific demographic and geographic contours of the city to advance its capacious, intricate ideas about identity, ethical responsibility and human survival in a time of pandemic and political retrenchment. Kushner's New York is a magnet for misfits of all kinds -- Jewish, queer, renegade Mormon -- but hardly an earthly paradise. Heaven is described as ''a city much like San Francisco'' (where ''Angels'' premiered at the Eureka Theater Company), though that's where you go when you're dead. New York is where everyone lives. In fact, the play's rallying cry is ''more life!'' -- a political demand during the AIDS crisis that might as well be the city's motto. In what other place does such a cross-section of humanity -- drag queens, underemployed intellectuals, lonely housewives, closeted Republicans, actual angels -- commingle and contend? Where else does Kushner's blend of high eloquence and borscht belt timing sound like the local vernacular? Nowhere but the city, where Kushner has lived since he arrived to attend college in 1974. (Speaking of God, one of the characters says to an audience of angels: ''If after all this destruction, if after all the terrible days of this terrible century, He returned to see ... how much suffering His abandonment had created, if all He has to offer is death. ... You should sue the bastard.'')

Kushner grew up in Lake Charles, La., the setting of ''Caroline, or Change,'' the Broadway production of which had just started previews when we met, but even after five decades here, he is not, in any provincial, Woody Allen sense, a New York writer, obsessed with the social minutiae of a few select codes. And yet he's undoubtedly a New York character. That isn't code for Jewish or gay, though what the city owes its gay and Jewish citizens is beyond measure: It includes, among much else, the original ''West Side Story,'' created by Laurents, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim and Jerome Robbins, all of whom can be claimed by both tribes.

But it's Kushner's voice, in person and on the page, that is New York: erudite and profane, ironic and earnest, a brilliant cascade of points and counterpoints, jokes and footnotes. Jeanine Tesori, 60, who composed the music for ''Caroline'' and was part of the new ''West Side Story'' team, told me that ''there's no better debater than Tony Kushner.'' This is true less in the high school forensic squad sense -- though he was on the debate team as a teenager -- than in the park-bench, deli-counter sense. Also in the passionate and demanding artistic-collaborator sense, which was Tesori's point; she was referring to how intently he focused on every nuance in the ''West Side Story'' libretto. Argument is synonymous with many things: thought, breath, democracy, life. But argument is also secular Jewish scripture, encapsulated in the old joke that for every two Jews, there are three shuls. It's likewise an undeniable element of gay style. The counterpointing of quasi-rabbinical disputation with camp-tinged sarcasm remains one of the central literary achievements of ''Angels in America.''

Not that the play or its author is in any way parochial. ''I'm not a tribalist,'' he says. ''I believe absolutely in identity politics as a great strategy for organizing power. I believe that oppression can create distinct cultures.'' A brief pause. ''At least recognizable cultures. They're not distinct, because all boundaries are always blurred and are meant to be crossed.'' This is an abstract way of explaining something that, throughout his work (including the six major plays, the Spielberg scripts and a steady stream of translations, adaptations, opera libretti and occasional essays), is breathtakingly specific -- his ability to cross into the mental, emotional and experiential worlds of people who aren't like him in a demographic or ideological sense. He isn't Walt Whitman. He doesn't mystically contain multitudes. He listens and studies and thinks.

Even in his 60s, his curly hair still dark and his short beard mostly gray, Kushner has a youthful energy that isn't quite boyish but that might be described as studentlike. Maybe it's the small round frames of his spectacles, or the iron gray denim jacket over the black T-shirt or the effortless, enthusiastic erudition of his speech, but he seems close to the Platonic ideal of a graduate teaching assistant, a guy you might encounter just uptown in a Columbia University classroom. The one who is a better teacher than the professor, and also much kinder and who is 100 times smarter than you, even though he couldn't be that much older. Spielberg, recalling the research that went into ''Lincoln,'' quantified it this way: ''I only read a dozen books on Lincoln. Tony read 400.''

KUSHNER HIMSELF WENT to Columbia, where he started as a medieval studies major before switching to English literature. But his New York roots go deeper than that. His maternal grandmother, a former seamstress, once heard Emma Goldman give a speech in Yiddish in Lower Manhattan (a detail that made its way into ''Angels in America''). Kushner eventually learned that, around the same time, ''she was living in a boardinghouse on St. Marks Place, and she was probably working as a seamstress in the area. This would have been 1911, so she would have been there during the Triangle Shirtwaist fire'' -- a grim incident in American labor history that took the lives of 146 mostly female, mostly immigrant garment workers.

This speculation, recounted as we were comparing notes about our left-wing Jewish ancestors, hints at how Kushner thinks about history and geography. The important events we learn about in textbooks -- the Triangle fire, the battle to ratify the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States and is central to the plot of ''Lincoln''-- are never distant from the everyday lives of actual people. Even works of imagination have an obligation to the truth of the past. ''Tony doesn't make up the history,'' Tesori says. ''The history is there.''

This can get complicated. For instance: ''West Side Story.'' Spielberg first proposed the project to Kushner over breakfast in 2014 at Cafe Luxembourg, a stalwart bistro on West 70th Street. After several years and five drafts, they had run into a wall on a different project, an adaptation of David I. Kertzer's 1997 book ''The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara,'' a grand historical epic about an antisemitic crime perpetrated by the Vatican, set during the Italian Risorgimento. That morning, Spielberg switched tracks, in part because ''he likes to scare himself,'' Kushner says -- and the playwright was, to say the least, a bit startled: ''I went home and I said to Mark, 'You're not going to believe this. He's lost his mind. He wants to do 'West Side Story.'''

The challenge was not only recapturing some of the power of the original Broadway show and of the 1961 movie musical -- which Kushner says has ''the greatest cultural impact in various ways, except for maybe 'The Wizard of Oz,''' in cinematic history -- but also to right some of their wrongs, notably with respect to casting. The film, directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, earned an Oscar for Rita Moreno in the supporting role of Anita, but she was the only Puerto Rican member of the main cast: María, the lead, was played by the white actress Natalie Wood. In the decades since, even as the film has remained popular and the stage show a fixture of high school auditoriums, ''West Side Story'' has come to seem dated, even offensive. Last year, the Puerto Rican writer Carina del Valle Schorske published an op-ed in The New York Times with the headline, ''Let 'West Side Story' and Its Stereotypes Die,'' in which she argued that ''the show's creators didn't know, or didn't seem to care to know, much about their own material.''

''I was aware that there was a degree of criticism among Puerto Rican thinkers and artists about the representation of Puerto Ricans in West Side Story. [But] I didn't really feel, and I don't feel, that the musical is racist at all,'' Kushner continues. ''I would never have done it if I did.'' Still, he knows there's room for improvement: He cited, in particular, the way the lyrics of the anthem ''America'' express a view of Puerto Rico as a place of unmitigated hardship -- ''you ugly island, island of tropic diseases'' -- one that's based in Jewish immigrants' (and, potentially, its creators') own feelings about Eastern Europe, which were shaped by recent memories of poverty and pogroms.

The cast, which features the newcomers Rachel Zegler as María and David Alvarez as Bernardo, is more culturally diverse and younger than before -- appropriately, since they portray teenagers who aren't old enough, as Kushner explains, ''to know what death is.'' Tony and María, the Romeo and Juliet equivalents, fall in love across boundaries of communal hatred. When Tony takes the life of María's brother Bernardo (Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet), the young couple's fate is sealed. Kushner's book emphasizes that tragedy partly by restoring the original Broadway order of the songs, which the 1961 film had changed. ''Tony felt that 'West Side Story' had very valuable things to contribute to our understanding of the consequences of racism, xenophobia and poverty,'' Spielberg says. ''He kept saying that this is going to be more relevant now than it was in 1957. And that turned out to be the case.'' And Kushner signed on, in part, because he wanted to explore not only the persistence of intergroup hatred but also the way the story is framed by gentrification and economic striving. In the late 1950s, a ***working-class*** Puerto Rican neighborhood is about to be uprooted by the cranes and bulldozers of the ruthless city planner Robert Moses, disrupting the life of the community to make way for, among other developments, the gleaming Lincoln Center arts complex.

Still, their update isn't about improving the past, or even casting a judgmental shadow over a beloved classic, which both collaborators grew up on. ''I was a good little gay boy,'' Kushner says, noting that he and his two siblings (he's the middle kid) were the children of musicians: His father, William, was a conductor and clarinetist; his mother, Sylvia, played the bassoon. Spielberg, now 74, recalls that the album ''was the first musical theater record my parents ever brought home.'' Tesori says she remains in awe of the ''radicalism'' of what Bernstein and his collaborators accomplished. Kushner goes even further, inscribing their gesamtkunstwerk -- a heady fusion of ballet, opera, Shakespearean tragedy and nascent youth culture -- in a pantheon of revolutionary modernist masterpieces. ''You know, like [Igor Stravinsky's] 'The Rite of Spring' [1913], or [Stephen Sondheim's] 'Company' [1970] -- these moments when people come up with something brand-new, and there's some daring, radical energy trapped inside it,'' he says. ''A lot of [Jean-Luc] Godard. 'Jaws.' 'Close Encounters.' 'Taxi Driver.' 'Mean Streets.' 'Badlands.' I'm sorry -- I'll stop, but you know these things where somebody's doing something that's never been done before and you just can feel it, and it will always be there.''

I do know. There's one title to add to the list, a seismic event in the history of American theater that I happen to have seen myself.

IN THE EARLY 1990s, when I was in my mid-20s and he was just past 50, my father came out as gay. How that came to pass -- the years in the closet and the decision to exit -- is his story to tell, not mine. But one of the ways he told it at the time, to the people who loved him, was through ''Angels in America.''

When ''Millennium Approaches,'' the first part of Kushner's now-canonical ''Gay Fantasia on National Themes,'' opened on Broadway in 1993, my father started buying tickets, for himself and everyone else. Throughout the rest of the run, as ''Millennium'' was joined later that year by its companion, ''Perestroika,'' there would be more tickets. As I recall, we could go back whenever we wanted -- my mother, my sister, my wife and I, other friends and relations. In the decades since, I've lost track of how many times I went, and stopped trying to calculate my father's credit card bills. What I'm certain of is that I saw three of the four Roy Cohns in that first New York run (Ron Liebman, Larry Pine and F. Murray Abraham), and that some of the characters (Prior Walter, Belize, Hannah Pitt) now seem like people who have always been in my life. I can't think of a play I know better.

Or maybe I should say that knows me better. This isn't a matter of literal identification, though like most people who qualify as complicatedly Jewish and vaguely intellectual, I inevitably see a lot of myself in the character of Louis Ironson, the perpetually guilt-ridden overthinker with a theoretical answer for everything and a practical inability to do what's right. For a while I wondered if my father, who is not Jewish, saw himself more as the visionary Mayflower descendant Prior Walter or the self-negating Mormon Joe Pitt, but that was the wrong question.

The sense of recognition -- which is to say of being recognized -- that ''Angels in America'' has elicited from so many people over the years comes from how clearly and specifically it represents experiences that might have seemed both too intimate and too enormous to contemplate: the devastation of the AIDS pandemic and the politics of gay visibility that emerged in response to it; the cynicism and disenchantment, felt across various American liberal and leftist denominations, of the Reagan years; the weird intimation that, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, history had either reached its terminus or opened a confusing new chapter.

''Angels'' was, in part, a re-enchantment of the American story, an attempt, by sheer force of imaginative and rational will, to square a tragic reality with an ideal of human progress. ''The play doesn't describe a time of great triumph,'' Kushner said, in an interview for ''The World Only Spins Forward,'' a 2018 oral history of the production. ''It describes a time of great terror, beneath the surface of which the seeds of change are beginning to push upward and through.'' Capturing that movement required a fusion of political didacticism, unabashed melodrama, stage supernaturalism and sitcom beats. The scale of the play is grand, but the tone is conversational, the epic gestures grounded in the bedrock of the everyday, the soaring themes articulated through arguments among friends, lovers, ex-friends, ex-lovers, enemies and chance acquaintances. Roy Cohn (an actual person, a lawyer, fixer and notorious hatchet man for Joseph McCarthy, whom Kushner transformed into a charismatic literary villain on the order of John Milton's Satan) spars with Belize, a Black nurse, who mixes it up with Louis, an avatar of ambivalence, whose lover Prior Walter literally wrestles with an angel.

Change is visited upon all of them, whether they embrace it or struggle against it. There may have been references, idioms and moments that resonated with my own family history -- the entwining of lefty-Jewish and high-goyish styles is a cultural double helix not far removed from my own DNA -- but in 1993, the power of ''Angels'' came from a more primal source. My family was changing. I was changing. The world was changing. And here was a play -- a playwright -- able to perceive how those changes might be connected, to capture a frequently dissonant, occasionally harmonious counterpoint of personal destinies, collective histories and metaphysical principles in a way that felt like the truth.

''Angels in America,'' Kushner's second full-length play, after ''A Bright Room Called Day'' (1985), is one of those early works that define an artist's legacy no matter what else follows. But as the play itself reminds us, the world only spins forward. In ''Caroline, or Change,'' completed a decade later, the personal lives of two families in Lake Charles intersect with the public dramas of 1963: the Kennedy assassination; the civil rights movement; Vietnam. The action mostly unfolds on three levels of a typical middle-class house: the upper floors, where the distant clarinetist Stuart Gellman and his wife, Rose Stopnick Gellman, struggle to raise Stuart's sulking 8-year-old son, Noah; and the basement, where the family's maid, Caroline Thibodeaux, keeps company with a washing machine, a dryer and a radio (all of whom find occasion to burst into song). Noah's mother, Betty, a bassoonist, has recently died of cancer, and Rose is his new stepmother, an old friend of Stuart and Betty's from New York struggling to heal the family and maintain her own equilibrium in alien surroundings. There are some overt parallels with Kushner's own family: His parents were both musicians. (His mother, Sylvia, died of lung cancer at 67 in 1990, while Kushner was writing the second part of ''Angels.'') Noah, a sensitive, hyperarticulate proto-gay child, is a pretty clear authorial surrogate.

The center of the story, though -- the person whose capacity and resistance to change the audience comes to feel most deeply -- is Caroline, a divorced mother of four contending with her own pain. She is one of Kushner's most incandescent creations, an operatic heroine whose passions and disappointments take shape in the interplay of performance, music and language. ''The music lets you know how uncomfortable you should be feeling,'' says Sharon D Clarke, the 56-year-old British stage star who plays Caroline with volcanic intensity and heroic restraint in the latest production.

Caroline is a character who courts misunderstanding, whose very presence onstage evokes painful racial tropes. ''I knew that when I was writing the show that I was playing around with at least two things that were really scary,'' Kushner says. ''One is a Black woman in a white maid's uniform ... and a show that was on a very important level about money, and about Blacks and Jews, and that also can push a lot of triggering things for Jewish people.'' The ''change'' in the title literally refers to what's left each week of Noah Gellman's allowance, which Caroline retrieves from his pockets when she does the laundry. Rose tells Caroline to keep the money, both a clumsy attempt to teach the boy a lesson and a way to give Caroline a little something on top of her $30-a-week wages without actually giving her a raise.

''The first time it was on Broadway,'' Kushner says, ''people would come up to me and say things that made me want to crawl under a seat. 'Oh, I was raised by a Caroline, too,' or 'My best friend was my maid also when I was a little kid.''' Never mind that one of the last things Caroline says to Noah is that they ''weren't never friends,'' and that the show works to subvert, at every turn, the sentimental clichés that its premise seems to summon, what Clarke calls the expectation of ''natural nurturing.'' ''It is not about a magical Black person who comes to take care of a bunch of sad white people,'' Kushner adds. ''It's about her. It doesn't end with them. She doesn't heal them. ... I defend this very heatedly, but it's good to remember that, when you dabble with these things, you are playing around with images of immense power and force.''

You also land yourself, in 2021, in a swirl of ongoing debates about representation, about how, to what extent -- and, for that matter, whether -- white artists can tell Black or Latino stories. Criticism has of late been leveled at works like Kathryn Bigelow's ''Detroit,'' a 2017 film about the murder of three Black men during the city's 1967 race riots; Jeanine Cummins's 2020 novel, ''American Dirt,'' about a family's migration from Mexico to the United States; and the 2019 Best Picture-winning ''Green Book'' (2018), an interracial buddy movie set in the segregated South. Meanwhile, calls for greater inclusion and representation across the arts have grown more insistent. As Kushner himself admits, ''If Steven had come to me in 2020, after George Floyd's murder, and said, 'I want to do ''West Side Story,'' and I want you to write it,' I would certainly have asked a very different set of questions.''

But he wouldn't necessarily have turned it down. And even as he acknowledges the history of exclusion and misrepresentation in movies and theater, he is troubled by the impulse to erect hard boundaries and strict rules: ''I have a profound disagreement,'' he says, ''with anyone who says that a person imagining another kind of person, another culture, is an act of violence or supremacism or appropriation. I absolutely believe that one of the great pleasures of art, and one of the great reasons that we have it, is to be able to witness leaps of empathic imagination.''

ONE WAY TO see beyond yourself is to look backward. In a section of his 1940 ''Theses on the Philosophy of History,'' a key text in the composition of ''Angels in America,'' the German-Jewish critic Walter Benjamin imagines the angel of history flying into the future with his face ''turned toward the past.''

Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

Indeed, Kushner's best work is frequently retrospective, taking an angel's-eye view of catastrophe and progress -- of terror and darkness and the inklings of change sprouting in the gloom. All of his collaborations with Spielberg have been set in the past, and one of the reasons the scripts take so long to write is that he treats the conventions of period filmmaking with the rigor of a historian.

When it premiered on Broadway, ''Angels'' already had a rearview quality to it. Up until the very end, when the story moves into the '90s, the scenes are set in 1985 and '86, in the midst of an era that already seemed, in 1993, to be fading. The G.O.P. was no longer in the White House. Americans were still dying of AIDS in large numbers, but persistent activism had compelled the political and medical establishments to start paying attention to the epidemic. When I taught the play to a class of college freshmen a few years later, they read it as a period piece, something from ''back in the '80s.'' On a higher-brow note, the Yale literary panjandrum Harold Bloom included the play in his idiosyncratic, best-selling ''The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages'' in 1994, a sign that the test of time had already been stood. The 2003 HBO screen adaptation, directed by Mike Nichols, confirmed that impression, identifying the characters with movie stars -- Al Pacino as Roy Cohn, Meryl Streep as Ethel Rosenberg and Hannah Pitt -- and giving the luster and permanence of cinema to their stories.

But then, in the late 2010s, a few years after Barack Obama draped the National Medal of Arts over Kushner's neck, ''Angels'' surged back into the present tense. A major revival in 2017 galvanized audiences in London and then, the next year, in New York, where the play once again felt undeniably relevant: raw, uncanny and unavoidable. Prior Walter's closing vow that ''we will be citizens'' -- an assertion of gay visibility that seemed to have been confirmed by the victory of marriage equality in much of the Western world -- took on a different inflection against a backdrop of anti-immigrant agitation. Roy Cohn's protégé, Donald Trump, was president, and lamenting his erstwhile mentor's absence even as Cohn's brand of cynical, mendacious, power-obsessed politics moved from behind the scenes into broad daylight, where it proved impervious to shame, mockery or indignant appeals to decency.

''It's infinitely more frightening now than it was back in the '80s,'' Kushner says of his masterwork today. ''Complete with the plague.'' Having identified an aspect of our ''one single catastrophe,'' he is still observing it. What happens now is a new iteration of what was already happening. And so, the 1963 of ''Caroline, or Change'' is not a version of the past that an audience in 2021 can look at with complacency, congratulating ourselves on how far we've come. The first thing you see on the revival's stage is a Confederate monument, a statue of ''the South's Defender'' whose presence signifies the not-even-pastness of the past. And while there are some charming period details -- and echoes of the soul, pop and gospel sounds of the time in Tesori's score -- there is nothing dated in the play itself. ''Tony is quite prophetic,'' Clarke says. When the play transferred to London in 2018 after its original run in Chichester, England, the actress remembers passing by far-right, racist demonstrators on her way to the theater. ''After growing up as a Black British child dealing with the National Front and the British National Party,'' she says, ''now I was coming into work and dealing with Caroline and feeling the eyes of English Defense League guys looking at me, wanting me not to be on the street, and just feeling, 'We ain't moved on.'''

During the show's long pandemic pause between London and Broadway, the United States was convulsed by the Black Lives Matter protests and plunged into another round of arguments on old themes: the relationship between law and order and white supremacy; the persistence of structural racism and racial inequality; the deep historical roots of present-day injustice. The people onstage discuss these same issues, very much in the present tense and with their eyes turned toward an ever-elusive future. Caroline's teenage daughter, Emmie, is drawn toward activism, and the boldness with which she expresses her opinions worries her mother, who has learned to keep her head down and her thoughts to herself, at least around white people. At a Hanukkah dinner, where Emmie is helping her mother serve latkes to the extended Gellman clan, Emmie is lured into debate with Rose's father, a dyed-in-the-wool old leftist visiting from New York. He scolds her for being insufficiently militant, and scorns the civil rights movement for being too pacific, too slow-moving, to effect real change.

The ironies and tensions that ripple through the scene -- the unexamined privilege of the white radical; Caroline's unease among the employers who imagine themselves to be her allies; the impatience of the younger generation -- will be familiar to anyone whose dinner table has been a site of political struggle. And no resolution to the conflict is offered, even as some small changes are visible. ''Secret little tragedies'' coexist with ''costly, quiet victories.'' Those phrases are sung one after the other near the end of the show, providing a musical landing place without settling the big issues. It's not that the tragedies cancel out the victories but that they are bound up together.

IN ACT III, Scene 2 of ''Millennium Approaches,'' Louis asks, ''Why has democracy succeeded in America?'' It's not exactly a rhetorical question, and Louis's rambling attempt to answer it isn't entirely persuasive, certainly not to his friend Belize, a Black, gay nurse who cares for men dying from AIDS-related illnesses, and who possesses an acute sense of the failures and compromises of the American experiment. (Louis's monologue only ends when Belize, after trying to participate in the debate, finally responds, ''POWER to the people! AMEN! ... OH MY GOODNESS! Will you look at the time, I gotta. ...'')

When we meet in Central Park for a second conversation (with no surprise appearances from major filmmakers), I tell Kushner that I think the argument between Louis and Belize -- a defense of good intentions and progressive tendencies countered by an insistence on the hard structural facts of exclusion, oppression and hatred -- is still ongoing, perhaps with more intensity and harder feelings than before.

We talk about that for a while, and also about how the censoriousness of the left isn't symmetrical with the authoritarianism of the right, about what Kushner calls the ''radical impatience of the young,'' about Twitter and TikTok and the early 20th-century German playwright Bertolt Brecht, a hero of Kushner's, who once said, ''Don't start from the good old things but the bad new ones.'' We agree more than we disagree, but the conversation nonetheless has a bracing, combative energy.

Kushner's stage and screenwriting consists of a great many family quarrels -- passionate debates among people who are fundamentally on the same side. Louis and Belize share not only their love of Prior, Louis's former lover, who they are afraid will die of complications from AIDS, but a wary, queer New York kinship. In ''Lincoln,'' much of the dramatic conflict takes place within the cabinet, the Congress and the Republican Party, people committed at least in principle to the defense of union and the abolition of slavery. In ''Caroline, or Change,'' the Southern white supremacist position is represented by that silent statue; the Gellmans are outsiders, some of whom imagine themselves to be on the angelic side of history. Kushner's ability to call forth those family quarrels within liberalism -- their endlessness, their passion -- may ultimately be what marks him as a great New York voice. That's the music of the city, after all. It's also the music of democracy, the soundtrack to the perpetually embattled American experiment.

Which is in a scary place right now. Eventually, Kushner jokes that Louis's rhetorical question might have to be amended or scrapped altogether. Democracy may not be succeeding in America, and the grand argument that connects President Lincoln to Caroline Thibodeaux may be heading toward a murderous Jets and Sharks rumble.

Neutrality, for Kushner, is never an option. ''I always get annoyed when people talk about theater that preaches to the converted,'' he says. ''That's so stupid. Who do you expect to find in your synagogue? ... When I teach playwriting, I always tell my students -- and it's almost impossible to do this particular thing without having some sort of phantom audience in your head -- that you should work really hard to populate that audience with people who fundamentally agree with you about certain things. Because if you don't, then you start from a position of needing to educate them about that which you already know, which I think guarantees didacticism and a certain dullness. The place that you want to start is those great arguments that you have with your friends.''

What you want to do, in other words, is dare to participate in the great historical mistake of your time.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/30/t-magazine/tony-kushner-caroline-west-side.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/30/t-magazine/tony-kushner-caroline-west-side.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Tony Kushner, photographed at the Astor Place subway station in New York City on Oct. 22, 2021.

Clockwise from top: Sharon D Clarke as Caroline Thibodeaux in the current Broadway revival of ''Caroline, or Change''

a portrait, ''Tony Kushner With Karl Marx Pillows'' (1995), taken by Robert Giard in New York City

Ellen McLaughlin, who played the Angel in U.S. productions of ''Angels in America'' from the first workshop through the original Broadway run, being fit for her wings

Stephen Spinella as Prior Walter and Joe Mantello as Louis Ironson in the 1993-94 Broadway production of ''Angels in America: Millennium Approaches.''

From top: A scene from the 1993-94 Broadway production of ''Angels in America: Perestroika,'' including, from left, Kathleen Chalfant, Stephen Spinella, Joe Mantello and Jeffrey Wright

a dance number from the new ''West Side Story'' film, featuring David Alvarez (center) as Bernardo

Kushner and his husband, the writer Mark Harris, at their commitment ceremony in New York City in 2003, four years before they legally married. (PHOTOGRAPHS by SEAN DONNOLA

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**Body**

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When Rebecca Hall read Nella Larsen's groundbreaking 1929 novel, ''Passing,'' over a decade ago, she felt an intense, immediate attachment to it. The story seemed to clarify so much that was mysterious about her own identity -- the unnameable gaps in her family history that shaped her life in their very absence, the way a sinkhole in the road distorts the path of traffic blocks away.

The novel follows Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry, two light-skinned Black women who grew up in the same Chicago neighborhood and shared a friendship complicated by differences in class and social status. When Clare's father died, she was sent off to live with white relatives, while Irene went on to become firmly ensconced in the vibrant Black artistic and cultural community of 1920s Harlem, wife to a Black doctor and mother to two dark-skinned young boys. One day, while passing for convenience on the rooftop restaurant of a whites-only hotel, Irene is recognized by a beautiful blond woman, who turns out to be Clare -- who now not only lives her life as a white woman but is also mother to a white-passing daughter and married to a bigoted man who has no clue about her mixed-race heritage. The friends' reunion crackles with tension, charged with curiosity, envy and longing.

When Clare asks Irene if she has ever thought about passing in a more permanent way herself, Irene responds disdainfully: ''No. Why should I?'' She adds, ''You see, Clare, I've everything I want.'' And maybe it's true that the respectable, high-status life Irene has built in Harlem encompasses everything a serious woman, committed to lifting up her race, should want. But Clare's sudden presence begins to raise a sense of dangerous possibility within Irene -- one of unacknowledged desires and dissatisfactions. When she sees the ease with which Clare re-enters and ingratiates herself within Black society, it threatens Irene's feeling of real, authentic belonging.

Raised in England within the elite circles of classical theater, Hall, who is 39, had her first introduction to the concept of racial ''passing'' in the pages of Larsen's novel. ''I was spending time in America, and I knew that there had been vague, but I mean really vague, talk about my mother's ethnicity,'' Hall explained over the phone this spring. Her voice is calm and poised, with a warm polish to it, and she tends to speak in composed paragraphs. Over the year that we had corresponded, Hall hadn't been acting much and had instead spent time writing screenplays from the Hudson Valley home that she shares with her daughter and her husband, the actor Morgan Spector. ''Sometimes she would intimate that maybe there was African American ancestry, or sometimes she would intimate that there was Indigenous ancestry. But she didn't really know; it wasn't available to her.''

Hall grew up steeped in performance: Her father, Sir Peter Hall, was known for founding the Royal Shakespeare Company and serving as the director of the Royal National Theater for many years, and possessed what she describes as a preternatural ability to know when and how an actor could be gently pushed into an even better performance. Her mother, Maria Ewing, an American raised in Detroit, is one of opera's most celebrated sopranos, famous for her daring portrayal of Salome in Richard Strauss's production, in which she followed the Oscar Wilde-penned stage directions to the letter and went nude onstage.

After her parents divorced in 1990, Hall lived for many years with her mother in a manor in the English countryside, where she remembers rooms filled with the sound of jazz on vinyl, her mother making herself at home in the relative isolation and remoteness of an adopted country. ''I was sort of brought up to believe that I was this -- all of which is true, by the way -- privileged, upper-middle-class, sort of bohemian well-educated white girl from a very prestigious family background,'' Hall said. ''And that was sort of where it stopped. And when I asked questions to my mother about her background in Detroit and her family,'' Hall said, her voice low and firm, ''she left it with an 'I don't want to dwell on the past.'''

Until a friend pointed her to Nella Larsen's ''Passing,'' Hall had no way of naming her intuition that these gaps in her family history were narratively charged -- but reading it was a ''gut punch.'' ''I felt deeply challenged and confused,'' Hall recalled. ''And the only way I could actually process it, for me, was to sit down and adapt it. I didn't, at the time, think, I'm going to adapt it, because I know it's going to make a killer film and I'm going to direct it. I really didn't. It was sort of personal and quiet, and I did it in 10 days.'' Then she stowed it away in a drawer for the better part of a decade.

Margot Hand, a friend and a producer of ''Passing,'' the film that was eventually made from that screenplay and that opens theatrically in the United States on Oct. 27 and streams on Netflix beginning on Nov. 10, remembers watching Hall on the set of ''Permission,'' a film they were both involved in, and noticing how knowledgeable she was about the setup and composition of the shots. When she asked Hall whether she had ever considered directing, she replied that there was only one movie she could imagine herself making as her first film: an adaptation of a novel from the 1920s, based on a screenplay she wrote years earlier. Hand told me that the version of the screenplay that was used in filming is essentially identical to the one Hall showed her years ago -- one of those rare artistic impulses that emerges whole and intact, like an egg.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

As Hall began to consider turning the script into her first directed feature, she knew that much of her vision for the film was nonnegotiable: It had to be shot in black and white, an unpopular choice from the perspective of studios, because black and white can be a harder sell in foreign markets. It had to be shot in the 4:3 aspect ratio that was the default for celluloid film in the 1920s and '30s but that has since been replaced by wider proportions. And it had to have Black women cast in the lead roles of Irene and Clare -- another sticking point in a moment when white actors still command the most star power and box-office revenue. Tessa Thompson and Ruth Negga signed on early and stayed attached through the years it took to gather the financing for the film, an unusual vote of confidence that Hall credits with the film's eventually being made.

''It's a big undertaking to have this be your debut, and it's still so hard as a female filmmaker to get something made,'' Thompson explained to me over the phone. ''To know that she would trust me with that, because so much would hinge on my performance, really was such a gift to me.''

Hall was insistent: To film in black and white was a way of honoring the films that she was raised on, which starred strong female leads like Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis and Myrna Loy. And casting Black actors allowed her to conjure the fantasy of a ''lost noir film'' that might have had a Black actress in a leading role, while nodding to a lineage of films like ''Imitation of Life'' (1934). Starring the Black actress Fredi Washington, the film is the story of a daughter who breaks her mother's heart by deciding to pass as white. Some Southern audiences were scandalized by it because Washington's light skin, combined with the ambiguity of the black-and-white cinematography, made it impossible for them to discern whether the actress was truly Black or truly white.

But each of these compositional choices also functions to amplify the internal tension of the narrative, to pressurize the pull of Irene and Clare's relationship. In black and white, the viewer becomes hyperattuned to the shades of gray that form the bulk of the visual image, an anxious gatekeeper perceiving similarity and difference at the same time. In the unconventionally narrowed screen, the two women's bodies are continually in relation, one occluding, the other hidden, the distance between them always palpable. As Hall says, the framing ''forces the face literally into the center of the frame, constantly. And so it constantly says, loud and clear, that this is a movie about faces and how we see them and watch them being seen.'' In this aspect ratio, she adds, ''there's no room for escape.'' For her, the project has been one of self-discovery and self-reckoning: ''I'd say that the whole journey from that day when I sat down to write this to now has been a way of me processing and understanding my family better,'' Hall says. ''It was a bit of an exploration and also something I felt compelled to do for reasons I had no language for.''

For the first half of my own life, I had no language for the sensation of precarious contingency that went along with my multiracial face, a product of a Taiwanese mother who immigrated in the 1980s and an American father with German ancestry. My childhood spanned the 1990s, when multicultural was an aesthetic, a party free of bad vibes. On TV, in the video for Michael Jackson's ''Black or White,'' faces of different races morphed into one another, smiling hugely as they lip-synced the words. In elementary school in central New Jersey, I was asked once a year to bring in a ''favorite recipe that shows your heritage'' to add to a gradewide cookbook -- I turned in the same recipe every time, for pork-and-cabbage dumplings -- and on Veterans Day to wear some traditional Taiwanese apparel while sitting on a float that rolled through the park behind my house. Culture was to be celebrated, and as with a good buffet, you could have as much as you wanted, all piled together.

If culture was additive, race was a place for optimism, insofar as its projected irrelevance would free the nation of the problems it had caused. Multiracial people were one mechanism through which that liberation would be accomplished: Their existence, and their acceptance and success in America, would be evidence that the country had left behind the violence and inequity of its past. If the nation couldn't achieve racial equality through the political process, then citizens could do it themselves by creating a new kind of person.

Being a symbol of racial and cultural optimism is a strange sign to live under. Your beauty signifies the rightness of the coming transition, its aesthetic balance; your flexibility, empathy and intermingled whiteness comfort those who fear the loss of place or privilege in the coming demographic shift. You are a bridge between the genes of your mother and the genes of your father, a bridge between their cultures -- a bridge being a structure that others can use to cross something hazardous. You are a link between past and present that somehow carries forward none of the old grudges.

But in the classroom and on the playground, my racial ambiguity didn't feel like something to celebrate. At some times, I felt illegible and unseen; at others, I felt that my inharmonious features -- the unusual shape of my eyes, my odd accent and the gaps in my knowledge of either culture -- were bizarrely visible. Other children and some adults asked about me, speculated about me, tried to puzzle through my racial and cultural identity. And in the estrangement I felt in the towns we moved to, surrounded mostly by white people and sensing my mother's own melancholia at being stranded far from her home country and the languages she was most comfortable living in, I found little in my racial identity that I could use as an anchor.

One day when I was 16, alone in the school library during lunch hour, I came upon ''Passing'' and, like Hall, found it strangely, alarmingly moving. It gave shape and language to the racial ambivalence I experienced that was difficult to place within the optimistic rhetoric that surrounded me. The precarity that Clare and Irene live with, one walking a tightrope between two worlds designated as incommensurable and the other clutching at the apparent safety of a singular, grounded identity, spoke to my own fear of a catastrophic mobility, the feeling that if I didn't find some way to root myself firmly to one world or the other, I might never find a way to belong anywhere. Texts are always haunted by the unseen -- in basic terms, they work to conjure in the mind what they can only point at in words -- but this entire book was fueled by invisible, scarcely apprehended drives that seemed to come from society, that spectral presence that moves us all in difficult-to-identify ways.

As I read George Hutchinson's ''In Search of Nella Larsen,'' the most comprehensive biography of the writer, I found a life that encompassed, at different times, the public-facing dutifulness of Irene Redfield and the lonesome, destructive freedom of Clare Kendry. A mysterious and remote figure who left inconsistent traces in the public record, Larsen struggled all her life to find her place among the categories available to her. The daughter of a white Danish seamstress and a Black cook from the Danish West Indies, Larsen spent her early years in an interracial sliver of Chicago where all kinds of people commingled in saloons and brothels, far from the buttoned-up neighborhoods of elite white and elite Black society. When her mother married another white immigrant from Denmark and gave birth to her second daughter, Larsen's skin tone prevented the family from establishing themselves in one of the newer, less precarious neighborhoods dominated by ***working-class*** white immigrants. After years of tension navigating an increasingly segregated city, her mother sent her to study at an elite, all-Black teacher-training program in Tennessee, where she was expelled after a year, probably for violating the dress code. She returned to Denmark, where she lived for a time as a child.

With her Scandinavian roots and little direct connection to the legacy of slavery that defined much of the African American experience, and because she came from a poor background, Larsen never felt fully at home in elite all-Black social circles. After she went to nursing school and became the first Black librarian to attend the New York Public Library's prestigious library school, her first publications were selections of Danish children's games and songs. The novelist Walter White, part of the literary community she had begun to associate with, encouraged her to write a novel, and eventually, she wrote two: the quasi-autobiographical ''Quicksand'' and her second and last published novel, ''Passing.'' She became one of the most celebrated -- and maligned -- writers of the Harlem Renaissance, insisting on a social circle that included the controversial white author Carl Van Vechten, whose writings had been deemed exploitative by many Black critics.

In her work, Larsen complicated traditional notions of morality or race loyalty. She sometimes wrote about white people, as in the unpublished domestic thriller set in Boston that she wrote and rewrote in her last years as a working writer, as if trying to prove that colored people could enter the minds and lives of white people. After years of disappointments -- her physicist husband was having an affair with a white co-worker, and one after another the manuscripts she submitted were rejected by publishers -- Larsen retreated. Without telling the remnants of her literary circle, she moved to a different apartment down the block and became unreachable to her friends and colleagues. She quietly returned to nursing and died in the company of colleagues who had little idea that she had been a writer at all.

The unusual shape of Larsen's story, riddled with holes and obscurities, has led many to misread her. When her work was rediscovered in the 1980s and 1990s and began to appear on syllabuses, biographers claimed she had embellished her Danish heritage in order to distance herself from African American culture and present herself as European, and therefore more sophisticated. Other critics suggested that she left her literary life in order to begin passing as white. In reality, the proof of her connection to Denmark only required more care and effort to unearth, and though she once boasted in a letter to friends of having managed to have lunch in an upscale whites-only Southern restaurant, Hutchinson argues that she never tried to pass in any deeper, more deliberate way. But the misinterpretations of Larsen and her work point to her predicament: Even as she attained significant success as a writer, she left too few traces on paper to ensure that she would be read accurately. She remained enigmatic, illegible to most.

In early August, I took a ride share, a ferry and a public bus to a quiet corner of Martha's Vineyard to meet Hall at the first in-person festival event she had attended in over a year and a half. Though ''Passing'' had found distribution and been featured at the Sundance Film Festival, the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival would be the first place where an audience gathered to watch and discuss it together. It was the weekend of Barack Obama's much-publicized 60th-birthday party, a celebration that would have brought hundreds of guests to the Vineyard, before it was scaled down amid right-wing criticism and Covid concerns. I walked past rows of newly painted and neatly hedged houses that looked out onto a still, grassy bay where over 400 years earlier an English explorer from Bristol anchored, traded with the native Wampanoag people and ''enjoyed terrifying them with the sound of his cannon,'' according to a 1923 book on the history of the island.

Hall appeared on the wraparound porch of her bayside hotel in a dark button-up shirt and slim pants -- casual, but in a different way from the bright whites and pale colors that covered much of the island. Hall had recently taken part in Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s PBS series, ''Finding Your Roots'' (the episode will air next year), and filled in some of the lacunas in her family history that had made elements of her own life feel incomplete or difficult to comprehend. She had shown a version of her film to her mother, sparking conversations that they weren't able to have in the decades preceding. And ''Passing'' had been sold to Netflix for almost $17 million, a deal that would guarantee the film the sort of broad audience and promotional support rarely given to intricate, demanding art foregrounding Black women.

The process of funding the film had been long and difficult -- multiple studios offered Hall funding if she agreed to film in color, but she turned those offers down. Many months ago, Hall felt resigned to the idea that the film would always be a niche artifact, telling herself: ''If I have to make it for nothing and it sells for nothing and nobody ever sees it, then so be it. This is the film that I want to make.'' She now felt ''a bit smug,'' and a bit shocked, at the idea that art had won out.

Hall's adaptation cuts to the quick of the novel and transfers the shifting, unsettling quality of Larsen's text back onto the viewer's shoulders. The film delves into the gray zone of seeing, priming the viewer to become aware of the way his or her own perception is positioned and constructed. Under the intensive, focused gaze of the film's long shots, Thompson and Negga deliver performances dense with desire and repulsion. Thompson plays Irene with turbulent restraint, her silences heavy and her speech shaped and structured by unseen constraints, while Negga's Clare is dazzling and appetitive -- her mobility, and the zest with which she transgresses boundaries of race and class, expose the falseness of the racial categories upheld by white and Black alike.

The film feels timeless, closer kin to the moody, claustrophobic psychological landscape of Ingmar Bergman's ''Persona'' or the taut, covert romance of Todd Haynes's ''Carol'' than to other films that depict the same period. In this way, though set with care and historical fidelity in the 1920s, it's not a film about the past or even about the social conditions of Larsen's America, but about the way choices made during Larsen's time reverberate through succeeding generations. It highlights the psychic afterlife of racial trauma -- the quiet holes pressed into the psyche by self-denial.

Like some long-limbed people, Hall has a tendency to fold herself up on the furniture in a disarming way, tucking her feet beneath her on the wicker sofa as she held a cup of green tea that I never saw her drink from. The researchers on ''Finding Your Roots,'' she told me, traced her mother's side of the family tree as far back as her great-great-great-great-great-grandparents. She learned that her great-grandfather, whose name was John William Ewing, was born into slavery but found government work post-abolition in Washington, and even gave the toast for Frederick Douglass at a banquet in his honor. Her great-grandmother was a free woman of color, descended from one of only 5,000 Black men who fought on the side of the rebels during the Revolutionary War. But against the background of so much lineage lost and recovered was the discovery of the exact point at which the narrative had broken. ''The revelation,'' she said, ''was that it was just my grandfather who passed -- just that one act that erased a huge amount of history, including some stuff that's really extraordinary.'' She spoke carefully, pausing often. ''The irony is his father was a race man. His father was someone who wanted to uplift.''

I pointed out how rare it was for a person to have the chance to make a decision that so rapidly shifts the path of his descendants, a complex, psychological decision that erased anyone's ability to find out why he made it. Hall nodded. ''And if you know that it happened, it passes on a legacy that's'' -- she trailed off, searching for the right term -- ''so confused, you know? Because if you're the child of the parent, and you believe them to be doing the right thing, or hiding something by living in secret, then your obligation to the parent is to do what they do.'' When I asked if her mother ever told stories about her own father that might shed light on why he chose to pass, or what his experience was like afterward, she told me that her grandfather was an artist and a musician, and this is part of what made them close -- her mother learned to sing from imitating records in the basement of the family house. She left home soon after he died when she was 16, Hall said, gaining admission to the Cleveland Institute of Music against the odds and later moving to the Barbizon Hotel in New York, and eventually to Europe, where she sang in Salzburg, in Milan, in London.

Hall didn't know if her grandfather was a sort of anchor for her mother, whether his death caused her to leave home. But her mother did talk, Hall said, about an event that was very disturbing for her. ''Her father was driving her home from somewhere. And they got out of the car, and there was a neighbor who my mom described as having a long yellow braid on one side. She was a white lady who had always been very nice to them. But as they were getting out of the car, this woman just turned around and said, 'Why don't you die?''' The woman added a toxic racial epithet. ''And worse, that was not long before he died.'' Her mother was very confused. She would tell this story, Hall said, but mostly avoided speaking about that time. I find myself haunted by it. I include it here even though I'm not sure what exactly the story signifies. What had happened to transform the neighbor's view of her grandfather? Had her grandfather's history of passing come to the surface, however carefully he hid it? In the end, it's a narrative with a deep hole at its center, one that mirrors others in Hall's family, a break in the telling that can't be filled in through any amount of genealogical research or archival work.

At the start of the golden hour, I made my way across the island to a reception on the deck of a waterfront restaurant, a celebration of the screening that would happen in a couple of short hours. Guests were already there, piling plates with beet salad and seafood. The atmosphere was warm and easy. When Hall and Spector appeared, a line formed in front of them, and I listened from nearby as they traded thanks with producers and attendees. A woman with straightened black hair, who appeared to be in her 50s or 60s, approached. She thanked them for coming and then added that the film was meaningful to her because her aunts lived their lives passing as white. ''Because they passed and we didn't, they didn't want to be seen with us,'' she explained.

Hall's film has cracked open a public conversation about colorism, privilege and secrets. On Twitter, people are sharing stories and black-and-white photographs of a grandmother's cousins who moved out of state, great-aunts who sneaked back to see their family in secret, relatives who lost their jobs when co-workers informed management about their identities: a public airing of what in Hall's family was once closely held. Recently one of her mother's sisters reached out: She said that they never really had language to understand the hidden context that shaped their family, and she thanked her for giving it to them.

Other responses pointed to the ways that racial categories continue to shape our collective thinking. When the trailer for the film debuted on social media, it prompted a deluge of tweets. Some shared memes featuring the movie title alongside photos of multiracial celebrities like Rashida Jones, Maya Rudolph and Thandiwe Newton -- the implication being that these lighter-skinned actresses would be a better fit for the roles or that they were continuing to benefit from the ability to pass as white in Hollywood and beyond. That so much of the discussion circulated around Thompson's and Negga's ability to successfully pass as white felt surreal, a return to a type of racial scrutiny that seems antithetical to the project of both the book and its adaptation. One Twitter user explained that in Larsen's day, passing did not necessarily mean persuading others that you were white, only persuading them that you were ''not-Black.'' Another suggested that the director was trying to heighten tensions with the casting, reminding the viewers at all times of the possibility that the characters would be found out.

''There's a real irony in this, in that the people who can really pass like me are challenged sometimes about whether they're really, truly Black,'' Mat Johnson, an African American novelist of mixed descent, told me over the phone. ''So we have this paradox where some of the same people who would be like 'Well, he's not really Black,' or 'She's not really Black,' also feel real ownership about the idea of passing being a part of the African American experience. It's interesting because even that discussion is about who owns the story of passing.''

''Passing'' is re-entering the culture at a moment when being multiracial is viewed in a more sober, realistic light than it was when I was growing up. In recent works like Johnson's graphic novel ''Incognegro,'' Danzy Senna's ''New People'' and Brit Bennett's best-selling ''The Vanishing Half,'' authors have rewritten the literary tropes of Black passing to probe its blind spots and challenge the notion that the color line has been erased within American society. If earlier notions of a cohesive ''mixed race'' identity failed to materialize, who could be surprised? No grand unifying theory of multiraciality can account for the multiple, highly specific ways in which individuals reconcile their own hybrid backgrounds, or for the particular way in which Blackness resists assimilation into both whiteness and the middle ground of the mixed.

''I've seen Black people around me getting interested in their family history start to do their research and realize that to be Black in America necessarily means having some non-Black ancestry,'' Kaitlyn Greenidge, author of the novel ''Libertie,'' told me in a recent conversation. ''Genetically, many of us have about 25 percent white DNA within us. To be Black, this thing that we say is readable and defined as necessarily separate from whiteness, literally usually means for most of us that we are, in fact, intertwined with it,'' she said. ''Hopefully what that will do is force people to have more complicated discussions about what it means to share all of this DNA when we still have this system set up to reward those who are closest or closer to whiteness.''

Over the past 10 years or so, I've noticed more people bypassing the conundrum of what it means to be racially mixed in order to define themselves in terms of who they feel themselves to be, how they lay claim to their cultures, how they themselves conceptualize racial boundaries. Many choose to identify as wholly Asian, or wholly Black, or to identify as multiple full identities rather than fractions of a diminishing whole. You could say that there are potentially as many racial identities as there are racial stories, and the more fulfilling work is to dwell in these stories rather than in their categorization. In the end, narrative may the best tool we have for binding together the disparate elements that make up the self.

Alexandra Kleeman is a professor at the New School and the author of two novels, ''You Too Can Have a Body Like Mine'' and ''Something New Under the Sun.'' Carly Zavala is a photographer who was born in Venezuela and is based in Brooklyn. She was a nurse for 15 years and is known for her play with light and shadow to create emotive and moody images.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/magazine/rebecca-hall-passing.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/magazine/rebecca-hall-passing.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLY ZAVALA) (MM42-MM43)

Rebecca Hall, Ruth Negga and Tessa Thompson on the set of ''Passing.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY V. ARAGONES/NETFLIX) (MM45)

Ruth Negga and Tessa Thompson in ''Passing.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY NETFLIX) (MM46)

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[***An Unexpected Struggle for Trump: Defining an Elusive Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B1-02F1-DXY4-X2WX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

With only six weeks to the Republican National Convention, President Trump has yet to find a framework for attacking his opponent.

[Follow our [*live Biden vs. Trump 2020 election coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden).]

President [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden) won the White House in no small part by seizing on Hillary Clinton’s missteps and using them to turn many voters against her. But after three unsteady months, and with the Republican convention six weeks away, Mr. Trump is struggling to define [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden) to similarly devastating effect, a critical task at this stage of a presidential race.

By a combination of design and circumstance, Mr. Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, has managed so far to deny Mr. Trump the sort of damaging offhand remarks, campaign clashes and clumsy encounters with voters that he used as weapons against Mrs. Clinton in the last general election, as well as his Republican opponents in the 2016 primary.

This is partly because Mr. Biden has run such a [*low-profile campaign during the pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden). He has had few public appearances and news conferences, which can provide the unscripted moments opponents can use to shape the public’s perception of a candidate.

But there are other obstacles for Mr. Trump that have become clear since Mr. Biden [*effectively won*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden) his party’s nomination in April. Mr. Biden, the former vice president, [*is viewed more favorably by voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden) than Mrs. Clinton was in 2016. He is a moderate Democrat who lacks a history of harsh partisanship or scandal. And he has long appealed to white ***working-class*** voters, who are part of Mr. Trump’s base.

“It is going to be more difficult for the Trump campaign to go after a man who really is a centrist, has dealings with people across the aisle and knows how to talk to people who disagree with him,” said Priscilla Southwell, a professor emerita of political science at the University of Oregon. “And 2020 is a different kind of year. Donald Trump can appeal to his core by being negative, but it’s such a difficult time for everybody. I don’t think negativity is going to sell as well as it used to.”

Defining an opponent — putting them on the defensive with caricature — is a crucial and proven tactic for candidates in competitive races. There is a graveyard of failed contenders — names like Kennedy, McGovern, Romney, Gore and Hillary Clinton — who found themselves branded by an opponent in portrayals, often unfair, that ricocheted across the political playing field and the media.

Mr. Trump had been adept at this. But the kind of attacks that seemed so effective when he was a new-to-politics outsider in 2016 also appear to have less resonance coming from inside the White House. Four years of tweets by Mr. Trump have numbed many voters.

“It’s almost self-defeating,” said Ron Christie, a Republican who was a senior adviser to President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney. “People are exhausted. The president, with every tweet, every insult, will move himself out of favor with the demographic that he needs the most, which is the independent.”

Mr. Trump does have some avenues to use against Mr. Biden before voter attitudes begin to harden. He has sought to tie Mr. Biden to the political unrest that has swept the country since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25 by the police. And Mr. Trump has tried to portray his opponent as senile, “sleepy,” corrupt and an ally of China, but none of those lines of attack has resonated with the public, at least up to now.

His aides have signaled that Mr. Trump, incumbent or not, would run as an outsider against Mr. Biden — who has been a fixture in Washington since he was elected to the Senate in 1972 — the way he had against Mrs. Clinton. Mr. Biden’s long history of votes in the Senate, as well as his eight years as an active vice president under President Barack Obama, could give Mr. Trump plenty of material.

And if Mr. Biden continues to escape definition, Mr. Trump is likely to turn to Mr. Biden’s running mate. Going after the vice-presidential candidate would be an unusual but not unprecedented strategy, and might have some resonance in this election given Mr. Biden’s age; he is 77. (Mr. Trump is 74.)

Mr. Trump’s campaign had calculated that Mr. Biden, given his long history and the stumbles in the early days of his primary, would be an easier opponent to caricature.

But now time is running short. A series of national polls has shown Mr. Trump trailing Mr. Biden, often by double digits. Even more alarming for the president, he is trailing Mr. Biden in battleground states that he won in 2016 and are likely critical to any re-election plan — including Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. Even states like Georgia, which once seemed clearly in Mr. Trump’s column, now [*appear competitive*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden).

“Trump has much less time to pile up negatives on Biden,” said Nelson Warfield, a Republican consultant who served as press secretary for Bob Dole’s presidential campaign in 1996. “I made my first negative ad starring Hillary Clinton in 1992 and I kept doing ads criticizing her across the next 24 years. And I was by no means alone. Republicans have months to do to Biden what Republicans had over two decades to do to Hillary.”

Mr. Trump would certainly seem to have a few advantages here to make his case. He has the platform of the White House and his Twitter account. Until two months ago, he enjoyed a huge [*financial advantage*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden) over Mr. Biden. And Mr. Trump, unlike Mr. Biden, never had to worry this year about a primary or uniting his party behind him.

But to the frustration of Republicans, his attempts to define Mr. Biden have seemed fitful. He barely mentioned Mr. Biden during two of his campaign’s highest-profile moments in months: his speech in front of Mount Rushmore last week, followed by his July 4 address from the White House South Lawn.

And when Mr. Biden has made mistakes, Mr. Trump’s campaign has struggled to turn them to its advantage. When Mr. Biden said that any African-American voter who considered supporting Mr. Trump [*“ain’t Black,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden) the Trump campaign roared into action, but the fallout lasted only a day, particularly after Mr. Biden apologized.

While Mr. Trump has filled the space on the stage that Mr. Biden has left open, he has been the one to make campaign missteps that provided fodder for Democrats, notably when he said at a rally that given the increase in positive tests for Covid-19, “I said to my people, ‘Slow the testing down, please.’”

Mr. Trump has the obstacle of familiarity in trying to draw attention to his attacks. And his credibility has suffered over these past four years, which might make him an imperfect messenger to go after Mr. Biden: 67 percent of voters in a New York Times/Siena College poll last month said they think Mr. Trump promotes falsehoods or conspiracies very or somewhat often.

“The truth is people have heard him mocking and demonizing for four years now,” said Mark Mellman, a Democratic pollster. “They are somewhat inured to it, they are sick and tired of it. And by being home, Biden has given him less to shoot at.”

The period before the conventions is typically the time when candidates make the kind of mistakes their opponents can use to set the frame for the fall campaign.

Mr. Trump’s campaign pounced when Mrs. Clinton was taped saying half of Mr. Trump’s supporters were a “basket of deplorables.” Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential candidate in 2012, was caught at a private fund-raiser saying 47 percent of Americans were “people who pay no income tax” and were “dependent upon government.”

John F. Kerry, as the Democratic presidential candidate in 2004, was caught on video windsurfing back and forth across the Nantucket Sound. That provided the perfect image for an [*attack advertisement*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden) by President George W. Bush, which portrayed him as a flip-flopper, his policy positions changing with “whichever way the wind blows,” as the announcer put it. (In the process, the advertisement underlined the Bush campaign’s effort to portray Mr. Kerry as elite.)

In Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Trump had an unpopular opponent easy to demonize. In the final month before Election Day, 54 percent of respondents had an unfavorable view of her, according to a [*New York Times/CBS News Poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden). Mr. Trump was in similar straits; he was viewed unfavorably by 56 percent of voters, the same percentage he holds today, according to the recent [*Times/Siena poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden).

Mr. Biden, on the other hand, was viewed unfavorably by just [*42 percent of voters in the same poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/10/19/us/trump-vs-biden); 52 percent viewed him favorably.

“That was what was historic about that race,” said Joel Benenson, who was chief strategist for Mrs. Clinton. “You don’t have that now. You have Trump with that high unfavorable rating. But Biden doesn’t have that.”

“And he’s the president now,” Mr. Benenson said. “He ran as a bomb-throwing presidential candidate. He could throw it at any candidate, they were the establishment. He owns it now.”

Ms. Southwell said that Mr. Biden presented a different kind of target than Mrs. Clinton. “It’s not that he hasn’t been an insider,” she said. “He’s had a different kind of upbringing and a different kind of career than Hillary Clinton.”

In many ways, Mr. Biden has turned the tables on Mr. Trump: He is running as if he were the incumbent, while Mr. Trump is acting like the challenger. The question is whether he will be able to maintain that posture through the election.

“Biden’s basement Rose Garden strategy has enabled him to play the role of a generic Democratic candidate, without the microscopic scrutiny that he would otherwise have been subjected to,” said Neil Newhouse, a Republican pollster who worked for Mr. Romney. “Joe Biden is not Hillary Clinton, in that he doesn’t have the built-in negatives that Hillary embodied. So, while we can absolutely still define Biden, we have significantly less time to do so.”

PHOTOS: A series of polls has shown President Trump trailing Joseph R. Biden Jr., often by double digits. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Trump gave a divisive speech at Mount Rushmore on July 3, where he refrained from any mention of Mr. Biden. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Living With Freaky Furniture***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YDF-FJ21-DXY4-X23V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

An exhibition of Italian Radical design showcases household objects that energetically defied good taste.

This article is part of our latest [*special report on Design*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/special-section-design), which is about getting personal with customization.

The tumultuous period remembered as the ’60s (although it extended well into the 1970s) was half a century ago, as far removed from 2020 as World War I was from Woodstock. Nonetheless that era’s cultural awakening — an unwieldy hodgepodge of social, political and aesthetic insurgencies — has begun to seem fresh again, relevant (as they used to say) and potentially of practical use for navigating the turmoil of our present moment.

So it is entirely apropos that the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, has mounted an [*exhibition*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/special-section-design) called “Radical: Italian Design 1965-1985, the Dennis Freedman Collection.” (The show runs until April 26 and will travel to Yale University’s School of Architecture in 2021.)

Mr. Freedman, a New York-based creative consultant to fashion houses, publications, galleries and museums, has made it his life’s mission to immerse himself in the output of the Italian branch of the counterculture.

The movement, in which young graduates of architecture schools in Florence, Milan and Turin organized themselves into collectives with comic book names like Superstudio, Archizoom and UFO, offered a means for expressing boundless political outrage through aesthetic contrarianism. The passions that famously drove the Bauhaus, a love of mass production and functionalism, were anathema to this generation.

Andrea Branzi, a founder of Archizoom, based in Florence, told the exhibition’s curator, Cindi Strauss, in an interview for the catalog that his compatriots were “snobs and Stalinists” with a profound desire to undermine Modernist rationalism with a pop sensibility and replace the notion of “good design” with a messy irreverence. Franco Raggi, who had worked in Milan with Alessandro Mendini at Casabella, the leading publication of the Radical moment, recalled that the goal was to “destroy bourgeois culture and thought” and force a re-examination of the “capitalistic nature of society.”

The Radicals worked in every possible medium to advance their ideas. They generated conceptual drawings of ethereal imaginary cities, staged happenings (like one in which Mr. Mendini set fire to his Monumentino da Casa, a chair atop a stepped pedestal) and tried, through an educational effort called Global Tools, to reinvent basic concepts like work and design. However, much of what remains of the Radicals’ output is in the form of furniture and light fixtures, which would be bourgeois if it wasn’t all so outré.

The work of the Radicals is curiously confounding. While the movement rejected the industrial aesthetic associated with the Bauhaus — and the very idea of mass production — it embraced industrial materials, most notably foam rubber and plastic. And most of its work appears to be in calculated defiance not of capitalism, exactly, but of good taste.

Take, for example, a 1964 sideboard called Cielo, Mare, Terra, a claw-footed walnut cabinet topped with a metal spike and, instead of the customary glass doors, a pair of pink Fiat doors (equipped with mounds that resemble breasts). It seems to reside in no explicable aesthetic universe but makes a certain amount of sense if you are trying to shake up the world by throwing out the rules.

In 1998, Mr. Freedman made his first purchase of Radical design, a big hunk of polyurethane foam shaped like the top of an Ionic column. The Capitello, by Studio 65, a group of art and architecture graduates of Turin’s Polytechnic University (who also edited the magazine ***Working Class***) was intended as a lounge chair.

Mr. Freedman was attracted to, among other things, the work’s patina, a quality not generally associated with foam rubber. “The age creates a surface that is not unlike porcelain,” he said, describing the effect of a polyurethane-specific varnish called Guflac. “It develops a crackle finish that is stunningly beautiful.”

While the Capitello has a cartoonish appearance, Mr. Freedman says he believes its political and philosophical message is unmistakable: “Literally your ass is on one of the pillars of classical Greek architecture. It’s an act of defiance.”

What philosophy can be expressed by squishy column fragments, or sideboards with car doors, or gargantuan blades of polyurethane grass meant to be used as a free-form lounge chair? It is hard to see this as Stalinism or even something more avant-garde, like Dadaism. Instead, it appears to represent a broad, indeterminate approach to making trouble, one object at a time.

If there was consensus among the Radicals about the nature of their collective undertaking, it had something to do with mutability. The Radicals seemed to agree that we should all be able to alter our personal environments however we would like. There is a broad swath of the Radical thinking that was dedicated to the power of rearrangement.

In the landmark 1972 [*exhibition*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/special-section-design) at the Museum of Modern Art, “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape,” a precursor of sorts to the Houston show, the Radicals were largely represented as designers of conceptual environments. Ettore Sottsass, for example, the Milan-based polymath who later became famous as the progenitor of Memphis design, contributed a residential interior consisting of a set of nearly identical multipurpose “containers” that satisfied all possible household needs and could be endlessly moved around.

Much of the Radical furniture advanced the idea that you could live anywhere and create your own environment. Inflatables were popular (for seating and also for protest props). And Archizoom created the 1966 Superonda sofa, a pair of lightweight, wave-shaped, configurable puzzle pieces, often photographed outdoors, as if they were part of the landscape.

Such furnishings signaled “a liberated lifestyle, a freedom,” suggested Andrew Blauvelt, the director of the Cranbrook Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. More than a decade ago, he set out to mount a show for the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, where he was then a curator, on the Italian Radicals. That exhibition ballooned into a much broader 2015 [*survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/special-section-design) called “Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia,” in which he traced countercultural projects across borders.

Mr. Blauvelt’s own interest in the Radicals was driven by the connections he saw between that movement and today’s socially minded designers. The way they worked, the fact that they were “very multidisciplinary and very nonhierarchical” with artists, architects and technicians commingling, is particularly inspiring for creative troublemakers today, he said.

There’s another aspect of the Radical approach that today’s aesthetic insurgents might find rousing. While other 1960s rebels were going back to the land and immersing themselves in nature, the Italian Radicals took the fruits of capitalistic society, the synthetic materials that were everywhere, and repurposed them to furnish their own little cosmos, not a world that was more in harmony with nature, but one that felt more natural to them.

A new generation of radical designers might easily do the same, appropriating today’s technologies, like those intended to optimize, to make everything smoother and more predictable, and subverting them to craft an aesthetic that accentuates the bumps, surprises and outrages.

PHOTOS: Clockwise from above, Archizoom’s 1966 Superonda sofa, made of two versatile puzzle pieces. Dennis Freedman, whose collection is featured at the show, wears a jacket by Riccardo Tisci for Givenchy with details from the technology of sound. A 1964 sideboard by Fabio De Sanctis and Ugo Sterpini has Fiat doors. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARIO BARTOLINI/CENTRO STUDI POLTRONOVA ARCHIVE; TODD SPOTH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (F16); MIES CHAIR, ARCHIZOOM ASSOCIATI, 1969: This ultraminimalist steel triangle, with a rubber sling seat and cowhide pillows, has been in uninterrupted production by Poltronova since its debut. The idea was to ridicule the truism that “less is more” by pushing minimalism to the extreme.; PRATONE, GRUPPO STRUM, 1971: An oversize patch of polyurethane greenery, intended as a free-form lounge chair, it is a work of pop art with a serious side. The manufacturer Gufram describes it as “temporary, unstable, always to be conquered due to the elasticity of the material.”; QUADERNA 2600, SUPERSTUDIO, 1970: The grid (here a laminate applied to a wooden table) was central to the vision of Superstudio. Dennis Freedman described Quaderna as a visual representation of egalitarianism: “The thing about the grid is that every point on the grid is equal to another.”; CHIOCCIOLA, STUDIO 65, 1972: A more subtle offshoot of the Capitello chair, this polyurethane one is called snail, but has also been interpreted as a riff on the acanthus leaf commonly found on the Corinthian column. The snails could be lined up to make a long, snaking “never-ending sofa.”; B.T.2, STUDIO A.R.D.I.T.I., 1971: In Italian, the studio initials stand for Association of Totally Integrated Reactionary Designers. Opposed to consumerism and capitalist society, it vowed to make design more democratic. This table lamp was an experiment with low-voltage lights; magnets hold tiny bulbs in place. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENT PELL/THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON); ZABRO CHAIR, ALESSANDRO MENDINI, 1984: Alessandro Mendini, who died in 2019, championed Radical design from his position as editor in chief of Casabella. His Zabro design is a more recent work, usually regarded as an example of postmodernism. The round back flips down, transforming the chair into a table. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAD BRIDGER/THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON) (F17)

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[***Big New Obstacle for Economic Recovery: Child Care Crisis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60B2-KXR1-DXY4-X0CW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Eliza Shapiro and Patrick McGeehan

**Highlight:** The decision to only reopen New York City’s public schools part time in September illustrates the looming threat to businesses.

**Body**

The decision to only reopen New York City’s public schools part time in September illustrates the looming threat to businesses.

When New York City decided to reopen its school system, the nation’s largest, on a part-time basis in September, it set off a new [*child care*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/upshot/child-care-biden.html) crisis that could seriously threaten its ability to restart the local economy and recover from the coronavirus outbreak.

Business and union leaders say the city needs to mount a kind of [*Marshall Plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/1972/06/06/archives/june-5-1947-start-of-the-marshall-plan-effort-to-build-a-new-europe.html)-like effort to find child care for many of the system’s 1.1 million students when they are not in classrooms. They said there was no way the economy — from conglomerates in Midtown Manhattan to small businesses in Queens — could fully return to normal if parents had no choice but to stay at home to watch their children.

The concerns reflected a growing recognition across the nation that the reopening of schools could be the linchpin in the broader effort to undo the severe economic damage from the outbreak. New York City alone is facing its worst financial crisis since the 1970s, [*with an unemployment rate hovering near 20 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/07/nyregion/nyc-unemployment.html).

“There is no discussion of this right now that’s serious,” said Kathryn S. Wylde, chief executive of the Partnership for New York City, whose members include the city’s biggest private-sector employers. “There is not a serious solution. Which means that people will not be able to go back to work.”

[*Under the plan announced by Mayor Bill de Blasio this week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/nyregion/nyc-schools-reopening-plan.html), classroom attendance would be limited to only one to three days a week in an effort to protect public health. The city’s approach is similar to that being followed by many school districts, which are concerned that crowded schools might intensify the outbreak.

The decisions on school reopenings are also fueling a contentious political debate over whether elected officials, educators and public health experts are moving forward too cautiously, even as [*the number of virus cases soars*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/09/us/coronavirus-cases-reopening-trends.html) in the United States.

President Trump and his aides are [*putting pressure on state and local officials*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/politics/trump-schools-reopening.html) to bring children back to classrooms full time this fall, saying the fate of the economy depends on it.

“Parents have to get back to the factory,” Alex Azar, the federal health and human services secretary, said this week. “They’ve got to get back to the job site. They have to get back to the office. And part of that is their kids, knowing their kids are taken care of.”

But some educators and public health experts said they were worried that fully reopening the schools before the outbreak is contained could recklessly lead to the spread of the virus.

[*A flurry of recent announcements on school reopenings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/coronavirus-schools-reopen-fall.html) has left families grappling with the harsh reality that they may not be able to fully return to work until there is a vaccine or effective treatment.

Children in Seattle will likely return to school only one or two days a week, and students in Los Angeles County, home to the country’s second-largest school system, [*may not be able to return to classrooms at all next month*](https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-08/campus-reopening-at-risk-from-coronavirus-surge) if cases continue to increase in the region.

In New York, Jane Meyer, a mayoral spokeswoman, said that the city had begun reaching out to the business community and that it would announce child care options in the coming weeks.

“We know working families are trying to put the pieces together and make this work, and we are laser-focused on providing solutions,” she said.

The school reopening plan will add to the complexities businesses face in juggling work and child care. Big companies have been scrambling to make workplaces safe and sanitary, but many have said that creating space in their buildings for schoolchildren would raise too many liability issues.

Some employers said they did not expect most parents to return to work without a normal school schedule. Leaders of the city’s big labor unions said many members had been looking after the children of those whose jobs were considered essential. Before many of the others could return to work, union leaders said, they would need safe spaces for their own children.

Steven James, New York City chief executive of the Douglas Elliman real-estate brokerage, said the schools plan would not allow for a normal return for nearly 1,000 employees based at the company’s Midtown office.

“It throws a bit of a wrench in it,” Mr. James said. “It’s not going to be, ‘I’ll drop you off at 8:30 on my way to the office and pick you back up at 3.’ It won’t be like that.”

While employees who have been working from home during the pandemic might have some flexibility, that is not the case for many low-income families and essential workers.

Unions that represent essential workers say many members face child care difficulties in normal times and now are being forced into an even worse predicament.

“Many of our members live in households where all of the adult members work staggered schedules to deal with child care,” said Kyle Bragg, president of 32BJ SEIU, which represents 85,000 building cleaners, security guards, doormen and airport workers in New York.

Public school parents will not learn what days their children can attend school until August, so it will be difficult for working families to let their employers know before late summer when they can show up in person.

Working parents have expressed confusion and anxiety about the prospect of a part-time return to schools without a child care plan.

David Segal, a sanitation worker who lives in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, said he and his wife had been “pulling out our hair trying to figure out child care” for their two young children. His older child was set to start pre-K this fall.

If Mr. Segal’s son can attend school only once or twice a week, his wife, who works in a clothing store, would have to significantly reduce her hours.

“I’m not sure how we will pay the bills,” Mr. Segal said, adding that a private day care could cost more than his wife’s annual income. “It’s insane that no political leaders have any answers for ***working-class*** parents.”

About 40 percent of New Yorkers think a full-time return to school this fall is a good idea, [*according to a recent Marist poll*](https://twitter.com/Politics_Polls/status/1281452963073056770).

Jose Maldonado, secretary-treasurer of Unite Here Local 100, said 15,000 employees in his 18,000-member union were laid off because of the coronavirus and were eager to get back to work.

Many of those members had jobs serving food in cafeterias, delis and airports. Those who have kept working have had laid-off workers care for their children, Mr. Maldonado said.

Mr. Maldonado, who is recovering from Covid-19, has a daughter, Cristina Cerezo, who is a guidance counselor at Public School 333 in the Bronx. Ms. Cerezo said she and some of her students’ parents were wary about the feasibility of the mayor’s plan.

“We’re flying this plane as we build it,” she said.

“There’s a child care crisis coming,” said Michael Mulgrew, president of the city’s teachers union, which represents about 75,000 classroom teachers.

Thousands of teachers who have spent months juggling remote learning for their students and their own children will now have to figure out how to return to school full time while their children go back only a few days a week.

“Every way that you look at it, it feels impossible” to plan for fall, said Emily James, a mother of two who teaches high school English in Brooklyn.

“The city has to come up with some way to provide child care instead of trying to make everything work through the schools,” Ms. James said, adding that she was nervous about whether teachers would be safe returning to buildings.

Some experts say they worry [*that the flexibility some companies offered on child care in the spring will wane*](https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-the-huge-hole-in-these-school-plans-20200709-b5depwefvrbahczunws5w4oyae-story.html) come fall. This week, a woman in California [*sued her former employer, claiming she was fired because her young children made noise during calls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/drisana-rios-lawsuit-hub-international.html) while she was working at home.

“As we start talking about reopening, there’s almost this compassion fatigue, that I’ve put up with you and your lack of child care long enough,” said Brigid Schulte, who runs the [*Better Life Lab*](https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/) at New America, a research group.

The city’s employers are also desperate for clarity on school reopening and child care.

Miriam Milord, owner of BCakeNy, a bakery in the Prospect Heights section of Brooklyn, said, “It would be great for employees to have child care.”

This summer, a teenage girl from the neighborhood has been supervising Ms. Milord’s 12-year-old son and a few of her employees’ children at her house while the parents bake and sell cakes.

Ms. Milord said she laid off 10 of her 16 workers, but had brought four of them back. Some are single mothers who would need child care on the days their children are not in the classroom.

“We definitely would like to hire back one or more of them,” Ms. Milord said. “But what’s the plan?”

Ms. Wylde said she had heard suggestions about how the private sector could pitch in to provide space for students when they are not in school, including using empty hotel ballrooms and auditoriums, and even vacant storefronts.

But she said those ideas seemed unrealistic given the huge number of students involved and the potential liabilities. Finding enough space would require a sweeping plan — one, she said, that would rival the Marshall Plan, which provided aid to Western Europe after World War II. Such an endeavor would also dwarf the [*largely successful effort in 2014 to create space for universal pre-K*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/01/nyregion/deblasio-pre-k-program-nyc.html).

City officials have not yet formally proposed any of these ideas to the business community, she said.

For now, working families are left in limbo, fearful for their own livelihoods and for the city’s future.

Mia Pearlman, a mother of two who lives in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn, lost her income when the pandemic hit. Her family has been living on federal unemployment checks and her husband’s teacher salary, and she does not know what her family will do if the government help dries up.

The mayor’s school plan, she said, “does not accommodate the reality of having kids in New York City.”

PHOTOS: Emily James, a high school English teacher, with her daughters Natalie, 7, and Alessandra, 5. She doesn’t know how she can return to school full time if her daughters are going only part time. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Miriam Milord, right, and Dara Roach run BCakeNy in Brooklyn. A teenager has been watching Ms. Milord’s children. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NAIMA GREEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A7)

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[***The Taste of Home***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:629N-XSX1-JBG3-62D6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Ligaya Mishan

**Body**

THE GRAPEVINES RISE at the corner of East 66th Street and Hough Avenue in Cleveland, 14 trim green rows claiming over half a city block -- a little less than an acre -- beside an abandoned building with boarded-up windows, whose rolling lawn on a summer morning is as lush as Versailles's. The sky is brilliant and wide above stoplights and swoops of telephone wire. Across the tar-patched street stand storefronts behind scissor gates and a former grocery whose facade half collapsed last May, raining brick on the sidewalk. Down the avenue, the walls of another boarded-up building have been commandeered as an outdoor art gallery, papered over in posters with messages: ''I survived the Hough riots''; ''Growing your own food is like printing your own money.''

For centuries, the French have used the word ''terroir'' to describe the environment in which a wine is produced. Going back to the Latin ''terra,'' ''earth,'' it's rooted in a traditional vision of the countryside and has become more fervently embraced as our agrarian past recedes. Today, more than half the world's population lives in cities, and an estimated 800 million of us take part in some form of urban farming, producing as much as one-fifth of the food we eat -- recalibrating both our idea of agriculture and the mystique of origins. When Mansfield Frazier planted his Cleveland vineyard in 2010, which he christened Château Hough, he became part of an unofficial movement of urban dwellers across America transforming vacant lots, rooftops and their own backyards into farms, vineyards and apiaries, encouraged in part by government grants aimed at revitalizing cities.

Frazier was warned about the potentially stunting effects of exhaust from passing cars, and was told he'd be lucky if the plants grew shoulder high. Instead, ''they jumped out of the ground,'' he says, reaching 12 feet the first year. The soil turned out to be good for grapes: Sandy and loose, it harbors heat, drains well, resists pests and allows the vines' roots to go deep. Frazier added a little phosphorous at the beginning, but has otherwise left it pretty much alone. Although he'd dreamed of making chardonnay, he was advised that European viniferas might be too delicate for Ohio, where temperatures can drop below zero. So he chose cold-hardy hybrids, Traminette and Frontenac, which have survived winters when larger rural vineyards in the state lost whole crops.

Proximity to water is key, and Lake Erie, two miles to the north, keeps the air cold in spring, protecting the vines from early budding, and warm as summer leaks into fall, so the grapes cling and ripen longer, building up their sugars before harvest. To give the vines unfettered sun, Frazier took a chain saw to the shady scrub trees that had sprung up along the plot; to nourish them, he considered, then rejected, the idea of sprinklers. The grapes were patient and there was rain enough.

''God is on our side,'' he says.

IN THE 13TH CENTURY, terroir was simply a practical way to delineate the right soils for growing grapes, as the American historian Kolleen M. Guy writes in ''When Champagne Became French: Wine and the Making of a National Identity'' (2003). Only toward the end of the 16th century did the word take on a sensory dimension, eventually yielding the phrase ''goût du terroir'' -- today popularly subsumed in and implied by ''terroir'' alone -- to explain how the profile of a wine reflects its origins; to identify a taste of place.

Still, to this day, no one can agree on what, precisely, terroir is, or if it even exists. Some limit it to the gifts of nature, those ecological conditions -- the chemistry of the soil (which the British wine writer Hugh Johnson described as ''the unseen dankness where the vine roots suck''), levels of water and sunlight, climate, elevation and altitude, topographical contours, surrounding biodiversity -- that predate the arrival of the vintner, whose interventions may enhance but not fundamentally change the ahistoric essence of the wine. Others point out that there is no scientific basis for a physical transmission of minerals from the ground to the final press of grapes. Instead, they argue, nature is but one factor, and terroir is best understood as a dialogue between land and vintner, who is no mere steward but a necessary partner, devoting labor and knowledge, and perhaps imparting something of the human soul.

In either case, terroir must be earned: coaxed out over decades, even generations. (In France, winemaking goes back to the sixth century B.C.) But Frazier does not hail from a long line of vintners. Now 77, he grew up a couple of miles away in Central, a Black neighborhood where Langston Hughes wrote his first poems. The son of a church deacon and saloonkeeper who ran a thriving gambling operation on the side, Frazier became first a pipe welder and then, as he describes it, a ''career counterfeiter,'' with a specialty in credit-card fraud, before landing in prison. There he turned to the written word and, in 1995, his essay collection ''From Behind the Wall: Commentary on Crime, Punishment, Race and the Underclass by a Prison Inmate'' was published by the Minnesota-based Paragon House, which cast the author as ''a latter-day Virgil, inviting us to descend with him into the modern American inferno.''

A few years after his release, Frazier headed home to Cleveland and settled in Hough, once among the city's poorest neighborhoods, whose population as of the last census, in 2010, was 94 percent Black. The streets still bear the scars of the historic riots -- ''I prefer to call it the uprising,'' he says -- of July 1966, which were set off in the middle of a heat wave when a Black man was refused a glass of water at a white-owned cafe. (A grand jury report, released a month later, floated the false theory that ''trained and disciplined professionals,'' abetted by members of the Communist Party, had incited the violence, not unlike the accusations against ''outside instigators'' after last spring's protests over the police killing of George Floyd.) With his wife, Brenda, Frazier built a home and a nonprofit organization to help prisoners re-enter society. He kept an eye on an apartment building across the street that he suspected had become a hub of drug activity, and when it was eventually torn down, he got a federal grant to convert the lot into an urban vineyard, and brought in formerly incarcerated people from a nearby halfway house to help build trellises and plant the vines.

Do the wines of Château Hough -- Frazier's favorite is a crisp, sweet white named Sassy -- owe their character to soil enriched by the glacial lakes that covered Ohio thousands of years ago, or to the fires that ravaged these streets in 1966, or to the men who, working the vines, began a new life? ''The grapes don't know there was a riot here,'' Frazier says. But he does.

WE INVOKE TERROIR today in all manner of food and drink, to praise the velvety finish of chocolate from the coast of Venezuela, say, or the icy clarity of uni from Hokkaido, Japan. But terroir wasn't always desirable. When taken strictly as a matter of geology, it could yield flaws as well as virtues. In ''Tasting French Terroir: The History of an Idea'' (2015), Thomas Parker, an American scholar of French literature, points to a 16th-century French treatise that snubbed wines in which the taste of soil was too dominant, a sign of coarseness. This sentiment persisted through the 1964 publication of the revered American wine importer and advocate Frank Schoonmaker's ''Encyclopedia of Wine,'' in which he defines goût du terroir as an ''earthy flavor, somewhat unpleasant,'' adding, ''superior wines rarely if ever have much of this.''

Nevertheless, terroir -- in the broader sense, place of origin -- is now law in France, codified in a system designed to protect certain regional products from the diminishment of false rivals. Since 1927 no sparkling wine may be called Champagne unless its grapes are grown in the Champagne wine region in northeastern France; only Roquefort cheese made in the caves of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon may bear that name, as first decreed in 1411. This is at once a marketing tool and a cultural statement (with nationalistic undertones), championing literal roots in the land.

The United States is a young nation by comparison, and beholden instead to the formative myth that whatever your birth -- your origin -- you can be anything (even if that isn't true). When it comes to character, terroir isn't fixed; it can even be defeated, and certainly reinvented. And so the term is applied more loosely and freely here, not to recall some lost pastoral idyll but to conjure a more metaphorical state of rootedness, as an antidote to the industrialization in the wake of World War II that flooded American homes with processed and unnervingly uniform foods -- ''placeless and faceless'' commodities, as the cultural anthropologist Amy B. Trubek writes in ''The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey Into Terroir'' (2008). This cheap bounty promised an end to hunger, but at the expense of part of what makes us human: a connection to our surroundings and the labor with which we make them our own. In this context, terroir offers a way to distinguish the particular from the generic, the personal from the corporate, what is local and what could come from anywhere.

But what does place taste like? Two years ago, Nora Lidgus, a 39-year-old baker and artist then working at a three-Michelin-star restaurant in Manhattan, was asked by her boss to make a single loaf of bread -- but it had to be, he told her, ''the best bread in the world.'' Instead, she set out to make bread that could exist only in New York. She filled sterilized jars with sourdough starters -- a combination of flour from wheat grown in New York State and tap water -- then planted them around the city to suck in wild yeasts from the air, along with microbes from passers-by, souvenirs from the crush of urban life. (This was long before the coronavirus, back when we shared microbes without thinking.) One jar went in the southern end of Central Park, where it was watched over by a guard at a kiosk; another stood outside a private dining room on the fourth floor of the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the Upper East Side; and the third and riskiest was tied to a rope and slung over a beam off the Brooklyn Bridge.

Every day for two weeks she visited each site, lifted the cheesecloth covers and fed the starters flour and tap water, careful to check the jar on the bridge only when nobody was looking. (She'd petitioned the city for a permit but never heard back.) When it came time to bake the loaves, the Met's turned out smooth and congenial, born of comfort, ''the bread version of table wine,'' she says, while Central Park's was floral and crustier, a little rugged at the edges. The starter from the Brooklyn Bridge produced the most alcohol, which made the bread sweeter, so she added seeds and rye to balance it out. Still, not every locale yielded an intriguing result: When she attempted another starter near the Gowanus Canal, it never took on identity; instead, the resultant bread reminded her of the King Arthur starter kit. (She blamed this, symbiotically, on her lack of a personal connection to the neighborhood.)

To be a baker, Lidgus explains, is to be half control freak, half submissive to fate; to embrace a life of eternal adjustments. There was an element of uncertainty in hanging a jar off the Brooklyn Bridge, in that she would never know the whole story, what cars, birds and people roared, fluttered and shuffled by, or if someone spied the rope and hauled it up to take a peek. A sourdough starter effectively eats the air around us and takes part of us with it; this one, suspended at the heavily trafficked meeting point of two boroughs, had potentially invited the whole world's microbes in. What -- who -- was in there, exactly? This was her ode to New York, and New York was chaos. ''I like my city messy,'' she says.

It's a common misbelief that terroir is a concept singular to the French, and that no corresponding word exists in other cultures. But the Chinese ''fengtu'' and the Japanese ''fudo'' -- literally, ''wind and soil'' -- have long been used to define how geography and climate shape the character of both regions and the people who live in them. More intimately, the Korean ''son-mat'' translates as ''the taste of your hands,'' attributing the flavor of food to the touch of the person who makes it: almost a microterroir, distinct to each individual. For Lidgus's New York project, she borrowed a term from the art world, saying, ''All sourdough is site-specific'' -- work that is created in and for one place and would lose meaning if shifted elsewhere.

CHICORY AND CLOVER, dandelion and milkweed, catmint and hawthorn, mulberry and crab apple: This is the feast that awaits the bees of Detroit, where between 60,000 and 70,000 vacant lots, just under a third of the city's land, brim with blossoms, and perennials like tiger lilies and asters still find their way out of the ground behind abandoned homes. In 2013, the city went broke, declaring the largest municipal bankruptcy in American history, with $18 million in debt. Nicole Lindsey, 37, and Timothy Paule, 36, lived through the gutting of public services in their neighborhoods and witnessed how talk of revitalization never seemed to include the voices of people in ***working-class*** communities. In 2017, they took matters into their own hands -- ''We can be our own heroes,'' Paule says -- and for $340 bought three partial lots in Detroit, a total of 3,500 square feet, where they set up three hives.

Today, through their nonprofit venture, Detroit Hives, Lindsey and Paule have expanded to 13 locations, partnering with local schools and community gardens, and tend more than three million bees. And while bee populations are declining precipitously across the country -- each winter of the past decade, American beekeepers have lost between a quarter and half of their colonies -- scientists report the opposite here. Where bees in rural areas must often make do with pesticide-strafed monoculture crops, they find abundance in cities whose empty lots, conventionally considered signs of urban blight, teem with undisturbed and luxuriant life. These conditions affect not just the survival of the bees but the taste of their honey, which is ''extremely local,'' Paule says, and changes by the season. In spring, Detroit's terroir has notes of mint; in fall, the hives give off the scent of clover and goldenrod.

To ''eat local'' is a modern mantra, driven by concern over climate change and the hulking trucks that haul produce and livestock from coast to coast. But it's also a commitment to the idea of locality -- the transformation of the space we move through into a place that is recognizably ours, be it a region, a city or a single block. With honey, to eat local is to go a step further and become local, taking into your body the traces of nectar and pollen from the surrounding flowers and trees, which some believe might help your immune system learn to be in tune with your surroundings and less prone to allergies. (Paule notes that local honey put an end to months of his hacking cough.)

And maybe this is the true purpose of terroir, to anchor us in place, to give us a stake in the world. The French social theorist Henri LeFebvre, writing shortly before the May 1968 student demonstrations in Paris, which catalyzed a wave of protests and strikes and brought France to a standstill, famously declared a ''right to the city'' -- a right to have a say in the shaping of the urban environment and to live in a place where use and pleasure are privileged over profit. A few decades later, the British social theorist and geographer David Harvey, amplifying the idea, argued that this right means more than simply access to urban resources: It is ''the freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves.''

Belonging somewhere isn't as straightforward as having an address, and even more so as the demands of virtual and global citizenship come to take precedence over the physical reality of neighborhoods. In cities like Cleveland, Detroit and New York, a neighborhood is never a constant or a given; it requires conscious engagement with others and daily traversals of space, fending off the intrusions and urgencies of capital, be they in the form of gentrification or real estate development, and wearing down what will become familiar paths, even if there's no ultimate destination beyond returning home. Trubek writes that ''locating food makes it ours,'' but it also helps to tell us who we are. Before there can be a taste of place, we first must make a place of our own.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/26/t-magazine/food/terroir-american-cities.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/26/t-magazine/food/terroir-american-cities.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: In Cleveland, grapes benefit from their proximity to Lake Erie, resulting in wine that's crisp and sweet

in New York City, a local baker placed her sourdough starter in various locations -- hung off the Brooklyn Bridge

within Central Park -- to determine how that influences the character of her homemade bread.

While bee populations have waned throughout rural America, urban hives are thriving in cities such as Detroit, producing honey that's reminiscent of mint, clover or goldenrod. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICIA HEAL

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Tressie McMillan Cottom; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62F3-J8P1-JBG3-600K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The April 13 episode of “The Ezra Klein Show.”

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Tressie McMillan Cottom. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

EZRA KLEIN: I’m Ezra Klein, and this is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

[MUSIC PLAYING]

So when I do these introductions, I try to have a particular thread I’m following, something to set up the main argument or the main question of the show, but that’s not possible today. It wouldn’t do this justice. There’s too much in this show for me to wrap it into one idea. It is, as my guest might say, really thick, and it is great. Tressie McMillan Cottom is a sociologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She’s the author of the book “Lower Ed” and then the wonderful essay collection “Thick,” which was a National Book Award finalist in 2019. She won a MacArthur “genius” grant. She’s a co-host of the podcast “Hear to Slay,” and she’s just one of those people who you can ask her any question, any question at all, and you just get a sparklingly interesting answer.

Prepping for this was intimidating because her work is just vast, from academic research on how for-profit colleges generate inequality, to sprawling essays on Dolly Parton, to these analysis of how beauty functions in contemporary America, to ideas about the roles hustle plays in the American economy, everything, everything, everything in between.

But in part, I just wanted to understand how does she take on so many different topics constructively. Like, what is her process for being able to say something useful as she moves into these different areas. It’s a lot to find something intelligent to say about, but as you’ll hear, there’s also one idea that thrums the core of a lot of this, and that is the way status structures reinforces the hierarchies of American life of who gets listened to and who gets seen and why, but this is honestly one of those conversations that could have gone for four more hours. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. As always, my email is [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com) Here’s Tressie McMillan Cottom.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

So something I always admire about your work is the range of topics you’re able to write in and the range of topics you write about and this crazy group of registers you do from Twitter, to Substack, to academic work. So I wanted to start here. How did you train yourself to write in so many different ways?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Oh, man. I wish I could say that I did train myself to write in so many ways. I think what happens instead is that — first of all, I’m a very curious person. I’m in these spaces anyway. I am an internet person for better or for worse, right? I came of age as a public person and like live journal, right? Like, I have followed the development of these spaces just like any other person, I think, of my generation, though. That’s just kind of where. That’s where we were hanging out.

And when I’m in a space, this predates being a sociologist or an academic. When I’m in a space, I’m very much a one step, in one step removed kind of person. I’m watching the thing I’m participating in, can’t turn that off. It’s just what I am and who I am. And so it makes sense for me that if I’m on Twitter, I’m also thinking about Twitter, right? I’m thinking about, why are all these people here? What’s the audience looking? What’s that about? And so that comes out in the things that I’m interested in. So that’s one thing.

I think training myself to write to that audience — understanding it is one thing, to be fair. Understanding everything as a genre is another thing, and there was a moment when I realized this is just like learning how to write the five paragraph essay, right, as opposed to a long form piece of creative nonfiction. Every medium has a genre, and some of that, cracking some of it really is just fun for me.

It’s like, OK. Let me see if I can do this. I can’t do them all, to be fair. There are definitely some genres, especially ones that lean more visual, because I’m a textual kind of girl. And I just don’t get like visual and editing, but some of it is just fun for me to see if I can remix the genre. First of all, can I capture it? And then can I remix it a little? Can I make an essay you have like the freewheeling feeling of Twitter? Can I surprise an audience that thought they were showing up for like a first person essay with a little bit of empirical thinking? Can I just sort of surprise people? That’s part of the fun for me.

EZRA KLEIN: How do the genres change the way you think? When you sit down and you begin writing in the academic register versus the personal essay register, does it change the kinds of thoughts you have?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yes. What will often happen is I sit down, and there’s something I want to write about or I’m obligated to write about. That happens sometimes, too. Like, I just got to write about it. And one of the first questions I kind of ask myself is, what is the right speed for this argument? So I actually think that one of the things that happens in writing in different registers is that you become much more reflexive about, should this have just been a tweet, which is totally fair, right?

And I think it’s a fair thing to say. Sometimes I’ll start on an argument, and I’ll go, this is not substantive enough for like this genre. And I’ll even push back sometimes now, like editors or people I’m collaborating with and go, y’all, I think we just mean to write a quick write up and move on. One of the things the academics are taken a task for is bloviating and overcomplicating simple things, and I really do think we could be set free a little bit if we would just admit that sometimes the thing we turned into like an academic piece probably just should have been either a first person essay or a tweet or somewhere in between, but status drives us sometimes more than the question we’re asking.

But I sit down and I go, OK, what is the right speed for this? What’s the right genre? When will I know that this argument is done? I like a complete argument. I like to walk away from something and say I left it all on the court, and sometimes that’s 240 characters. Sometimes it’s 20,000 words, and just being like attuned to that, that those are options. Those are choices. I ask myself that a lot when I sit down and I start with an argument. What’s the right size?

EZRA KLEIN: I feel like I used to be able to ask that question of myself. I came up as a blogger, and I’m an internet person.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And I would write little posts and long ones. And I swear to you, I cannot, no matter how hard I try now, write something that is in between 280 characters and 1,800 words.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: It’s one or the other?

EZRA KLEIN: I completely lost the register, like all the way in between. It’s like a book. It’s like a long essay, or it’s a tweet.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yup.

EZRA KLEIN: And God forbid you have 400 words worth of something to say. I just can’t seem to stop then.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Because then you just feel like you talk — it feels like a stub, right?

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: I call those stubs. I’ve got so many of those. It’s something like 350 words or something, and I’m not sure where that would go. I think what you’re asking is for us to bring back Blogger. I think that’s what you’re suggesting we do.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, I’m always asking for us to bring back blogging.

[LAUGHING]

There is a nostalgia, oftentimes, among people who came up in it, for the internet of the aughts.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. The old internet.

EZRA KLEIN: Do you think that’s nostalgia, or do you think something was lost?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Hmm. OK. So I now work with a lot of internet people. I’m in an information school at a university. And so a lot of my very good friends are those people, so I want to tiptoe carefully. I do think that there was a clubbiness and a camaraderie, even among people who politically disagreed. There was a class of thinkers, a class of writers who came up in that web 2.0 that does feel like, yeah, we lost something there.

There was a humanity there for good or for bad. Humanity is messy, but there was a sense that those ideas were attached to people, and there were things driving those people, there’s a reason they had chosen to be in that space before it all became about chasing an audience in a platform and turning that into influencer and translating that into that — before all that happened, the professionalization of it all. And that’s what I think we’re missing when we become nostalgic for that web 2.0. I think it’s the people in the machine.

Having said that, I am very resistant to nostalgia as a thing because usually what we are nostalgic for is a time that just was not that great for a lot of people. And so what we were usually a really nostalgic for is a time when we didn’t have to think so much about who was missing in the room, who wasn’t at the table. So when I talk to friends, and especially younger people coming up behind us either in the internet or in writing spaces, we’re like, that time was horrible for young queer people.

They talk about looking for little safe pockets of space in web 2.0 world where it was still very OK to be homophobic, for example, in those spaces and our casual language and how we structured that kind of thing. And they love being able to leave that part behind in this new world of whatever the web is now, both a consolidated and a disaggregated new web.

That’s why I’m like resistant to nostalgia. At the same time, I’m like, yeah. I also laugh and go, I really miss having a blog. In some ways, coming back to the newsletter, and Substack was kind part of that. It’s me being nostalgic for having a place where I could put thoughts that didn’t fit into any other discourse or genre, and I wanted a space where I could talk to people who were actually interacting like real people. They weren’t acting like bots, or trolls, or whatever your internet persona is.

So, I mean, I say I’m resistant to nostalgia. I just try not to reproduce, but even I get a little — I’ll always have a soft spot for Blogger, which is coincidentally my first “where I state” space on Blogger.

EZRA KLEIN: Yup. Me too.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: [LAUGHS] I’ll always be a little romantic about it.

EZRA KLEIN: But I think you’re right about that criticism of it, too. Something that, for all that I can tip into nostalgia, something that I think is often missed in today’s conversation is the conversation has never been wider.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: People talk all about things they can’t say, but it has never been wider.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yup.

EZRA KLEIN: There’s never been a larger allowable space of things you could say.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: That’s right.

EZRA KLEIN: And people have also never been more pissed about how it feels to participate in it. I don’t want to say never, but broadly, there is an intensity to that conversation that is distinct, and I don’t think those things are unrelated, right? I think it is the wideness of the conversation and the fact that there are so many people you might hear from that make you feel cautious and insecure and unsafe, and the good of it is the bad of it.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Exactly. One of the things I like to say to people is that we think that broadening access in any realm — we do this with everything, by the way. It’s such an American way to approach the world. We think that broadening access will broaden access on the terms of the people who have benefited from it being narrowed, which is just so counterintuitive.

Broadening access doesn’t mean that everybody has the experience that I, privileged person, had in the discourse. Broadening it means that we are all equally uncomfortable, right? That’s actually what pluralism and plurality is. It isn’t that everybody is going to come in and have the same comforts that privilege and exclusion had extended to a small group of people. It’s that now everybody sits at the table, and nobody knows the exact right thing to say about the other people.

Well, that’s fair. That means we all now have to be thoughtful. We all have to consider, oh, wait a minute. Is that what we say in this room? We all have to reconsider what the norms are, and that was the promise of like expanding the discourse, and that’s exactly what we’ve gotten. And if that means that I’m not sure about letting it rip on a joke, that’s probably a pretty good thing.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah. Jennifer Richeson, the psychologist at Yale, once called this a democratization of discomfort to me.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: And I think it’s such a good line. And something it always makes me think about is that there are a lot of us who came up in an earlier iteration, not just of the internet, but of journalism or cultural criticism or whatever it might be, and there were certain things it selected for. You know what I mean? There was like the 80s “New Republic” people who were really selected for slashing counterintuitive, provocative, and somewhat offensive essay-writing, and just — this era requires different virtues, and that’s the conversation I almost never hear people have.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: That maybe just the new internet or this moment, to be in one of these highly public and very privileged positions, you’re going to need to develop a different set of virtues and competencies and how to conduct a conversation and how to speak to people that are just hard. It’s just going to be really hard.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. Yeah. And human nature is resistant to learning. I mean, nobody knows that more than people who teach for a living. But for all we valorize learning and education, human nature really trends towards inertia, and every layer of privilege you layer on top of somebody makes that more true. And so what we’re fundamentally, I think, saying to people is — who achieved something where part of the promise of the achievement was that I’ll never have to learn anything new again, right?

This was the promise, right? I’m now the editor. I’m the gatekeeper or whatever, and the whole promise of that was I’ll never have to worry about learning anything new again. And then we come to them and we go, no. You got to relitigate. You got to reconsider what your role is, and now there actually are people who can hold you accountable for that in a way that wasn’t always true.

And I found it to be true in every space I’ve ever been in, every organization. It is true of myself. Nobody likes being reminded that they are not done yet, that there’s still more work for them to do. And that’s, I think, what we’re fundamentally saying to people, and they resist that because that’s human nature. It’s just that some people get to resist it in a way more aggressive fashion than other people.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah. Yuval Levin, who’s this conservative thinker, I once heard him say that almost all change is generational. Almost all real change that happens is when a new generation comes, and they are able to change. And I hadn’t thought about it quite that way before. But now when I look at, say, Congress, and I see the way, particularly, the Democratic Party is changing, or I look at what’s happening in online discourse, some of it just feels to me — I’m of a different generation, even than some of the young writers now — and you feel a little left behind. There is more change generation to generation than there is within generations, and maybe it’s for exactly that reason.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. Nothing is funny to me than when I realize, we wrote all of this stuff. We did all this stuff. We threw out all these theories of change, and then people believed us. That’s literally what happened. You’ve got young people who said, wait a minute. Gender is a spectrum? OK. I’m a live it like a spectrum. And we’re like, no, but we didn’t mean that.

Really, what fundamentally happened is we hypothesized and imagined all of this stuff, wrote it into the ether, and then we’re surprised that people actually took it up and lived it. That does happen faster, as you point out. We do owe that to the internet. The generations are now like four and a half years long, but it happens faster, and so we feel older faster, and we feel outdated faster.

But I get so inspired by the people who, within a generation, have resisted becoming that old person. And I’m just like, OK. I’m just going to double down, right? I think we’ve got a choice. You can become like the Angela Davis of the world, or you’re like, OK, I hear you. Each new generation comes along, and I hear you. I got to get with it, and I’ve seen Angela do that in real time.

Like a young person will stand up in the audience and go, and we say “sibs” now. And she’s like, I’m with you. Gotcha. Like, you just take it, and you’re supposed to go. And I think we’ve got a choice. You can become that person within your generation who lives in that uncomfortable space, or you can become the person — I won’t name a name — but you can become the person who doesn’t and resists it. I just don’t want them writing about me like that later. So I’m really shooting for the Angela Davis model.

EZRA KLEIN: Let me ask you about your own generational change. You have this line I love where you say that all of your essays begin with a question of why me and not my grandmother. Tell me about your grandmother.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Oh, thank you. I’d love to tell you about my grandmother. I’ve been thinking about her so much lately, in part because I’ve moved back home to North Carolina, and that’s where my family is, and so getting nostalgic, and because we’ve been trapped in the house. What else is there to do? But my grandmother was a part of this sweeping — talk about a generational change — sweeping generational change in the United States of America, really, I think in the Western world when we think about how central the United States is to that definition.

She’s the tail-end of the Great Migration generation, Black people who left point South for points North and West with millions of other people, spans about a generation and a half of people if we use the big definition of generations, but I think something really just coheres that generation of African-Americans in particular. They’re the ones who made really foundational decisions about whether to stay or to leave.

And my grandmother was one of the people who left, and she was probably the least likely of her family members to have been predicted to leave. I mean, this was not a brave woman. I love her dearly. She’s sweet as she could be, but this was the woman who had 19 locks on the door. She wasn’t exactly a pioneer and that pioneering spirit. What she was pragmatic, however.

And if jobs were in the North and that’s where you went — but I think about how much she probably had to fight her nature to do what she needed to do. She was creative. I get so much of, I think, my creative energies from her, a big reader, which all of us are in the family. But even in a family of readers, my grandmother was the reader, really wide reading. She read anything, and I think I got that from her, too.

Very agnostic on genre, and I don’t care. I’ll read anything. I got that from her. And so when I’m thinking about why me and not her, of all of those instincts that I inherited from her and all those things she socialized me into, she’s just, for me, the concrete example of how you can be everything that a culture values and not be in the right body for the culture to value it, and that is going to shape the limit of your life. It is my understanding of this is what inequality and stratification looks like in a very real way. My grandmother should have had my life, basically.

EZRA KLEIN: And what life did she have?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: She had a hard life. She moved from rural Eastern North Carolina where hard life meant partially sharecropping, leasing yourself out in the summers to pick tobacco that was left over after the machines that come through. She went into labor with my mother in the middle of a field and almost did not survive childbirth. So she leaves that to go to Harlem, which would have been an exciting time by all accounts, but another hard transition, small, crowded living conditions, very different from what she’d come from.

For many, many years, she went back and forth between working for Jewish families as a domestic worker to, again, working in the garment district and just always trying to eke out something that was just a little bit better than the position before, and then eventually came back home to North Carolina, as many Black folks did in the reverse migration, and by that time was done with raising people and taking care of people and being a caretaker, and she really spent the last few years of her life reading, and I think it was the most peaceful she’d been her whole life Living right there at the edge of social change, as much as we like to write about it and romanticize it, living it is tough. So she had a tough life.

EZRA KLEIN: And so tell me about the question why you and not her. What is that question?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: I think that question is about the limits of how we internalize the American dream. I think a lot about nobody believes in mobility more than Black people. Nobody believes in the promise of this country more than Black people, and nobody has less reason to believe it than we do, and I think holding those two ideas at the same time is probably why our health outcomes are as poor as they are.

I think living in that liminal space between it’s supposed to be better but it isn’t and trying to just constantly trying to butt up against that, just trying to find a crack, trying to get in there. And I think what I’m asking about when I think why me and not her, one, I hope I’m keeping myself grounded in how contingent this all is. I never want to wed my sense of self and my identity to something I don’t control.

And part of being Black and being a woman in this country is that, even when you’re very successful, you just don’t control the terms of your success. My success is always limited by how well other people can imagine the possibility of me. When people could not imagine my grandmother, she just wasn’t possible, you know? Here is this big reader who did well in school, and she’s a domestic worker.

They just couldn’t imagine anything else for her, and so I’m always really aware of and never want to forget that, that no matter how hard I work — and yeah, you’re supposed to maybe work hard or whatever, and then you invest in yourself, and you develop your skills. I always want to be really clear that I can do all of that. I can do all of the right things, and it still won’t work out, and I think that’s just the basis of my work of trying to explain that to other people.

Many people who, for the first time in their lives, are reckoning with the fact that I did everything right, and it didn’t work out. Maybe this is just not supposed to happen. And what’s basically just becoming more true for more people is that more people feel like my grandmother than they ever imagined would be possible for them.

EZRA KLEIN: Sometimes I hear a line when I’m doing the show that I just know I’m not going to get away from for a long time, and how well I did is how well people can imagine me is one of those. That’s a remarkable way of putting that. You say something in Thick where you write and, quoting, smart is only a construct of correspondence between one’s abilities, one’s environment, and one’s moment in history.

I’m smart in the right way in the right time on the right end of globalization. Tell me about that because I think we frame smart culturally as something that cuts through time, space, society. Tell me about seeing smart as contingent.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. I think we love that idea because I think it’s an idea about ourselves, that there some one true thing about human nature that will be as fixed as a mathematical relationship. It’s a very post-enlightenment sort of way to think about it, but yeah. There’s supposed to be one smart, that you would recognize genius no matter where you were on the timeline, right?

I’m not into this show, but I have a young person in my life who’s very into the “Doctor Who” show. One of the things I do find interesting about “Doctor Who” is it’s that premise. It’s that conceit that no matter where you drop in the time-space continuum, you’re going to recognize that person as the doctor, the scientist, the one who knows, right? And it’s just so not true.

What a culture needs from its smart people at any given point in time changes. We can have a very different value system about what constitutes smart. What I want to keep in mind, and one of the things I hope that people take away when I say something about the correspondence of how smart you are is just really about your place in the world is because I want people to feel obligated to think about what world they’re creating for somebody else, but first we got to recognize how vulnerable our own identity is.

If you build your whole identity on how smart you are, I think it can make you very small and selfish in thinking about the world for everybody else. And so that’s why I try to pinpoint, like, if you think that I’m good enough, if you think, wow. Tressie’s really sharp, right? Tressie’s really brilliant. What I want you to imagine is how easy it would be for you to not think that and for me to just not exist, right?

I’d still be me. I’d still have my talents and abilities, and that we do that to people every day. We build a world that’s just not allowable or acceptable, and then I also really want to push the idea that we have so embodied the idea of smart as being something that a person is that it makes us really easy to disinvest from the things that make smart actually possible because smart is like a social problem.

We make smart. We make smart with schools. We make smart with our political decisions and choices, right? And if you think nature is just going to take care of it and it’s just going to give you a once in a lifetime genius every go round, then you don’t invest in the things that produce smartness. And a fixed idea of intelligence invites us to disinvest from the social contract of making more smart people. Just make more by expanding your understanding of it.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the things I was thinking about with that is I’ve been thinking about the idea of disability studies, that disability is about a relationship between you and the built world.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yup, yup.

EZRA KLEIN: And we were talking before we began recording about our eyesight, that you got LASIK, and I had negative eight vision since I was five, basically. And in another context, I’m just completely useless. The things that make you smart, like I’m a good reader and I can write a lot, I can’t do that without my glasses, not that long ago in human history that it wouldn’t have been possible for me.

And even that, you can have everything exactly the same but just one lapse in the accommodation society or technology is able to make for you, and you’re gone. And meanwhile, I have no sense of direction whatsoever.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Same!

EZRA KLEIN: My mechanical and physical intelligence is really weak.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yup.

EZRA KLEIN: I think all the time about how low the esteem I would be held in at other points in history.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Mm-hm. You take away things like libraries and the written word and the printing press, and I my social value declines significantly. I’ve learned so much from the disability studies people, by the way. And it’s actually something that was in back of my mind the whole time I was answering your question. One of the things that just sort of flipped a switch in my brain, I was in graduate school at Emory University, so we had a really strong contingent of scholars who were doing disability studies, and I learned a lot from them.

But we were having coffee one day with some of those folks, and friend Adam turns to me. And he’s like, the thing is, it’s not about who is disabled. It’s about when are you going to become disabled. We will all be disabled at some point in our life course, and so much middle class consumption, by the way, and our obsession with health and wellness is about that.

We are fundamentally — because we know how horrible we are to other disabled people, so we are terrified of becoming in any way disabled or differently-able, right? So take your bee pollen, and get your magnesium, and — well, you’re going to age. If nothing else, your eyesight is going to go. You’re going to lose some of your mobility, speaking about smart as a fixed idea. Just the way your brain works is going to change. We’re just so vulnerable to nature and time and biology, and we’re so terrified of it, I think, because we know that a lot of what we have built our ideas of who we are on are really far more vulnerable than we think they are

EZRA KLEIN: I think about this all the time when I cover health care policy because people will, during these fights, they’ll talk about, well, I don’t know. As a healthy person, do I need to be subsidizing the sick so much? Or they’ll start talking about the old and the young, and I’m always screaming during these debates. These are not fixed categories. We go in and out, you know? You’re young now, but you’re going to be old someday, hopefully.

And you’re healthy now, but you’re going to be sick someday, and it’s funny. It’s a place where I think our enthusiasm for categorizing people — it’s one of many that really leads us astray. As soon as you begin talking in categories, it tricks the mind into fixing the boundaries, but a lot of categories are very porous.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yes. Categories are really useful for like analytical thinking. Like, yeah, it helps me get my arms around something that’s really messy, and it helps me figure out like — because you can’t just consider every eventuality. That’s just a limit of human nature, of how the human mind works. So categories, they become useful as long as you keep in mind that that’s all they were, right?

You got to constantly, I think, relitigate. Wait a minute, what was the category I had at play here? We were talking about the old internet and the world people miss. I think one of the things that people are so uncomfortable with right now, why there’s just so many — there seems to be moral panic after moral panic after moral — we’ve got a lot of moral panics happening right now, hard to even like separate them out, and I think that it’s because it’s all one big moral panic about I don’t think we feel equipped for doing that. It is a moment, I think, in time when we are being asked and really pushed to rethink almost every meaningful category that we’ve kind of taken for granted.

EZRA KLEIN: I love that description of the moral panic. You talk in your book about thick descriptions and thin descriptions, and one of the things that feels to me like part of the moral conflict or the reason it feels so panic-inducing is we are having the thickest conversation possible in the thinnest mediums possible.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Bingo. I totally agree. So thick description is ultimately about asking as many questions of yourself as you’re asking of other people. So a thin way of engaging with the world is to assume that everybody has already made the decisions that you’ve made prior to the discussion, and all of your questions are going to be reserved for the object that you’re talking about, right, the people you’re talking about, the idea you’re talking about. I think that’s one way to think about it.

We also think about thick description as being really evocative, and that’s true, too. Using language to really try to capture people’s experience of things, that’s also true. Whereas thin description usually tries to flatten differences between experiences because it wants to tell you about sort of a universal experience, right, that I can make you understand your connection to something by pointing out what’s universal in it.

We think that we’re going to lose people when we start talking about the differences, by the way. And I’m not sure that’s true, and I try to show in my work that that’s not true, that you can absolutely seduce people into having a thick, nuanced conversation. It’s just going to take work on your part, right? I think you have to be dead on with craft. I think you have to be brutal about your empirics being accurate. I think you have to consecrate your own belief in yourself as being the universal storyteller.

But I think if you do all of that, people will follow you into a thick, uncomfortable conversation that they did not know they needed to have, but the mediums you talk about, who’s going to do that, right? The economics of that are horrible, and I know that. I get it, but I think what we’re seeing is an unspoken desire for exactly that kind of work, but a media ecosystem and an attention economy that just cannot allow that to happen.

That takes a lot of human beings, a lot of human power, takes a lot of willingness to embrace risk because you’re going to mess it up. You’re going to fail, and you’re going to piss somebody — right? This is just going to happen. There’s a lot of risk involved. And initially, it’s not profitable, but that is one of our struggles, I think, in the public discourse where we are trying to have that kind of conversation that I think people absolutely are attracted to even if that attraction feels like they’re angry about it, but that’s still desire for the conversation. I think they’re attracted to it, but we’ve only figured out the economics for very thin genre.

EZRA KLEIN: I don’t want to pick on Twitter and cable news here, which are two mediums that I operate in sometimes, but I will see conversations happening there, and I’ll just think, that is such an important conversation, and there is no way I’m engaging it in this medium.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: That’s right.

EZRA KLEIN: I’m not going to come within 1,000 feet of it in this space.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Same, never going to happen.

EZRA KLEIN: Whereas, in a podcast, there are things you talk about in a podcast that are a lot trickier because it has this quality of hesitancy. I got a reader email yesterday, actually. I guess it was a listener email, but they were emailing me to say that they listen to a show, and they just thought there shouldn’t be podcasts anymore. They thought podcasts were part of a ruining America because it was such a loose and messy form. People just talk.

I mean, they prefer columns, which is fair, and I write columns. But as I was reading it, I was thinking it’s the exact thing I like about the medium, that messiness allows things to be thick. To take on these topics, you have to let things breathe a little bit. And so many mediums over time, particularly when they get professionalized, they trend towards this type optimization. You ask as little of the audience as you possibly can before letting go of them. And that works for scale, but I think it’s bad for understanding and very bad for your relationship with the audience.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. I don’t think we have the luxury right now of scale and efficiency. We don’t have a culture right now for scale and efficiency that can be productive. That’s for a culture that mostly agrees on who and what it is is mostly functioning the way most people need it to function for a good life. We don’t have that culture. And so I tell people, maximizing efficiency is for very different political body and public discourse than the one we have.

The one we have is trying to grapple with potentially massive social change and social transformation. That is a culture that needs messier, more nuanced places for public discourse. Trying to skip over that to get to the scale and efficiency part is how you become antagonistic to the audience. Even as y’all are sort of in a dance together, I think that thin stuff that is narrowed, asking the least from the audience, is actually fundamentally antagonistic to the idea of having an audience.

EZRA KLEIN: What are those spaces for you?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: I mean, I think I’m in part trying to build that with increasingly thinking about micro media, of which podcasting is one of those. I tend to think of audio storytelling, which is a little bit broader to me. Thinking just about podcasting because I’m thinking about the different cultural traditions for telling oral stories, and that there has to be more than one way for us to capture those and share them and reproduce them.

So audio storytelling just broadly excites me a lot as a potential avenue, and I think it’s all right if that never scales. I think that’s actually probably preferable. I think what we are in a moment for is a lot of micro media attempts to capture the parts of the discourse where people are willing to be called in to complicated conversations that, again, scale just might not be the goal. It might not even be preferable to desire scale in that arena.

I’m still working out whether or not I think something like — I’ve been on Substack. I’ve been on Medium. I’ve done my own sorting, and that’s just way too hard. I don’t like running all the back-end, but basically trying to recreate the comment section of web 2.0, becoming a destination conversation place for people around an idea, and I think that’s what some people are doing with the newsletter model, and et cetera. So I’m interested in that. I’m not sure yet what I think that space does, but I like the experiment.

EZRA KLEIN: I think a lot now about the way we’re all taught to want scale and the way that that’s often a false or counterproductive desire. I am somebody who is taught to want scale, and I got it, and I can’t tell you I’m happier for having it. It definitely affords me opportunities and all kinds of things, but I can’t tell you I’m happier for having it, and I know a lot of people who got it, and I can’t tell you they’re happier for having it.

And it’s a funny thing, the desire people are given for a certain kind of success as measured by scale where scale takes away a lot of what makes these conversations and work joyous. And yet, it’s the way we are taught to measure, whether we are succeeding in these conversations and work. And so then you see now, I think, Substack and podcasts, you see a lot of people who’ve achieved scale actually fleeing to things that are smaller scale.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: They’re to actually pare it down. I was about to say. So what you have is you got somebody with like a million followers on Twitter who has realized it’s actually horrible, and now they want to talk to 20,000 people more regularly in depth, and we don’t have a way to either capture the value of that — that’s actually, I think, part of what a lot of the more contentious debates are about.

We don’t know how to value that. I mean, we don’t know whether we can say that’s worth a half a million or not, but I don’t think that’s about our inability to — we have the tools to capture how many eyes you have on it, how long people spend. So it’s not that. I think it’s what you’re saying. I think we are just resistant to the idea of valuating anything other than scale, right?

I think it’s perfectly reasonable to imagine like a midterm future where having 20,000 regular people who meet and talk about an idea is valued roughly equal to a periodical that has a mailing readership of 350,000 people. We don’t like thinking about it that way, but I think it’s entirely possible.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: I got to read a lot of your work all at the same time to prepare for this, which is great, but something that leapt out at me was that a lot of your work revolves around this idea of status, how it’s developed and what it’s composed of. So how do you define what status is and how we construct it?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: It’s a great question, and I think I would agree. A challenge for me, professionally, is that I write so broadly, and certainly the way other people experience it is broad. But in my mind, I’m always writing about one thing, and I’m always stunned that other people don’t see it. It’s just status. It’s just status. The thing is, status looks the same everywhere you go, but it wears a different outfit.

So it’s always at play. It’s always happening. And so when I show up and I see status, it’s not that I’m the person who does race and gender or whatever. It’s just that I entered a room, and I looked around, and I went, oh, here’s what’s happening here. Here’s the status that’s at play. And sometimes that’s a little bit more gender than it is race. Sometimes it’s a little bit more class than it is race, right? But it’s always there.

And the way I explain it to students and my audiences is status is the thing that is external to you that defines you as much as your identity does. So we love to talk about identity, right? We’ve got a whole language about identity, about self and our political identities and our racial identities and sexual identities. We don’t have as rich a conversation to talk about status, which, coincidentally, is some of the most powerful work that status does.

It becomes so taken for granted that we never even label it, right? We’ll walk into a room, and everybody agrees who’s supposed to sit at the chair at the front of the room. That’s status, right? And that it operates a little differently everywhere you are standing. But if you learn how to identify it wherever you are standing, in many ways, you become one of the most powerful people in the room because you see what’s driving and shaping the decisions.

But as a cultural critic, as a social investigator, you also become super important to the people who will never be invited to that room, right? So when I leave a room, I want to be able to tell people not just what happened, but I want to be able to give an informed opinion about why it happened, why it happened, and that’s what understanding status does. It means that when I leave the room, I can bring some of the people who will never be invited to that room with me by being able to translate the dynamics that happen in that room, and it’s a hard thing to do with American audiences.

I travel, before times, I was doing quite a bit more international travel, and it’s so interesting. I can go to the UK where everybody gets this. Their language about social class is so refined that they get it. They may not have our same understanding of race and gender, but their language about class has really given them a public language of talking about status. In America, we only talk about status as race, and so our language is very, very atrophied, you know?

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah we want to ignore the idea that class is status.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: That’s right. Class is natural. Class is biology. Class is destiny. Class is family. We talk about it embedded in those things, family politics. We talk about it about values, ideals, having the right behaviors, but we don’t have any language to talk about it in this country. And since it is one of our biggest status differentials in this country, it means we miss a lot of what’s happening.

EZRA KLEIN: I think a lot about places where we have language that hides what we’re doing, hides, particularly, the way we actually treat people. We have language that venerates them as a way of not making good on what that language would say. So middle class, ***working class***, essential workers, the military and veterans are huge in this. There are certain groups where we have an agreed upon political language.

And if you were an alien who came to this planet and this country and listened to us talk, you’d be like, ah, those people they’re talking about, they have the most status, and they’re going to be treated the best. And then you look at how policy plays out, and it’s the exact opposite. And the language, we are pretending we have a different social hierarchy than we actually do.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Which is super important to our ruling ideology, which is merit. How else do you get people to buy into the idea of merit when their own lived experiences say to them every day that merit is not real, or certainly not as concrete as everybody says it is? Well, you get them to buy into it by saying you just need to get into the right category.

And if you get into the right category — military veterans is one. It’s a big one in my world, like in education policy. We make horrible education policy for veterans. They have some of the highest rates of student loan defaults. The money that they’re given to go to college really translates into them going into high quality institutions, but you try to talk to somebody about making the G.I. Bill more robust, and they will have a public meeting in the middle of Capitol Hill.

Everybody shows up. There’s the equivalent of bible thumping, and then they will all close the doors — and both sides of the aisle, by the way, will close the door and will agree to not do anything to protect veteran students, but the veterans believe that they’re protected, you see? That’s what matters. They believe. How else do you get somebody to sign up for something like military service when they’re poor and ***working class*** and from places with poor economic outcomes?

You do it by saying, yeah, you won’t be rich, but everybody will value you, will give you status instead of money. This is one of the allures of becoming a police officer where status can far outstrip the economic rewards of being a police officer to take on the risk of doing the job. So really tightly closed status that does not have the economic power to go with it can actually become violent, frankly, but we don’t have a language yet to talk about any of that.

All we know how to do is say this group of people deserves our deference and our respect, but we don’t have a commensurate policy conversation to talk about how we attach actual meaningful resources to it.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah. There’s almost nothing more destabilizing in politics than a group that the way they are talked about and the way they talk about themselves in terms of merit and status is not recognized by society because it creates a deep sense of unfairness, of shame, of resentment for individuals for whom it happens to. I think it collapses a person’s psyche, oftentimes.

But for groups, particularly when it’s a group that is told or actually has power, but then society isn’t treating it like it does or stops treating it like it does, that becomes, as you’re saying, it becomes very violent. This whole discussion has always been to me like the molten core of Trumpism. It’s this class of voters and Donald Trump himself who, on some level, have so much status and have had so much power.

But then what begins to happen is not just a losing of power, but a losing of status, a feeling that the culture is turning on them, that they’re being disrespected. What motivates Trump is disrespect, the feeling that he’s not a winner, right? And the same for what motivates many of his supporters, and I do think this is why the fights over speech and cancel culture and all of this are so intense because they are, at some fundamental level, about who has the status to decide how they are spoken about, and then who has the status to not fear what it is they’re saying? And you can’t solve that with policy. It’s actually a question of social hierarchy.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: A lot of people woke up to find that the merit culture that they have been operating in has been, for a very long time, an honor culture. See, we were supposed to be too sophisticated for our honor culture of ritual and honor, exchanges of prestige and status and privilege, right? We were supposed to be too sophisticated for that.

And so you work hard and that the status will follow, economic achievement. And when that economic promise starts to collapse but the ritual of status remains, you really just have an honor-based culture where people will defend honor, will determine their honor in relation to other people. They’ll build hierarchies of honor within their own little corner of the world that might be at odds with another corner.

That’s when we talk about the siloing effect of culture. It’s not that people don’t know that people disagree with them. It’s that they’ve built their own little honor culture over here. And if there are no economic incentives to leave it, why would you? If you can be the king— what’s the guy with the thing on his head, the horns on January 6th?

EZRA KLEIN: Oh, the QAnon Shaman.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Thank you. But if you’re going to walk around with horns on your head, I get to mock. So that’s an honor culture he brought of a subculture that had a set of rules where that actually wasn’t absurd, but if you divorce then some of the economic incentives for people to participate in that, all you’re left with is the guy with the horns on his head.

EZRA KLEIN: You did this research project about white deaths of despair that feels relevant to this conversation.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Very much so.

EZRA KLEIN: Do you want to talk about it a bit?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yes. So our argument — my colleagues Arjumand Siddiqi, Sandy Darity, and I did — so we were responding to the documented demographic data points about change in white Americans’ mortality. One of the arguments had been that was due to several things, the opioid crisis, growing economic insecurity, job polarization, and access to health care.

Well, one of the things that we actually find and argue in the data is that you see those deaths even in places where those indicators do not exist, where they have not experienced job losses, where they do enjoy access to health care and a certain amount of economic security. And our argument is that white people’s deaths of despair, as it has been called, is not as much about real losses in their status. It’s about perceived loss in their status, right?

The perception of loss was enough to undermine positive health outcomes and health-seeking behaviors. That point you were making that people feel like they have lost status, whether they’ve lost it or not. Well, that’s not about actual loss. That is about perceived loss, and that we so underappreciate how much perception matters to how much we’ll even accept facts, right?

Most people will just accept the facts that match what they already believe, you know? Confirmation bias and et cetera. We’ve seen this in vaccine roll-outs, right, where people’s political identity shapes what information they will accept about scientific evidence. Well, that happens in every facet of life. And so perception is just as important as any universal belief system and what’s true and what’s untrue, and that that perceived loss is enough for people to not seek out health care or to engage in dangerous health behaviors.

How else do you explain people arrested on Jan. 6 who perceived loss of status? And they engaged in — if you think about self-selecting into a conflict with armed police as a dangerous health behavior, that’s one way to think about it. You can quite literally get hurt, right? They elected to go into this risky behavior that could end in loss of life, and for several people did.

That’s a risky health behavior, and that’s about perceived status, and that we haven’t thought concretely enough about how dangerous privileged people will become if they just perceive that they have less privilege, not actual loss of privilege, but they perceive they have less privilege.

EZRA KLEIN: I wonder if one way of thinking, too, about this actual versus perceived is to think about base rates versus rates of change.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: You get this in economics all the time where people, particularly their politics, are much more driven by how their economic situation is changing than what it actually is. The fact that you’re richer than you were 10 years ago doesn’t matter in terms of a recession. If things are getting worse right now, you get really upset, and I think there’s something in this for white voters, for more conservative Christian voters, for more traditionalist Christian voters, where, still on top, no doubt about it, but in terms of groups raising and lowering their power in society, in terms of rates of change in status, the rate of change is bad.

White people feel that they are not as protected as they were, not as powerful. Christian folks feel they don’t have the hammerlock on politics they did, particularly white Christians, once upon a time, and that people are very sensitive not just to rates of economic change, which we in the literature forever, but they’re very sensitive, much more so than we give them credit for, to rates of status change.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yes, actually. I think that’s a great way to think about it, and it’s actually like — when we talk about socioeconomic status, the addition of the socio to the economic status is something that was being said in I think my old sociological literature, the ’60s and ’70s, where we had something called like — we’d do these massive class structure and stratification tables. They said that people’s understanding of their economic position was conditioned on their social position, basically.

We got away from that understanding when we thought that there was more equal opportunity access to economic positioning. Well, yeah. That makes sense when you got a lock on something like male privilege in the workplace, but once women entered the workplace, we expected those things to level off. So it isn’t that those things stop being true. We did, however, stop studying them that way.

There became a real preference for saying that your economic position was so wedded to your social position because we were more egalitarian. And macro economists, especially more critical ones, will now say that what you’re really seeing is, with the polarization and the pulling apart of the economic structure, a re-emergence of the importance of how social position conditions your understanding of your economic position.

But if you look at women, however, women workers, for example, nonwhite workers, that’s always been true. It’s always been the case that we understand the fine-grained differences in our relative economic status based on who we are and our lack of social status. It is just more true now, however, for white workers, especially white males.

EZRA KLEIN: I always think that the political conversation here is driven basically mad by something that’s all over your work, which is that status is not stable.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And there’s no agreement as to who is where, and that’s partially because who is where changes, but there’s a real different status hierarchy in elected politics and how power records there to where it is in culture to where it is and religion to where it is in a bunch of other parts of our society. One of the things I noticed in your work is that you are incredibly sensitive to using the way status changes for you moving in and out of different rooms as an example to showing it for others.

You really do use yourself as like, look what happened to me here, and look where I was here, and look where I was here. Could you talk a bit about that? Because we keep using status as a singular, but it’s not. It’s a shifting plural.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yes, it is. It’s highly contextual, which is why we don’t like trying to measure it, frankly. And it is experienced subjectively but has objective consequences and measurable effects. That’s why it’s a really messy thing to try to understand. But as we start our conversation with the mess is where the good, important stuff is happening, and then we also are living in a time where — this is the technology piece.

Almost all of the dominant technological changes that have reshaped our world over the last 30 years have only made status more contextual. So it’s added a layer of how important context is to status. Audiences can be collapsed and expanded so quickly, and they can shift so rapidly, and there new forms of status emerging all the time driven by digital platforms and digital technologies and just digital ideas, the idea of technology.

And so at the very time that status has become more destabilized and contextual and transient, there are also ever new and emerging forms of status, right? One of the examples I like to give is you can be a celebrity, what we call a micro celebrity in some digital space, and that translates to absolutely no form of capital anywhere else.

I love these stories. They do them every few years where they go, oh, what happened to somebody who was in that massive meme, you know? And they’ll go find them, and they’re working in fast food, or they were doing what they were doing before, usually worse off because the celebrity impacted their ability to work and get a regular job. And so status has become decoupled in so many micro ways from economic relations.

And I use myself as an example because people are so resistant to thinking about themselves as being vulnerable. If I invite the reader to think about how much status they lose when they go from one room to another, very few people are ambitious enough and courageous enough to do that. It’s a level of vulnerability to ask from the reader to go, you know how you feel like such a girl boss when you go do x, right? But you know what happens when you leave that room and you go to this other room, right?

And it doesn’t feel good to people, but if they can project it onto me and experience it through the way I’ve learned to see myself as sort of like a meta-narrative as I move through the world, I think it shows them a model for, when they’re ready, a model for how to think about it in their own lives. I think of some of my work, especially in Thick and some of the essay work as just trying to model for people that you can understand that this thing is happening to you and it not change who you are, right?

I’m still who I am. I still have what I have, but I know there are rooms that enter where my status evaporates the second I walk in. You can almost feel it sometimes. You can become so attuned to it. I can feel when a room changes, and we know that feeling. If you’ve ever been someplace, when a celebrity walks in the room and the air gets that crickle-crackle feeling in it, right, we know it. We just don’t think of it as being something that happens with us and to us.

And so I use myself as an example to try to give people a way to develop a model of thinking about the world, that you don’t have to be afraid of acknowledging that because status exists and it makes you vulnerable, acknowledging it doesn’t change your vulnerability. You’re vulnerable whether you develop a language to think about it or not.

And that thing you talked about earlier, that psychological fissure that can happen when the world doesn’t recognize your status the way you think they should, developing a language is the most powerful thing we can do to protect ourselves from that kind of psychological trauma, that I may not be able to control how the world will see a really smart Black girl as she walks around in the world, but I can have a language for describing it, and I can know, at the end of the day, that if I can label it, if I can talk about it, it hasn’t completely broken me, and that more of us need that language. More is needed.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: We’ve talked about some of the tributaries of status here, money, education, race, gender, politics. One of the really challenging essays from Thick, one that I still think about having read it now, I guess, a couple of years ago, is In the Name of Beauty, and attractiveness is a huge generator of life outcomes, of status. And you write in that that beauty isn’t actually what you look like. Beauty is the preferences that reproduce the existing social order. People talk about lookism. Is attractiveness a generator of status, or is it the reflection of it?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Both. I just did a really fun project — fun for me project — about Dolly Parton, and I read a book, “She Come By It Natural” by Sarah Smarsh. And what Sarah is doing is she’s talking about her. She comes from a white ***working class*** rural family, woman-dominated family, a very matriarchal family, and I could relate. I come from a very patriarchal family, and she talks about the women in her life, in her family’s lives about how important it was for them to be attractive as ***working class*** white women.

And she said it wasn’t attractive the way attractive matters to my now upper middle class white peers. Her life has changed. Being attractive meant a level of security and very marginal economic mobility for white ***working class*** women. She was like, for us, staying thin or staying attractive or staying pretty was about just being able to get some favor at a really brutal job.

If I’m a waitress, then it means I get a slightly better shift because the manager thinks I’m cute, basically. Or it opens up an avenue to marry and get the hell out of the Blue Ridge Mountains, right? That marginal amounts of very conditioned and complicated status, that beauty and attractiveness was generating then in that space status. But it also — the idea of what is beautiful, about what is attractive is a reflection of our collective political values and is about reproducing the underlying economic relations embedded in them.

And the way you know that it’s true is because if beauty were some objective idea, the same thing would have been beautiful in 1880 that was beautiful in 1980 that will be beautiful in 2080. And in fact, what you see when you study ideas, popular ideas about what constitutes attractiveness and desire and beauty, is that they have changed to match whatever is the economically valued group of people in the world.

And so yeah, there’s some underlying — sometimes evolutionary psychologists like to point to work about how there’s a universal equation for beauty, like there’s a ratio. The beauty, I think, ratio is what they call it, that we all value eyes that are set to something, some weird math. And I go, or there was a global system of capital by the 1500s countries that developed an idea the world over that was predicated on an equation of beauty that was exported.

And when I do that, they always get very eh with me, but I also complicate the evolutionary psychology people because I think they are wild. That’s just a wild group of people, but looking for stable ideas across thousands of years is wild to me. But yet, we don’t think about — we’d like to think that beauty is just like the merit myth, so that we’d like to think of beauty as being objective at the same time that we want it to be achievable, right?

So this is the tension. And in every idea about merit that is both supposed to be inherited and achievable, and things cannot be both. If you inherit beauty but you can also achieve beauty, then inherited beauty won’t matter as much, right? And that’s the tension that we have and the ideas about what we’ll say is beautiful becomes a tool for consolidating status and opportunity and privilege for people who have inherited a social position.

One of my favorite ways to get people really upset is to talk about how much we valorize blondness in our culture, right? So here you have a biological blip, a set of recessive traits that has been elevated to almost a political ideology that we never, ever, ever critique as political or economic-based, but turn on the evening news tonight. Turn on Fox News, right? And you tell me what the visual comportment of power looks like.

EZRA KLEIN: I think all the time, just all the time, about how Hitler ran this genocidal campaign in service of an aesthetic ideal that he didn’t represent.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Didn’t embody, yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: It is — the mind crumbles. [LAUGHS]

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Mm-hm.

EZRA KLEIN: And not that it’s funny, obviously.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: I know what you mean.

EZRA KLEIN: But it’s just one of these things. Sometimes I sit there with that, and it is the strangest thing. I understand on some level going nuts in service of something that obviously accrues to your own power, but the whole thing he was fighting for, he would have been on the outs — it just — It drives people mad.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: It really, really does. It does.

EZRA KLEIN: I don’t know if you across this. I come across it a lot. There’s a what-aboutism around beauty and attractiveness that will come from people who say, oh, well, you care about discrimination or inequality or inequity that comes from race or gender or education or something else, but look at the research on unattractiveness, and you don’t seem to care about that. And it’s always from people don’t care about any of them who are saying this.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Anything else. Uh-huh. Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: But it actually is, but I do think that it’s a critique worth taking seriously in the sense that there is something real to it, that we really do treat people differently in society based on height, based on looks, and we don’t have a very good critical discourse around that, in part because I think it implicates us too much, right? It’s very hard to talk about something that you’re part of that you can’t change or don’t want to change what you’re attracted to, or don’t want to think too hard about where it came from. It feels like a pretty expansive vista for complication. Not that, obviously, a lot of scholars haven’t been doing this for a long time, just that, in the public conversation, it’s a little thinner.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. And it’s the one that goes at the heart of — listen, you don’t own a lot in a leasing society, right? So here’s a society where we running out of stuff. We don’t get much, OK? Many of us are going to be renters forever. So the idea of the things that are naturally occurring that emerge from our true selves, I think we have always put value in that, but I think we especially put value in that now.

So this is the part where people will feel implicated, I think, in critiquing beauty privilege or whatever, attractiveness privilege, is what they think we’re saying is who you are attracted to is a social construction and a political problem. And well, here’s the truth. That is exactly what I’m saying. I am saying that that is not nearly as natural as you think it is, and that one of the most basic ways that we are all implicated in the status hierarchy is in naturalizing those differences and saying that they are naturally occurring.

And then that gets really, really, really fuzzy when I think it pushes people on thinking about something like gender and desire. I think that there is a lot of resistance coming from that side, but I also just think there’s just sort of a routine uncritical resistance to the idea that you’re going to try to police what I find attractive, and you’re going to tell me that even that is a political problem. And yeah, it kind of is.

EZRA KLEIN: I think it’s hard in a lot of these conversations to hold the idea that what we believe, think, do, intuitive reactions we have do reflect political problems, but they are not sins.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Oh, yeah. The morality. Yeah. Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah. People have a lot of difficulty. Even I have a lot of difficulty with the idea that there can be things about me that don’t fit my politics. That can be an interesting fact and worth interrogating without it being something that I have to like loathe myself for.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. One thing I didn’t get from my family was — we are what I call culturally Baptists. We show up on Easter and Christmas, and we do some of the things, but we were not like devout churchgoers, which actually made us quite different in the places that we were from where the church is the center of the social and economic life of Black communities, right?

We kind of participated, but we didn’t bring a lot of that home. And I think because of that, I never had some of the moral baggage. I mean, I have some that just comes from, I think, living in a secularly religious society, but I never internalized that because I am a part of a thing that’s bad, I am bad. And I actually will forget sometimes that other people aren’t like me in that regard.

And yeah, they’ll start spinning out. And I’ll go, what’s wrong with you? And somebody will say, Tressie, you basically just went at the core of their entire belief system. But I was like, well, all I said was you like blondes, and that’s a little eugenicist. I mean, I don’t know why you’re now crying. And apparently, because I don’t have that impulse, I forget to be empathetic with others. So thank you for reminding me. Yes, it does, I think, make people feel really bad.

EZRA KLEIN: But also, just, I don’t know. I don’t want to get prescriptive here coming to the end of this, but when we were talking earlier about mediums for thicker conversations and how do you have them, and how do you have this, like, what you described as a unified moral panic about our categorization systems without it feeling like a panic and without it feeling like a war of all against all.

I feel like there’s something here that’s really important in the way you approach it that makes a lot of sense for why you’re good at talking about these things because, somehow, it has to be OK that we are going to fall on the wrong side of even our categories. And I don’t know that we can do that in these spaces that are so tuned for shame that are tuning us for shame. You somehow have to — it has to be safer than it is to have some conversation because, if it isn’t safe, you can’t you can’t admit any of it.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: I actually have a really counterintuitive position on shame which is that it can serve a social function when it is divorced from some of the other social functions. So one of the problems right now is that social shame, which I think in and of itself is enough, usually, to discipline most people, is now tied to economic and political and cultural capital in sort of a way, and people feel that in a really gut level, and I think they’re right to feel it.

Shame is important to kind of like get people to adhere, especially to new norms, and we got to have. And so I’m always like, you don’t want to take shame off the table. What we probably do need to have happen is we need to divorce it from our micro celebrity driven culture.

EZRA KLEIN: That is such a good point.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Where your systems are the people, right? People become avatars for a whole system of thought, and I’m just like, well, that’s almost never going to work, the celebritization of some of these things that are always supposed to be really contentious sort of trade-offs, right? Well celebrity is not set up for trade-offs. Most of what we do for work is not set up for trade-offs, but our status is set up for that.

And so that’s probably where we confine those conversations to. I think is perfectly fine to say, when somebody is on the wrong side of one of our political values, to say I don’t mess with them when they’re talking about minimum wage, right? They’ve been wrong on it. When they get started on minimum wage, I tune out. And for that to be the take away, tune out on so on so when they do minimum wage because they don’t know what they’re talking about, and they’re on the wrong side of history on this one, but to say but that person tends to be in the pocket on X, and we’ll listen to him on X. That would be to me contextual and status-based.

Like, OK, let’s not give them status on this idea, but give them some status on it that idea. But micro celebrity and the microeconomics of writing into public life right now really privilege everybody being a generalist and a universalist who performs being an ideologue, and you just can’t do all of that. You can’t do it all.

EZRA KLEIN: Ooh, let me try to make this comparison. So this feels technological, at least in part. We were talking earlier about your work on how status doesn’t follow you room to room, how you change room to room, but one of the problems online to what you were just saying about how many things shame attaches to is our, at least our group identity, our name online is cohesive.

And the things that attach to it, which are not everything. It’s a very flattened identity. Only a certain number of things attach to it, but the things that are attached to it follow it into every room, follow it into every Google search, follow it into what anybody would know about that online identity, and it’s very then hard to change it. You can’t get out of the room, and we don’t really know what to do with that well.

And it’s funny because were talking earlier. I think it almost maybe sounded negative that the things in our lives are contextual. But in many ways, I think the problem with our online identities, which now, as you’re saying, are our economic identities, our cultural identities, et cetera, is they are noncontextual. They are decontextualized.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Yeah. That efficiency and maximization piece again, the thing is, technologies can only maximize and increase efficiencies in a system of unequal distribution. It’s just going to make unequal distribution more efficient, and it’s just going to maximize it. And in the case of our very identities, that’s what it does most effectively. It flattens differences and distinctions and elevates the place where you have cobbled together the most consensus, even if that consensus is itself negative and decontextualized, but it will drive efficiencies of driving up consensus, even if the consensus is negative, and that there might be some value in there being contextual spaces where, in this space, I am an expert. In this space, I’m just a member of the audience, right? And in this space, I’m a membership of a group who has a group position, and we’re trying to move forward a group agenda, and that we cannot do that when we attach our work to our identity.

So what we may have here is just a fundamental critique of, should we be our work? And I always tell people, if you judge me by Twitter, that’s on you because I write all the time. And I have made as much of it free as I possibly can. So I’m like, you can judge me on what I write, but I’ve never told you to pay attention to me in these other contexts, and that is one of my ways of trying to navigate that.

If I write and I articulate a reasoned, more thoughtful position on something and I make it freely available, then I always feel like I’ve got plausible deniability on the fallibility of being a digital person, an internet person, right? That’s me trying to build a buffer. It’s harder to do when you don’t control where you write, and you can’t control the circulation of your ideas, but yeah. That’s what I think I’m trying to get around.

The technology is never going to give us that affordance. We’re going to have to come up with social norms about it. The technology just can’t differentiate. The economics aren’t there. The political structure regulation isn’t there to make it differentiate. So what we really would be asking for is something like where we own all of our data and we could change access to different parts of the data we produce in different ways. We just don’t have that environment. So that means social norms are going to have to do it.

My challenge is this. I want those social norms to bubble up from the actual vulnerable people and not to be imposed top down from the people who only perceive that they are vulnerable.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that’s the good challenge right there. You want to do some book recommendations?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Oh, yes. Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: All right. What’s a work of cultural criticism you’d recommend?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Oh, yeah. And this is not only one of the more recent things I’ve read, but it is one of the better things I’ve read, and so I got lucky in that regard, and that is Minor Feelings by Cathy Park Hong. I think everybody who says that they are an essayist and a popular culture critic right now needs to be chasing this book.

EZRA KLEIN: What’s the best book by a contemporary sociologist who isn’t you?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: I’m actually going to recommend something that, in my dream scenario, these things would come together in a pack when you went to the store. Like, if you bought one, you get the other, and that is Sabrina Strings, who’s a sociologist, and she has a book called “Fearing the Black Body,” “Fearing the Black Body,” that actually gets it some of what we were talking about, the construction of beauty, how we have defined beauty to be antithetical to whatever our racialized assumptions were of difference at any point in time in history, and that if that’s the line you take, then beauty has been stable. The construction of beauty has been whatever was not the racialized moral panic of the time. And so it’s a really great book.

EZRA KLEIN: We managed to have so many interesting conversations, so I didn’t expect that I never got to all of my education questions for you, but because you’ve done so much education work, what’s the book you recommend on thinking about education?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Well, when I think about education, I am most often thinking about higher ed. So this is going to be the higher ed book. I think it’s just the GOAT. I think you got to do the GOAT book, and this was one of those when we talked about the difference between census reading and reading around. This is a census book. So that’s why I say these things still matter to do. It’s just I want people to do both, but you got to read Jerome Karabel’s “The Chosen,” which is the history of selective admissions in elite higher education.

I, as a person, do not care about Ivy League institutions. I tell people this all the time, and I think they think I’m doing that to angle for a job at one, and I promise you I’m not, but we are always, always in a long historical conversation in higher ed circles in this country with the foundations of how selective admissions were designed. And until we fully understand that, you can’t grapple with something like student loan debt or why people keep showing up for paying $100,000 for a master’s degree that has a symbol on it, right? We got to get that, again, status.

EZRA KLEIN: Then finally, always our last one, what’s your favorite children’s book?

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: My sentimental favorite will always be “Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry” by Mildred Taylor. I often call this book — it was baby’s first novel. It was a longer book, right? I wasn’t a children’s reader, so I felt very grown up when I read this book. Didn’t have any pictures in it. I was so impressed with myself, and it is the kind of story — I mean, I saw myself in that story in a way that was really new for me at that age and at that time, and the book holds up. I reread it again within the last year and a half or so, and it really holds up.

EZRA KLEIN: Did it really? I remember reading that as a kid. And actually, it was almost too adult for me.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: Well, that’s why I liked it, to be fair, and probably why I now think it holds up because now I’m the adult, right? I thought it nailed the emotions of a certain point in history without being too heavy-handed, but it was adult in a way that all kids don’t get to be kids. That’s kind of the moral of that story. So when we’re talking about a moment when the adultification of young men of color and young women of color, making them more vulnerable to police violence and et cetera, one of the my adult takeaways from the book is that not all kids get to be kids in the same way, and that’s probably why I liked it as a kid.

EZRA KLEIN: Tressie McMillan Cottom, thank you so much. What a pleasure.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: It really was a really good time. For a thing that did not involve cocktails or dinner, this was a lot of fun. Thanks, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, next time we can do it with cocktails.

TRESSIE MCMILLAN COTTOM: I’m holding you to it.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: That is the show. We’ll see if I keep doing this, but I thought it might be fun to offer occasional recommendations of my own here at the end, and here’s mine for today. I just watched “My Octopus Teacher” on Netflix, which is in their nominated for Oscars documentaries category, but it’s all about a guy’s friendship with an octopus, and it is wonderful.

I think I need to do a show about octopi at some point. I’ve been reading some books on them. And then after watching this, it’s really strange how much we just have a wonderful alien-style intelligence on this planet and how little attention we actually pay to that fact. But if you want to just — I don’t exactly want to say trip out here, but if you really want to enter a different world for a while, “My Octopus Teacher,” it’s terrific.

If you want help the show, you can leave us a review wherever you are listening, or you can email this episode or text it or however you kids share your episodes to a friend, if you think they’d enjoy it, or family member. It’s a great way for the show to grow, and we always really appreciate it when you do it. “The Ezra Klein Show” is a production of New York Times Opinion. It is produced by Roge Karma and Jeff Geld, fact-checked by Michelle Harris, original music by Isaac Jones, and mixing by Jeff Geld.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Correction: April 23, 2021

An earlier version of this transcript incorrectly referred to the author Judy Blume. Ms. Blume is alive; the author Beverly Cleary died on March 25.

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2021

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[***On Politics: Scrambling to Michigan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YCS-XVC1-JBG3-611M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1524 words

**Byline:** Giovanni Russonello

**Highlight:** Biden locks down his former rivals, Sanders an old ally: This is your morning tip sheet.

**Body**

Good morning and welcome to On Politics, a daily political analysis of the 2020 elections based on reporting by New York Times journalists.

[*Sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) to get On Politics in your inbox every weekday.

Where things stand in the race

* Cory Booker became the latest former presidential candidate to endorse [*Joe Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), and our colleague   [*Nick Corasaniti*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) has   [*the scoop*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline).

1. Booker is planning to appear alongside Kamala Harris, who endorsed Biden on Sunday. Taking place ahead of the high-stakes Michigan primary, that event seems destined to take on a distinctly [*Klobuchar-and-Buttigieg-before-Super Tuesday*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) feel.
2. [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline)got his own big endorsement from a black former presidential candidate — just not one from this election cycle. Jesse Jackson, whose own campaign in 1988 Sanders endorsed as mayor of Burlington, Vt., traveled to Grand Rapids, Mich., to endorse Sanders on Sunday. “I stand with Bernie Sanders today because he stood with me,” Jackson said to cheers. “I stand with him because he’s never lost his taste for justice for the people. I stand with him because he stands with you.” Revving up a crowd whose candidate’s chances have dimmed significantly in the past 10 days, Jackson led people in his trademark chant: “Keep hope alive!”
3. Sanders will need a lot more than hope if he is going to win Michigan, the big prize tomorrow, when nominating contests will be held in six states. On Super Tuesday, he failed to rack up enough support among liberals and white ***working-class*** voters to overcome his deep deficit among black voters in many states. And as [*Jonathan Martin*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) and   [*Astead W. Herndon*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) point out in a   [*new article*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), the 2018 Michigan governor’s race — in which a left-wing challenger was trounced by the moderate candidate, Gretchen Whitmer — offers yet more cause for concern for Sanders’s campaign.
4. Our eyes will be peeled today for the release of a Monmouth University poll of Michigan, expected by this afternoon.
5. As Democrats start to ponder who might be chosen as a vice-presidential nominee, with several of the former female presidential candidates frequently floated, the issue of gender remains front and center. In [*a story*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) published this morning,   [*Lisa Lerer*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) and   [*Reid J. Epstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) explore the bitter aftertaste that is setting in for many Democratic women after the race narrowed to a battle between two white men.
6. “There must be a woman on this ticket,” Cecile Richards, a longtime abortion-rights activist and founder of the women’s organization Supermajority, told Reid and Lisa. “What is really important to see is representation, a commitment to the issues that women care about and a commitment to do something about it.”
7. During his remarks at the Sanders rally, Jackson made a pointed call to increase representation of black women in politics. “There is a great concern today about the impact of African-American women,” he said. “There should be one on the Supreme Court. There’s a real consideration,” he added, for a black woman “to be on the ticket of the next nominee of our party. Inclusion leads to growth, and with growth everybody wins.”
8. That is the central theme of [*a four-part documentary series*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) on Hillary Clinton that Hulu released on Friday. The project began simply as an attempt to capture Clinton’s 2016 campaign on film, but it ended up as a four-hour documentary that tells the story of her life, and seeks to examine bigger questions about the treatment of female leaders in the public sphere.
9. In an [*interview with CNN’s Fareed Zakaria*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) over the weekend to promote the series, Clinton talked about the role of implicit bias in weakening support for female politicians. “We carry with us — it’s kind of deep in the DNA — what we expect women to be,” she said. “And we’re OK with kind of opening the doors and allowing our daughters, our granddaughters, you know, to get great educations and compete for great jobs. But there still is something inside that — when a woman says, ‘Wait a minute, I’d like to lead, I’d like to be in charge, I’d like to be your president or your chief executive,’ or whatever it might be — little alarm bells, little unconscious alarm bells, start to ring.”

* If Biden does win the Democratic nomination, he can expect a nonstop fusillade of attacks from President Trump’s allies on Fox News. And in recent days he’s gotten a preview of what that might be like from Sean Hannity, a leading Fox host and a confidante of Trump. Hannity has repeatedly sought to cast doubt on whether Biden has the mental faculties to successfully serve as president.

1. Hannity [*wondered aloud*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) on Thursday whether “the 77-year-old Biden has the stamina, the strength, the mental acumen and focus required.” And Hannity isn’t the only host to harp on it — to the point that Howard Kurtz, another host, took a moment on the air to call out two colleagues for suggesting that Biden might be “senile or getting there.”   [*Hannity hit right back via Twitter*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline): “Howie, being the President of the United States of America is the Hardest job in the world. Whether any candidate has the physical strength, the stamina, the focus and mental toughness needed to do this job is critical.”

Photo of the day

Sanders and Jackson — and several large flags — appeared together on Sunday in Grand Rapids, Mich.

What could the coronavirus mean for Trump in November?

More than 500 cases of the coronavirus have now been reported inside the United States. Some schools are temporarily closing. People across the country are canceling travel plans and events.

Trump now has to contend with the possibility ahead of his re-election fight in November that the pandemic [*could threaten a cornerstone*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) of his public image: the thriving economy.

Trump signed [*an $8.3 billion emergency package*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) on Friday, with funds for the health secretary to disperse and for state and local governments to use. But that came only after Trump’s initial request — for just $1.25 billion in new funding — drew heavy criticism, including from some congressional Republicans. At that time, Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, called Trump’s request “long overdue and completely inadequate.”

Meanwhile, stocks and oil prices have been falling.

Trump has sought to assuage the public’s fears about the virus while reassuring people that he has it under control. But as our chief White House correspondent, [*Peter Baker*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), points out in   [*a new analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), the coronavirus has the potential to shed a negative light on some of Trump’s budget cuts within the White House.

“Who would have thought we would even be having the subject?” Trump said during a visit to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday. But in fact, when he shut down the office responsible for preparing for pandemics in 2018, an official was clear about the threat.

“The threat of pandemic flu is the No. 1 health security concern,” the official said then. “Are we ready to respond? I fear the answer is no.”

If the virus is not contained, and it does cause an economic downturn, Trump may have a hard time escaping some culpability for the way he sought to confront it.

Warren’s campaign is over, but she’s not out of the spotlight.

The last major presidential candidate who still hasn’t endorsed is, of course, Elizabeth Warren. And so far she’s offered no signs on where she could come down.

But that’s not to say she has disappeared from the public eye.

Warren made a [*surprise*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline)     [*cameo on “Saturday Night Live”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) this weekend, answering questions from Kate McKinnon, who played Laura Ingraham — and then, in a miraculously quick costume change, showed up next to Warren dressed as her, in a blue suit jacket with a wig of Warren’s neatly cut hair.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline)]

“I wanted to put on my favorite outfit to thank you for all that you’ve done in your lifetime,” McKinnon said, adopting a Southern accent and bouncing lightly on her feet with Warren-like vim.

“I’m not dead,” Warren shot back. “I’m just in the Senate.”

Two days earlier, she had been on MSNBC for a more serious conversation. The evening after she exited the race, Rachel Maddow spoke to Warren about what she had learned throughout the campaign, how she decided to end it, sexism in politics (“we can’t lose hope over this”) and, of course, the question of whom she would endorse.

Many on the left have questioned why she would hold out on endorsing Sanders, whose policies generally align with hers. In [*her interview with Maddow*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), which aired on Thursday, Warren outlined at least one area in which she and Sanders still have not found accord: instances of abusive language used by his online supporters.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline)]

“We’ve talked about it, but I think it’s a real problem,” she told Maddow, referring to conversations she had had with Sanders. “I think we have to have some accountability around that.”

On Politics is also available as a newsletter. [*Sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) to get it delivered to your inbox.

Is there anything you think we’re missing? Anything you want to see more of? We’d love to hear from you. Email us at [*onpolitics@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***We Lean on the Tax Code To Fix All Kinds of Problems***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YCK-5331-DXY4-X257-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 8, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BU; Column 0; Money and Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 4; YOUR TAXES 2020

**Length:** 1515 words

**Byline:** By Neil Irwin

**Body**

When a ***working-class*** divorced couple takes turns caring for the kids, who deserves a hefty income subsidy to help offset the cost?

Do the fees that college students pay to join a club or play a sport count as an education expense? What about the books they buy?

Should at-home genetic tests count as a health care expenditure worthy of a public subsidy? How about acupuncture, or massage?

These are the types of questions that, under the U.S.'s peculiar approach, fall not to elected officials, nor to the agencies in charge of family welfare, education and health care. Rather, they are the province of the Internal Revenue Service.

They are part of a long and growing list of ways that Congress has made the I.R.S. its tool to help people in certain situations and penalize them in others. Although the government does directly give some checks to people who are judged to need help, it distributes a huge swath of social assistance through provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

The heaps of special deductions, exemptions and credits are part of what makes filing taxes an intimidating gantlet for many Americans -- the reason that even an online tax service might ask you hundreds of questions to calculate your obligations.

The government subsidizes the working poor through the earned-income tax credit. It subsidizes health care by making health insurance benefits tax-free. It encourages retirement savings, college savings and child care spending through tax-free accounts.

And those are just the big ones. The United States also uses the tax code to provide more obscure benefits; some people receive (tax-free) compensation for wrongful imprisonment or because they are legally blind.

Many of these tax provisions are popular, achieve important goals, and in many cases have good reasons for operating through the tax code as opposed to more straightforward channels. But taken in the aggregate, they cause a whole lot of problems compared with an alternate world in which the government subsidizes certain behaviors more directly.

Funneling subsidies through the tax code gives the tax-savvy a disproportionate advantage. Many tax provisions structured as deductions offer the most generous benefits to the highest earners as a matter of arithmetic. A married couple making $75,000 is in the bracket with a 12 percent tax rate on their last dollar of income, meaning a given deduction is only about a third as valuable as for a couple making $425,000 that faces a 35 percent rate.

What this means is that in effect, the I.R.S.'s tax collectors spend remarkably little time collecting taxes. Rather, they administer social welfare programs, regulate retirement savings and, well, adjudicate discounts on those 23andMe kits.

''The problem with the creep of social benefits into the Internal Revenue Code is that no one ever said, 'Oh my God, we've got a new mission, we aren't just a revenue collector, we're a benefits administrator, so we need to hire different people and set different goals,''' said Nina Olson. She was the chief taxpayer advocate within the I.R.S. for nearly two decades before becoming executive director at the Center for Taxpayer Rights last year.

''You have a tax-enforcement-minded agency administering a benefits program, and that is the source of real problems,'' she added.

Politics is at the root of this reality. Conservatives and centrist Democrats who might blanch at the idea of explicit government welfare -- a federal agency cutting checks to families with low incomes, for example, or to help out with health expenses -- are often more open to a tax subsidy that achieves the same thing.

And whereas new spending may have to survive a politically fraught appropriations process every year, a new provision in the tax code will typically remain law until a future Congress decides to overhaul the tax system, a more rare occurrence.

''Tax expenditures aren't viewed the same way as an addition to the budget,'' said Mark W. Everson, a former I.R.S. commissioner who is now vice chairman of Alliantgroup, a tax consulting firm. ''It's not quite as pejorative. That's just the political reality, that people think a program can be swallowed more readily if it is run through the tax code as opposed to a payment from H.H.S. or some other agency,'' he said, referring to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The United States' biggest program to support lower-income workers is the earned-income tax credit. It supplements salaries by as much as several thousand dollars -- paid when those workers file their tax returns.

There are some good reasons the program works through the tax code, rather than as a more traditional welfare program. Families do not need to make some special application to receive the benefit at a social service office; rather, it is applied automatically, as they file taxes. There is no stigma to receiving it, because it is just one more aspect of a complicated tax code. And for families whose income rises and falls, the earned-income tax credit also automatically pays benefits in years with lower income and takes them away when earnings turn out to be higher.

''When done through the filing of tax returns, people don't have to go to an office, take time off from work, that sort of thing to claim their benefits,'' said Bob Greenstein, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. ''If the country were to contemplate moving various social programs for people with low or moderate incomes out of the tax code, it would be really incumbent to create something with service that is pretty different than what exists today.''

But there are also disadvantages to making the tax code the vehicle for social assistance. Some 36 percent of I.R.S. audits in 2017 were of families claiming the earned-income tax credit, even though those are usually households with relatively low incomes. Scammy providers of tax preparation services encourage some tax filers to lie about their situation. Even people trying to file their taxes with full integrity may run afoul of complex rules about whether a child counts as a dependent, for example.

It all means that for lower-income people, doing taxes correctly can mean the difference between receiving thousands of dollars in cash, or not. And the I.R.S. is in the position of deciding whether a particular household is worthy, the type of role that typically falls to welfare case officers in other parts of the government.

Many of the other areas in which the tax code administers public policy have even weaker claims toward some ideal of efficiency.

Take the case of 529 accounts for college savings and 401(k) accounts for retirement savings. Investment gains are untaxed for 529 accounts, and 401(k) accounts allow people to place untaxed dollars into an account on which any gains remain untaxed until funds are withdrawn. The potential advantage is highest for families who both have the means to save and would otherwise face high tax rates because of their high income.

And consider, for example, tax deductions for child care. The dependent child care tax credit has complicated rules that limit who can take advantage, including what qualifies as a child care expense. Those who work at companies that offer ''dependent care savings accounts'' receive some of the most favorable treatment. They can allocate up to $5,000 in pretax earnings toward day care or other forms of child care.

The highest benefits, in a sense, are for those in high tax brackets and available only to those who work at larger companies that offer the accounts.

When the Obama administration was pursing the Affordable Care Act, it channeled many key elements of the program meant to expand health coverage to the tax system, including the individual mandate and subsidies to help lower-income people afford insurance.

In general, the strongest case for a public benefit that goes through the tax code is when things are simple, said Chye-Ching Huang, director of federal fiscal policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. ''The more you are trying to target a benefit, the less well suited it tends to be to being done through the tax code,'' she said.

It's probably inevitable that the I.R.S. will find itself in the middle of fraught questions that don't seem to have much to do with tax collection.

''I'm comfortable having a lot of these calls vested in the service,'' said Mr. Everson, the former commissioner of the agency. ''Like it or not, the I.R.S. is less partisan and more efficient than a lot of pieces of the government.''

But there is a cost to conflating the core job of collecting revenue for the government with being the all-purpose agency in charge of administering social and economic problems. Millions of American tax filers will face the complexity of the I.R.S. in the weeks ahead, grappling with dozens upon dozens of complicated questions when they just want to figure out what they owe.

When practically every public policy is tax policy, it shouldn't be surprising that taxes become an unwieldy burden.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/06/upshot/tax-code-irs-problems.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/06/upshot/tax-code-irs-problems.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Nicolas Ortega FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Why Isn’t the ‘Southern Strategy’ Working?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:609C-BGH1-DXY4-X29M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1811 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** And what else you need to know today.

**Body**

And what else you need to know today.

Want to get The Morning by email? [*Here’s the sign-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Good morning. There are long lines for coronavirus tests. Tech companies are pulling back from Hong Kong. And President Trump’s racial appeals don’t seem to be working.

The so-called Southern strategy — appealing to white voters by focusing on racial issues — has worked very well for the [*Republican Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). It has helped the party persuade many frustrated white ***working-class*** voters that the Democratic Party doesn’t care about them.

Richard Nixon’s campaign invented the strategy, and he won the presidency twice. Ronald Reagan praised “states’ rights” in a tiny Mississippi county known for a Ku Klux Klan triple murder. George H.W. Bush ran the notorious Willie Horton advertisement. The Southern strategy has been “the most successful strategy in the history of modern politics,” Cornell Belcher, a Democratic strategist, told me.

The basic bet has been that Republicans win when voters focus on race. Steve Bannon, who helped run President Trump’s campaign, described the flip side of the idea, in 2017: “The Democrats,” [*Bannon said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), “I want them to talk about racism every day.”

Sure enough, Trump has put race at the center of his re-election message. He did so in two aggressive speeches over the weekend and defended the Confederate flag yesterday. “Almost every day in the last two weeks, Mr. Trump has sought to stoke white fear and resentment,”[*Maggie Haberman writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). (She’s also on [*today’s episode of The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).)

And yet this time seems different: The strategy isn’t working. Trump’s poll numbers are slumping, and some of his 2016 supporters [*cite racial issues*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) as a reason they plan to vote for Joe Biden.

Why is the Southern strategy suddenly flailing? I count four main reasons:

* The country is changing. It becomes more racially diverse each year. And most Americans under age 35 [*are quite liberal*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). The horror of the George Floyd video and the ensuing protest movement have also [*changed the minds of many Americans*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

1. People are afraid. Historically, many white Americans didn’t see how racism hurt them, Belcher said. But he now hears white voters in focus groups say they’re worried that [*the country is coming apart*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). “They talk about, if we continue on this trajectory, it’s going to be dismal for our kids,” he said.
2. Trump has gone too far. Most white Americans remain moderate to conservative on immigration, affirmative action and more. But many also believe police departments are biased, and many don’t like symbols of slavery. Reagan offered an optimistic, patriotic message that let many voters downplay or overlook his racial appeals. Trump is practically forcing voters to take sides on racism, Terrance Woodbury, another Democratic strategist, [*told CNN’s Ron Brownstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
3. Voters are simply too unhappy with Trump’s handling of the coronavirus. “As long as that’s true,” The Times’s Nate Cohn told me, “I don’t see how he has the freedom to employ wedge issues.”

Of course, the usual caveat applies: The campaign still has four months left.

For more: FiveThirtyEight’s Clare Malone has written a brief history of how the Republican Party [*“spent decades making itself white.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) And The Times’s Emily Cochrane reports from Maine [*on Senator Susan Collins’s effort to win re-election*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) despite Trump’s unpopularity there.

THREE MORE BIG STORIES

1. Testing troubles

As the United States nears three million coronavirus cases, many cities and states are still [*struggling with testing*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Sites in New Orleans have run out of tests five minutes after doors open. In Phoenix, where temperatures have topped 100 degrees, residents have waited in cars for as long as eight hours to get tested.

While testing has increased considerably since April, it has not kept pace with the recent explosion of the virus. Some experts blame the lack of a federal system, which has led cities to compete for testing labs and supplies.

In other virus developments:

* President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, a vocal skeptic of the virus, said last night that he would be tested after [*developing symptoms of Covid-19*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

1. New York City lost a million jobs when it shut down nearly four months ago and is mired in its [*worst economic slump since the 1970s*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

2. Plans for the fall semester

The fall semester is starting to take shape, with most colleges planning to open — [*but not with business as usual*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Harvard will teach all courses remotely and no more than 40 percent of undergrads will live on campus. Georgia Tech plans to resume in-person classes without requiring face masks, leading more than 850 faculty members to sign a letter expressing concern.

One deterrent for going online-only: Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced yesterday that international students enrolled at universities without in-person classes would have to leave the country or transfer to another college. It’s part of the Trump administration’s continuing crackdown on immigration.

3. Unrest over Phoenix police shooting

Another video of a shooting by police — this time with officers in Phoenix fatally shooting a man in a parked car over the weekend — [*is leading to protests*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Police officials said the victim, James Porter Garcia, had pointed a handgun at one of the officers before he was shot. But a friend told local news media that Garcia was unarmed, and activists have demanded the release of body-camera footage from the officers who shot him.

Here’s what else is happening

* Google, Facebook and Twitter said that they [*would temporarily stop processing*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) requests from Hong Kong’s government for user data.

1. The Dakota Access Pipeline, an oil route opposed by Native American and environmental groups, [*must shut down pending an environmental review*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), a federal judge ruled. The Texas company that owns it said it would fight the ruling.
2. Amy Cooper, a white woman who was captured on video in May falsely accusing a Black man of threatening her life in Central Park, [*was charged with filing a false police report*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).
3. Fresh off a Super Bowl victory, the Kansas City Chiefs signed quarterback Patrick Mahomes to a 10-year contract extension [*worth $503 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). And Colin Kaepernick, the activist quarterback shunned by the N.F.L., [*has signed a deal with Disney*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) to produce stories about race and injustice.
4. Lives Lived: “If you don’t like the way I’m livin’/You just leave this long haired country boy alone.” So sang Charlie Daniels, and, if nothing else, he lived large: A brash, down-home singer, songwriter and blazing fiddler, Daniels had hits on both the pop and country charts while his politics swung from left to right. [*He died yesterday at 83*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

IDEA OF THE DAY: Pop culture at the Supreme Court

In a unanimous Supreme Court decision yesterday — [*holding that members of the Electoral College cannot vote for whichever candidate they want*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) — Justice Elena Kagan referred to both the musical “Hamilton” and to the television show “Veep.” We asked Adam Liptak, The Times’s Supreme Court reporter, for some context, and he replied:

The two best writers on the Supreme Court are generally thought to be Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justice Elena Kagan, and neither is a stranger to pop culture references.

In 2008, Chief Justice Roberts quoted ([*some say misquoted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)) Bob Dylan in explaining why the plaintiff lacked standing in a dispute between two phone companies. Instead of citing a case to back up a legal proposition, he cited a lyric: “When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose.” (What Dylan actually sings, of course, is, “When you ain’t got nothing, you got nothing to lose.”)

The chief justice, 65, also drew on the classic rock canon at [*the argument of a copyright case*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) in 2011. “What about Jimi Hendrix, right?” he asked. “He has a distinctive rendition of the national anthem.”

Justice Kagan, 60, has made her own contributions. In [*a 2013 case*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) concerning signs on trucks, she gave a hypothetical example of one: “How am I driving? Call 213-867-5309.” That was a sly reference to “[*867-5309/Jenny*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing),” Tommy Tutone’s indelible 1981 hit, which reached No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and will still get people of a certain age onto the dance floor at college reunions.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT, CHEER

Get baking

Maple-blueberry scones are “the perfect thing to bake when you’re looking to funnel some angst into something delicious,” [*writes the cookbook author Dorie Greenspan*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

They are big and glazed and possess a unique texture — tender and flaky at the same time — thanks to a technique for mixing the butter with flour. Created by the chef Joanne Chang for her Flour Bakery + Cafe in Boston, [*you can find the recipe here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Read a timely new memoir

“The Beauty in Breaking,” written by Michele Harper, [*chronicles her life as an emergency room physician*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) through the lens of the patients she has treated. Each chapter highlights a different case, like a newborn baby who isn’t breathing. Along the way, Harper tells her own story — of experiencing abuse, divorce, racism and sexism, and of becoming a doctor. Elisabeth Egan, an editor at The Times Book Review, called the book a “riveting, heartbreaking, sometimes difficult, always inspiring story.”

Baseball sets a date

Major League Baseball announced that its season would begin on July 23 with a game between the New York Yankees and the Washington Nationals. But will it actually happen? [*Some players and managers are skeptical*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

At least four teams have canceled workouts this week because of virus-testing delays, and several players have already said they will sit out the season. “We haven’t done any of the things that other countries have done to bring sports back,” Sean Doolittle, the Nationals’ closer, [*told The Washington Post*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). “Sports are like the reward of a functioning society.”

Diversions

* The seamstresses of Chanel, Dior and more [*formed a network to make face masks in quarantine*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). They’re not done working together.

1. Take a look back at [*seven years’ worth of covers*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing) from The New York Times Magazine.

Games

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing), and a clue: Guacamole ingredient (five letters).

[*You can find all of our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

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

P.S. Dana Canedy, the administrator of the Pulitzer Prizes and a former Times journalist, [*will run the namesake imprint at Simon &amp; Schuster*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). It is one of the biggest jobs in book publishing, and she is the first Black person to hold it.

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Today’s episode of “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing)” is about Trump’s re-election campaign.

Subscribers help us report stories from around the world. [*Please consider subscribing today*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

Ian Prasad Philbrick and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Highway Safety Patrol Honor Guard retire the state flag outside the capitol building in Jackson, Miss. last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Rory Doyle/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 8, 2020

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[***Your Monday Briefing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YCR-X1T1-DXY4-X2X0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Highlight:** Coronavirus, Italy, Turkey: Here’s what you need to know.

**Body**

Coronavirus, Italy, Turkey: Here’s what you need to know.

Good morning.

We’re covering a coronavirus lockdown in northern Italy, life in Syria’s last rebel stronghold and a big day in Afghanistan.

Italy locks down millions as coronavirus cases surge

Italy imposed an [*unprecedented peacetime lockdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) on Sunday that will affect 16 million people across much of the country’s north, as officials reported a more than 50 percent surge in confirmed cases from a day earlier. Here are   [*the latest updates on the virus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) and a   [*map of where it has spread*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

Italy now has 7,375 confirmed cases, and 366 people have died from Covid-19, the disease caused by the virus. The government’s move is a sign that restrictive clampdowns — which clash with core values of Western democracies — might be necessary to contain and defeat the epidemic.

“We are the new Wuhan,” one Milan resident told our reporter, referring to the Chinese city where the virus was first discovered, and which was later [*cordoned off by the authorities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

[*But debate has already erupted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) over how well the Italian government will be able to enforce the new rules — and whether Italians will obey them.

Yesterday: As the toll from the virus in the United States topped 500 cases on Sunday, American officials [*worried that existing containment efforts weren’t enough*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html). The country’s leading expert on infectious diseases said that officials must “be prepared to take whatever action is appropriate to contain and mitigate the outbreak.”

Markets: Asian markets opened sharply lower today, after [*Saudi Arabia slashed its export oil prices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) over the weekend and as investors digested the relentless global spread of the coronavirus. Investors predicted sharp drops in Wall Street and Europe as well.

Cruise ship: [*The*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html)     [*Grand Princess*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html), which has been held off the coast of California after 21 people onboard tested positive for the virus, was expected to dock in Oakland today. Passengers will then be taken to military facilities around the United States to be tested and quarantined.

Europe and the outbreak

As officials across Europe scramble to slow the outbreak of the coronavirus, this much is clear: Public health measures that make sense for one country can have negative effects on its neighbors.

The Italian lockdown may ultimately save lives, for example, but [*analysts say it will paralyze the country’s economic heartland*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) and almost certainly tip the continent into recession.

Officials in Brussels have also criticized efforts by France, Germany and the Czech Republic to [*lift controls on the export of protective medical gear*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) — moves that test a sense of unity that was frayed by Britain’s recent departure from the bloc.

Go deeper: Europe’s generous social policies — including programs and regulations that protect workers, provide low-cost health care or help companies get through lean periods — [*could serve as a vaccine against a recession*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

Clinging to hope in Idlib

On a recent trip from Turkey into Idlib Province in northern Syria, our journalists met frightened residents who were [*camping in bombed-out buildings and scanning the skies for jets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html). Others had decamped to settlements along the Turkish border, where blue and white tents pockmark rocky hillsides and olive groves.

Some of Idlib’s civilians still cling to the hope that Turkey’s growing deployment of troops into the province will stop an onslaught against rebels by Syrian government forces and Russian warplanes. But even though a [*cease-fire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) that took effect last week appears to be holding, few believe it will last.

Related: Five years ago, many people on the border island of Lesbos, Greece, greeted Syrian refugees with empathy as they traversed the country en route to northern Europe. Now some Lesbos residents are [*forming civilian patrols to round them up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) — and setting up roadblocks to stop them from reaching refugee camps.

If you have 8 minutes, this is worth it

The race for a Labour leader

Lisa Nandy, above, who is vying to lead the opposition Labour Party in Britain, has more centrist politics than her main rivals. That’s one of the reasons she is a clear underdog in a race that Keir Starmer, the party’s Brexit policy leader under Jeremy Corbyn, is favored to win.

But Ms. Nandy, 40, is a woman from the north of England — the place where analysts say Labour betrayed its ***working-class*** roots. In that sense, [*she represents an alternative model for how the party might rehabilitate itself*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) from the losses it suffered under Mr. Corbyn’s leadership.

“This has been a really long time coming,” she said of the recent election failure, “and I don’t think the Labour Party has had an honest reckoning with how deep this is and how long and how far back the roots of this go in communities like mine.”

Here’s what else is happening

Lebanon: Amid calls by protesters for the government to prioritize domestic concerns, the country [*plans to default on $1.2 billion in foreign currency debts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) that are coming due today.

Afghanistan: President Ashraf Ghani was expected to be [*sworn in for another term today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html), but his rival in a disputed September election has issued invitations to a parallel swearing-in ceremony. The dueling events may threaten   [*peace talks over the country’s future*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) between the United States and the Taliban that are scheduled to start tomorrow.

Political spies: Erik Prince, a security contractor close to the Trump administration, worked to recruit former American and British spies to infiltrate groups considered hostile to the Trump agenda, [*a Times investigation found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

Nazi collaborators: A U.S. judge last week ordered a 94-year-old man to return to Germany, where he remains a citizen and where he served as a guard in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. [*It may be the end of a long-running effort*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) to root out Nazi collaborators from often cozy American existences.

António Guterres: In an interview for The Times’s “In Her Words” newsletter, the United Nations secretary general explained [*why he calls himself a feminist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

Snapshot: Above, demonstrators clashed with the police in Santiago, Chile, during an International Women’s Day march on Sunday. People across Latin America, from Buenos Aires to Mexico City, [*protested against inequality, femicide and strict abortion controls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

Sports profile: Our reporter traveled to the Czech Republic to interview [*Adam Ondra*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html), the world’s best climber.

What we’re reading: [*This architectural deconstruction in The Texas Observer.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) “Boxy minimalist homes reflect more than aesthetics,” writes the Briefings editor, Andrea Kannapell. “I didn’t realize how much more until I read this.”

Now, a break from the news

Cook: [*French onion soup.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) It comes from a 1954 pamphlet The Times simply called “Soups,” which had 20 recipes for soups “thick and thin, hot and cold,” but our cooking team has updated this one recipe with sherry and wine to layer in more flavors.

Watch: [*“Hillary,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) a four-part documentary about Hillary Clinton, examines the public fixation on the former first lady and presidential candidate.

Read: “[*Capital and Ideology*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html),” the latest book by the French economist Thomas Piketty, outlines a grand theory of inequality.

Smarter Living: Data overages from your wireless carrier can add up quickly. Here’s how to [*keep your bill under control*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

And now for the Back Story on …

Coronavirus by the numbers

The coronavirus outbreak can be tough to follow, especially the statistics. Adam Kucharski, who studies the math behind outbreaks for the London School of Hygiene &amp; Tropical Medicine, recently [*talked to The Times about how people should look at the data*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

One signal Mr. Kucharski looks for is when the first case in an area is a death: “That suggests you had a lot of community transmission already,” he said.

“Suppose the fatality rate for cases is about 1 percent, which is plausible,” he continued. “If you’ve got a death, then that person probably became ill about three weeks ago. That means you probably had about 100 cases three weeks ago, in reality.”

“In that subsequent three weeks,” he added, “that number could well have doubled, then doubled, then doubled again. So you’re currently looking at 500 cases, maybe 1,000 cases.”

When considering the fatality rate, Mr. Kucharski suggested people pay attention to the variable risk level for different age groups, particularly people in their 70s and 80s.

“Over all we’re seeing maybe 1 percent of symptomatic cases are fatal across all ages,” he said. “What’s also important is that 1 percent isn’t evenly distributed. In younger groups, we’re talking perhaps 0.1 percent, which means that when you get into the older groups, you’re potentially talking about 5 percent, 10 percent of cases being fatal.”

That’s it for this briefing. See you next time.

— Mike

Thank you

To Mark Josephson and Eleanor Stanford for the break from the news. You can reach the team at [*briefing@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

P.S.

We’re listening to “[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).” Our latest episode is about the agreement between the U.S. and the Taliban.

Here’s today’s   [*Mini Crossword puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html), and a clue: Underneath (five letters).   [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html).

Parul Sehgal, a Times book critic, talked about her middle-of-the-night reading schedule, her review process and more for The Cut’s   [*“How I Get It Done”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/coronavirus-italy.html) feature.

PHOTO: Milan’s central train station on Sunday, where some were leaving the “red zone” for other areas of Italy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alessandro Grassani for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2020

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[***The Secret Toll of Racial Ambiguity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63WK-C191-JBG3-6332-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Alexandra Kleeman

**Highlight:** Rebecca Hall’s new film adaptation of the 1929 novel “Passing” has cracked open a public conversation about colorism and privilege.

**Body**

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When Rebecca Hall read [*Nella Larsen’s groundbreaking 1929 novel, “Passing,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/02/t-magazine/passing-nella-larsen-brit-bennett.html) over a decade ago, she felt an intense, immediate attachment to it. The story seemed to clarify so much that was mysterious about her own identity — the unnameable gaps in her family history that shaped her life in their very absence, the way a sinkhole in the road distorts the path of traffic blocks away.

The novel follows Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry, two light-skinned Black women who grew up in the same Chicago neighborhood and shared a friendship complicated by differences in class and social status. When Clare’s father died, she was sent off to live with white relatives, while Irene went on to become firmly ensconced in the vibrant Black artistic and cultural community of 1920s Harlem, wife to a Black doctor and mother to two dark-skinned young boys. One day, while passing for convenience on the rooftop restaurant of a whites-only hotel, Irene is recognized by a beautiful blond woman, who turns out to be Clare — who now not only lives her life as a white woman but is also mother to a white-passing daughter and married to a bigoted man who has no clue about her mixed-race heritage. The friends’ reunion crackles with tension, charged with curiosity, envy and longing.

When Clare asks Irene if she has ever thought about passing in a more permanent way herself, Irene responds disdainfully: “No. Why should I?” She adds, “You see, Clare, I’ve everything I want.” And maybe it’s true that the respectable, high-status life Irene has built in Harlem encompasses everything a serious woman, committed to lifting up her race, should want. But Clare’s sudden presence begins to raise a sense of dangerous possibility within Irene — one of unacknowledged desires and dissatisfactions. When she sees the ease with which Clare re-enters and ingratiates herself within Black society, it threatens Irene’s feeling of real, authentic belonging.

Raised in England within the elite circles of classical theater, Hall, who is 39, had her first introduction to the concept of racial “passing” in the pages of Larsen’s novel. “I was spending time in America, and I knew that there had been vague, but I mean really vague, talk about my mother’s ethnicity,” Hall explained over the phone this spring. Her voice is calm and poised, with a warm polish to it, and she tends to speak in composed paragraphs. Over the year that we had corresponded, Hall hadn’t been acting much and had instead spent time writing screenplays from the Hudson Valley home that she shares with her daughter and her husband, the actor Morgan Spector. “Sometimes she would intimate that maybe there was African American ancestry, or sometimes she would intimate that there was Indigenous ancestry. But she didn’t really know; it wasn’t available to her.”

Hall grew up steeped in performance: Her father, Sir Peter Hall, was known for founding the Royal Shakespeare Company and serving as the director of the Royal National Theater for many years, and possessed what she describes as a preternatural ability to know when and how an actor could be gently pushed into an even better performance. Her mother, Maria Ewing, an American raised in Detroit, is one of opera’s most celebrated sopranos, famous for her daring portrayal of Salome in Richard Strauss’s production, in which she followed the Oscar Wilde-penned stage directions to the letter and went nude onstage.

After her parents divorced in 1990, Hall lived for many years with her mother in a manor in the English countryside, where she remembers rooms filled with the sound of jazz on vinyl, her mother making herself at home in the relative isolation and remoteness of an adopted country. “I was sort of brought up to believe that I was this — all of which is true, by the way — privileged, upper-middle-class, sort of bohemian well-educated white girl from a very prestigious family background,” Hall said. “And that was sort of where it stopped. And when I asked questions to my mother about her background in Detroit and her family,” Hall said, her voice low and firm, “she left it with an ‘I don’t want to dwell on the past.’”

Until a friend pointed her to Nella Larsen’s “[*Passing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/11/movies/passing-review.html),” Hall had no way of naming her intuition that these gaps in her family history were narratively charged — but reading it was a “gut punch.” “I felt deeply challenged and confused,” Hall recalled. “And the only way I could actually process it, for me, was to sit down and adapt it. I didn’t, at the time, think, I’m going to adapt it, because I know it’s going to make a killer film and I’m going to direct it. I really didn’t. It was sort of personal and quiet, and I did it in 10 days.” Then she stowed it away in a drawer for the better part of a decade.

Margot Hand, a friend and a producer of [*“Passing,” the film*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/11/movies/passing-review.html) that was eventually made from that screenplay and that opens theatrically in the United States on Oct. 27 and streams on Netflix beginning on Nov. 10, remembers watching Hall on the set of “Permission,” a film they were both involved in, and noticing how knowledgeable she was about the setup and composition of the shots. When she asked Hall whether she had ever considered directing, she replied that there was only one movie she could imagine herself making as her first film: an adaptation of a novel from the 1920s, based on a screenplay she wrote years earlier. Hand told me that the version of the screenplay that was used in filming is essentially identical to the one Hall showed her years ago — one of those rare artistic impulses that emerges whole and intact, like an egg.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/trwq3CNCMkU)]

As Hall began to consider turning the script into her first directed feature, she knew that much of her vision for the film was nonnegotiable: It had to be shot in black and white, an unpopular choice from the perspective of studios, because black and white can be a harder sell in foreign markets. It had to be shot in the 4:3 aspect ratio that was the default for celluloid film in the 1920s and ’30s but that has since been replaced by wider proportions. And it had to have Black women cast in the lead roles of Irene and Clare — another sticking point in a moment when white actors still command the most star power and box-office revenue. Tessa Thompson and Ruth Negga signed on early and stayed attached through the years it took to gather the financing for the film, an unusual vote of confidence that Hall credits with the film’s eventually being made.

“It’s a big undertaking to have this be your debut, and it’s still so hard as a female filmmaker to get something made,” Thompson explained to me over the phone. “To know that she would trust me with that, because so much would hinge on my performance, really was such a gift to me.”

Hall was insistent: To film in black and white was a way of honoring the films that she was raised on, which starred strong female leads like Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis and Myrna Loy. And casting Black actors allowed her to conjure the fantasy of a “lost noir film” that might have had a Black actress in a leading role, while nodding to a lineage of films like “Imitation of Life” (1934). Starring the Black actress Fredi Washington, the film is the story of a daughter who breaks her mother’s heart by deciding to pass as white. Some Southern audiences were scandalized by it because Washington’s light skin, combined with the ambiguity of the black-and-white cinematography, made it impossible for them to discern whether the actress was truly Black or truly white.

But each of these compositional choices also functions to amplify the internal tension of the narrative, to pressurize the pull of Irene and Clare’s relationship. In black and white, the viewer becomes hyperattuned to the shades of gray that form the bulk of the visual image, an anxious gatekeeper perceiving similarity and difference at the same time. In the unconventionally narrowed screen, the two women’s bodies are continually in relation, one occluding, the other hidden, the distance between them always palpable. As Hall says, the framing “forces the face literally into the center of the frame, constantly. And so it constantly says, loud and clear, that this is a movie about faces and how we see them and watch them being seen.” In this aspect ratio, she adds, “there’s no room for escape.” For her, the project has been one of self-discovery and self-reckoning: “I’d say that the whole journey from that day when I sat down to write this to now has been a way of me processing and understanding my family better,” Hall says. “It was a bit of an exploration and also something I felt compelled to do for reasons I had no language for.”

For the first half of my own life, I had no language for the sensation of precarious contingency that went along with my multiracial face, a product of a Taiwanese mother who immigrated in the 1980s and an American father with German ancestry. My childhood spanned the 1990s, when multicultural was an aesthetic, a party free of bad vibes. On TV, in the video for Michael Jackson’s “Black or White,” faces of different races morphed into one another, smiling hugely as they lip-synced the words. In elementary school in central New Jersey, I was asked once a year to bring in a “favorite recipe that shows your heritage” to add to a gradewide cookbook — I turned in the same recipe every time, for pork-and-cabbage dumplings — and on Veterans Day to wear some traditional Taiwanese apparel while sitting on a float that rolled through the park behind my house. Culture was to be celebrated, and as with a good buffet, you could have as much as you wanted, all piled together.

If culture was additive, race was a place for optimism, insofar as its projected irrelevance would free the nation of the problems it had caused. Multiracial people were one mechanism through which that liberation would be accomplished: Their existence, and their acceptance and success in America, would be evidence that the country had left behind the violence and inequity of its past. If the nation couldn’t achieve racial equality through the political process, then citizens could do it themselves by creating a new kind of person.

Being a symbol of racial and cultural optimism is a strange sign to live under. Your beauty signifies the rightness of the coming transition, its aesthetic balance; your flexibility, empathy and intermingled whiteness comfort those who fear the loss of place or privilege in the coming demographic shift. You are a bridge between the genes of your mother and the genes of your father, a bridge between their cultures — a bridge being a structure that others can use to cross something hazardous. You are a link between past and present that somehow carries forward none of the old grudges.

But in the classroom and on the playground, my racial ambiguity didn’t feel like something to celebrate. At some times, I felt illegible and unseen; at others, I felt that my inharmonious features — the unusual shape of my eyes, my odd accent and the gaps in my knowledge of either culture — were bizarrely visible. Other children and some adults asked about me, speculated about me, tried to puzzle through my racial and cultural identity. And in the estrangement I felt in the towns we moved to, surrounded mostly by white people and sensing my mother’s own melancholia at being stranded far from her home country and the languages she was most comfortable living in, I found little in my racial identity that I could use as an anchor.

One day when I was 16, alone in the school library during lunch hour, I came upon “Passing” and, like Hall, found it strangely, alarmingly moving. It gave shape and language to the racial ambivalence I experienced that was difficult to place within the optimistic rhetoric that surrounded me. The precarity that Clare and Irene live with, one walking a tightrope between two worlds designated as incommensurable and the other clutching at the apparent safety of a singular, grounded identity, spoke to my own fear of a catastrophic mobility, the feeling that if I didn’t find some way to root myself firmly to one world or the other, I might never find a way to belong anywhere. Texts are always haunted by the unseen — in basic terms, they work to conjure in the mind what they can only point at in words — but this entire book was fueled by invisible, scarcely apprehended drives that seemed to come from society, that spectral presence that moves us all in difficult-to-identify ways.

As I read George Hutchinson’s “In Search of Nella Larsen,” the most comprehensive biography of the writer, I found a life that encompassed, at different times, the public-facing dutifulness of Irene Redfield and the lonesome, destructive freedom of Clare Kendry. A mysterious and remote figure who left inconsistent traces in the public record, Larsen struggled all her life to find her place among the categories available to her. The daughter of a white Danish seamstress and a Black cook from the Danish West Indies, Larsen spent her early years in an interracial sliver of Chicago where all kinds of people commingled in saloons and brothels, far from the buttoned-up neighborhoods of elite white and elite Black society. When her mother married another white immigrant from Denmark and gave birth to her second daughter, Larsen’s skin tone prevented the family from establishing themselves in one of the newer, less precarious neighborhoods dominated by ***working-class*** white immigrants. After years of tension navigating an increasingly segregated city, her mother sent her to study at an elite, all-Black teacher-training program in Tennessee, where she was expelled after a year, probably for violating the dress code. She returned to Denmark, where she lived for a time as a child.

With her Scandinavian roots and little direct connection to the legacy of slavery that defined much of the African American experience, and because she came from a poor background, Larsen never felt fully at home in elite all-Black social circles. After she went to nursing school and became the first Black librarian to attend the New York Public Library’s prestigious library school, her first publications were selections of Danish children’s games and songs. The novelist Walter White, part of the literary community she had begun to associate with, encouraged her to write a novel, and eventually, she wrote two: the quasi-autobiographical “Quicksand” and her second and last published novel, “Passing.” She became one of the most celebrated — and maligned — writers of the Harlem Renaissance, insisting on a social circle that included the controversial white author Carl Van Vechten, whose writings had been deemed exploitative by many Black critics.

In her work, Larsen complicated traditional notions of morality or race loyalty. She sometimes wrote about white people, as in the unpublished domestic thriller set in Boston that she wrote and rewrote in her last years as a working writer, as if trying to prove that colored people could enter the minds and lives of white people. After years of disappointments — her physicist husband was having an affair with a white co-worker, and one after another the manuscripts she submitted were rejected by publishers — Larsen retreated. Without telling the remnants of her literary circle, she moved to a different apartment down the block and became unreachable to her friends and colleagues. She quietly returned to nursing and died in the company of colleagues who had little idea that she had been a writer at all.

The unusual shape of Larsen’s story, riddled with holes and obscurities, has led many to misread her. When her work was rediscovered in the 1980s and 1990s and began to appear on syllabuses, biographers claimed she had embellished her Danish heritage in order to distance herself from African American culture and present herself as European, and therefore more sophisticated. Other critics suggested that she left her literary life in order to begin passing as white. In reality, the proof of her connection to Denmark only required more care and effort to unearth, and though she once boasted in a letter to friends of having managed to have lunch in an upscale whites-only Southern restaurant, Hutchinson argues that she never tried to pass in any deeper, more deliberate way. But the misinterpretations of Larsen and her work point to her predicament: Even as she attained significant success as a writer, she left too few traces on paper to ensure that she would be read accurately. She remained enigmatic, illegible to most.

In early August, I took a ride share, a ferry and a public bus to a quiet corner of Martha’s Vineyard to meet Hall at the first in-person festival event she had attended in over a year and a half. Though “Passing” had found distribution and been featured at the Sundance Film Festival, the Martha’s Vineyard African American Film Festival would be the first place where an audience gathered to watch and discuss it together. It was the weekend of [*Barack Obama’s much-publicized 60th-birthday party,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/04/us/politics/obama-cancels-60th-birthday-party.html) a celebration that would have brought hundreds of guests to the Vineyard, before it was scaled down amid right-wing criticism and Covid concerns. I walked past rows of newly painted and neatly hedged houses that looked out onto a still, grassy bay where over 400 years earlier an English explorer from Bristol anchored, traded with the native Wampanoag people and “enjoyed terrifying them with the sound of his cannon,” according to a 1923 book on the history of the island.

Hall appeared on the wraparound porch of her bayside hotel in a dark button-up shirt and slim pants — casual, but in a different way from the bright whites and pale colors that covered much of the island. Hall had recently taken part in Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s PBS series, “Finding Your Roots” (the episode will air next year), and filled in some of the lacunas in her family history that had made elements of her own life feel incomplete or difficult to comprehend. She had shown a version of her film to her mother, sparking conversations that they weren’t able to have in the decades preceding. And “Passing” had been sold to Netflix for almost $17 million, a deal that would guarantee the film the sort of broad audience and promotional support rarely given to intricate, demanding art foregrounding Black women.

The process of funding the film had been long and difficult — multiple studios offered Hall funding if she agreed to film in color, but she turned those offers down. Many months ago, Hall felt resigned to the idea that the film would always be a niche artifact, telling herself: “If I have to make it for nothing and it sells for nothing and nobody ever sees it, then so be it. This is the film that I want to make.” She now felt “a bit smug,” and a bit shocked, at the idea that art had won out.

Hall’s adaptation cuts to the quick of the novel and transfers the shifting, unsettling quality of Larsen’s text back onto the viewer’s shoulders. The film delves into the gray zone of seeing, priming the viewer to become aware of the way his or her own perception is positioned and constructed. Under the intensive, focused gaze of the film’s long shots, Thompson and Negga deliver performances dense with desire and repulsion. Thompson plays Irene with turbulent restraint, her silences heavy and her speech shaped and structured by unseen constraints, while Negga’s Clare is dazzling and appetitive — her mobility, and the zest with which she transgresses boundaries of race and class, expose the falseness of the racial categories upheld by white and Black alike.

The film feels timeless, closer kin to the moody, claustrophobic psychological landscape of Ingmar Bergman’s “Persona” or the taut, covert romance of Todd Haynes’s “Carol” than to other films that depict the same period. In this way, though set with care and historical fidelity in the 1920s, it’s not a film about the past or even about the social conditions of Larsen’s America, but about the way choices made during Larsen’s time reverberate through succeeding generations. It highlights the psychic afterlife of racial trauma — the quiet holes pressed into the psyche by self-denial.

Like some long-limbed people, Hall has a tendency to fold herself up on the furniture in a disarming way, tucking her feet beneath her on the wicker sofa as she held a cup of green tea that I never saw her drink from. The researchers on “Finding Your Roots,” she told me, traced her mother’s side of the family tree as far back as her great-great-great-great-great-grandparents. She learned that her great-grandfather, whose name was John William Ewing, was born into slavery but found government work post-abolition in Washington, and even gave the toast for Frederick Douglass at a banquet in his honor. Her great-grandmother was a free woman of color, descended from one of only 5,000 Black men who fought on the side of the rebels during the Revolutionary War. But against the background of so much lineage lost and recovered was the discovery of the exact point at which the narrative had broken. “The revelation,” she said, “was that it was just my grandfather who passed — just that one act that erased a huge amount of history, including some stuff that’s really extraordinary.” She spoke carefully, pausing often. “The irony is his father was a race man. His father was someone who wanted to uplift.”

I pointed out how rare it was for a person to have the chance to make a decision that so rapidly shifts the path of his descendants, a complex, psychological decision that erased anyone’s ability to find out why he made it. Hall nodded. “And if you know that it happened, it passes on a legacy that’s” — she trailed off, searching for the right term — “so confused, you know? Because if you’re the child of the parent, and you believe them to be doing the right thing, or hiding something by living in secret, then your obligation to the parent is to do what they do.” When I asked if her mother ever told stories about her own father that might shed light on why he chose to pass, or what his experience was like afterward, she told me that her grandfather was an artist and a musician, and this is part of what made them close — her mother learned to sing from imitating records in the basement of the family house. She left home soon after he died when she was 16, Hall said, gaining admission to the Cleveland Institute of Music against the odds and later moving to the Barbizon Hotel in New York, and eventually to Europe, where she sang in Salzburg, in Milan, in London.

Hall didn’t know if her grandfather was a sort of anchor for her mother, whether his death caused her to leave home. But her mother did talk, Hall said, about an event that was very disturbing for her. “Her father was driving her home from somewhere. And they got out of the car, and there was a neighbor who my mom described as having a long yellow braid on one side. She was a white lady who had always been very nice to them. But as they were getting out of the car, this woman just turned around and said, ‘Why don’t you die?’” The woman added a toxic racial epithet. “And worse, that was not long before he died.” Her mother was very confused. She would tell this story, Hall said, but mostly avoided speaking about that time. I find myself haunted by it. I include it here even though I’m not sure what exactly the story signifies. What had happened to transform the neighbor’s view of her grandfather? Had her grandfather’s history of passing come to the surface, however carefully he hid it? In the end, it’s a narrative with a deep hole at its center, one that mirrors others in Hall’s family, a break in the telling that can’t be filled in through any amount of genealogical research or archival work.

At the start of the golden hour, I made my way across the island to a reception on the deck of a waterfront restaurant, a celebration of the screening that would happen in a couple of short hours. Guests were already there, piling plates with beet salad and seafood. The atmosphere was warm and easy. When Hall and Spector appeared, a line formed in front of them, and I listened from nearby as they traded thanks with producers and attendees. A woman with straightened black hair, who appeared to be in her 50s or 60s, approached. She thanked them for coming and then added that the film was meaningful to her because her aunts lived their lives passing as white. “Because they passed and we didn’t, they didn’t want to be seen with us,” she explained.

Hall’s film has cracked open a public conversation about colorism, privilege and secrets. On Twitter, people are sharing stories and black-and-white photographs of a grandmother’s cousins who moved out of state, great-aunts who sneaked back to see their family in secret, relatives who lost their jobs when co-workers informed management about their identities: a public airing of what in Hall’s family was once closely held. Recently one of her mother’s sisters reached out: She said that they never really had language to understand the hidden context that shaped their family, and she thanked her for giving it to them.

Other responses pointed to the ways that racial categories continue to shape our collective thinking. When [*the trailer for the film debuted on social media*](https://twitter.com/NetflixFilm/status/1440361557473447939), it prompted a deluge of tweets. Some shared memes featuring the movie title alongside photos of multiracial celebrities like Rashida Jones, Maya Rudolph and Thandiwe Newton — the implication being that these lighter-skinned actresses would be a better fit for the roles or that they were continuing to benefit from the ability to pass as white in Hollywood and beyond. That so much of the discussion circulated around Thompson’s and Negga’s ability to successfully pass as white felt surreal, a return to a type of racial scrutiny that seems antithetical to the project of both the book and its adaptation. One Twitter user explained that in Larsen’s day, passing did not necessarily mean persuading others that you were white, only persuading them that you were “not-Black.” Another suggested that the director was trying to heighten tensions with the casting, reminding the viewers at all times of the possibility that the characters would be found out.

“There’s a real irony in this, in that the people who can really pass like me are challenged sometimes about whether they’re really, truly Black,” Mat Johnson, an African American novelist of mixed descent, told me over the phone. “So we have this paradox where some of the same people who would be like ‘Well, he’s not really Black,’ or ‘She’s not really Black,’ also feel real ownership about the idea of passing being a part of the African American experience. It’s interesting because even that discussion is about who owns the story of passing.”

“Passing” is re-entering the culture at a moment when being multiracial is viewed in a more sober, realistic light than it was when I was growing up. In recent works like Johnson’s graphic novel “Incognegro,” Danzy Senna’s “New People” and Brit Bennett’s best-selling “The Vanishing Half,” authors have rewritten the literary tropes of Black passing to probe its blind spots and challenge the notion that the color line has been erased within American society. If earlier notions of a cohesive “mixed race” identity failed to materialize, who could be surprised? No grand unifying theory of multiraciality can account for the multiple, highly specific ways in which individuals reconcile their own hybrid backgrounds, or for the particular way in which Blackness resists assimilation into both whiteness and the middle ground of the mixed.

“I’ve seen Black people around me getting interested in their family history start to do their research and realize that to be Black in America necessarily means having some non-Black ancestry,” Kaitlyn Greenidge, author of the novel “Libertie,” told me in a recent conversation. “Genetically, many of us have about 25 percent white DNA within us. To be Black, this thing that we say is readable and defined as necessarily separate from whiteness, literally usually means for most of us that we are, in fact, intertwined with it,” she said. “Hopefully what that will do is force people to have more complicated discussions about what it means to share all of this DNA when we still have this system set up to reward those who are closest or closer to whiteness.”

Over the past 10 years or so, I’ve noticed more people bypassing the conundrum of what it means to be racially mixed in order to define themselves in terms of who they feel themselves to be, how they lay claim to their cultures, how they themselves conceptualize racial boundaries. Many choose to identify as wholly Asian, or wholly Black, or to identify as multiple full identities rather than fractions of a diminishing whole. You could say that there are potentially as many racial identities as there are racial stories, and the more fulfilling work is to dwell in these stories rather than in their categorization. In the end, narrative may the best tool we have for binding together the disparate elements that make up the self.

Alexandra Kleeman is a professor at the New School and the author of two novels, “You Too Can Have a Body Like Mine” and “Something New Under the Sun.” Carly Zavala is a photographer who was born in Venezuela and is based in Brooklyn. She was a nurse for 15 years and is known for her play with light and shadow to create emotive and moody images.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLY ZAVALA) (MM42-MM43); Rebecca Hall, Ruth Negga and Tessa Thompson on the set of ‘‘Passing.’’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY V. ARAGONES/NETFLIX) (MM45); Ruth Negga and Tessa Thompson in ‘‘Passing.’’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY NETFLIX) (MM46)

**Load-Date:** November 29, 2021

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[***The Growers, Bakers and Beekeepers Embracing the Terroir of American Cities; Food Matters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6297-XC51-JBG3-600V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE; food

**Length:** 2874 words

**Byline:** Ligaya Mishan

**Highlight:** Long celebrated in France, the concept of place-specific tastes is spurring the revitalization of neighborhoods and communities.

**Body**

THE GRAPEVINES RISE at the corner of East 66th Street and Hough Avenue in Cleveland, 14 trim green rows claiming over half a city block — a little less than an acre — beside an abandoned building with boarded-up windows, whose rolling lawn on a summer morning is as lush as Versailles’s. The sky is brilliant and wide above stoplights and swoops of telephone wire. Across the tar-patched street stand storefronts behind scissor gates and a former grocery whose facade half collapsed last May, raining brick on the sidewalk. Down the avenue, the walls of another boarded-up building have been commandeered as an outdoor art gallery, papered over in posters with messages: “I survived the Hough riots”; “Growing your own food is like printing your own money.”

For centuries, the French have used the word “terroir” to describe the environment in which a wine is produced. Going back to the Latin “terra,” “earth,” it’s rooted in a traditional vision of the countryside and has become more fervently embraced as our agrarian past recedes. Today, more than half the world’s population lives in cities, and an estimated 800 million of us take part in some form of urban farming, producing as much as one-fifth of the food we eat — recalibrating both our idea of agriculture and the mystique of origins. When Mansfield Frazier planted his Cleveland vineyard in 2010, which he christened [*Château Hough*](https://www.chateauhough.com/), he became part of an unofficial movement of urban dwellers across America transforming vacant lots, rooftops and their own backyards into farms, vineyards and apiaries, encouraged in part by government grants aimed at revitalizing cities.

Frazier was warned about the potentially stunting effects of exhaust from passing cars, and was told he’d be lucky if the plants grew shoulder high. Instead, “they jumped out of the ground,” he says, reaching 12 feet the first year. The soil turned out to be good for grapes: Sandy and loose, it harbors heat, drains well, resists pests and allows the vines’ roots to go deep. Frazier added a little phosphorous at the beginning, but has otherwise left it pretty much alone. Although he’d dreamed of making chardonnay, he was advised that European viniferas might be too delicate for Ohio, where temperatures can drop below zero. So he chose cold-hardy hybrids, Traminette and Frontenac, which have survived winters when larger rural vineyards in the state lost whole crops.

Proximity to water is key, and Lake Erie, two miles to the north, keeps the air cold in spring, protecting the vines from early budding, and warm as summer leaks into fall, so the grapes cling and ripen longer, building up their sugars before harvest. To give the vines unfettered sun, Frazier took a chain saw to the shady scrub trees that had sprung up along the plot; to nourish them, he considered, then rejected, the idea of sprinklers. The grapes were patient and there was rain enough.

“God is on our side,” he says.

IN THE 13TH CENTURY, terroir was simply a practical way to delineate the right soils for growing grapes, as the American historian Kolleen M. Guy writes in “[*When Champagne Became French: Wine and the Making of a National Identity*](https://www.chateauhough.com/)” (2003). Only toward the end of the 16th century did the word take on a sensory dimension, eventually yielding the phrase “go\xC3t du terroir” — today popularly subsumed in and implied by “terroir” alone — to explain how the profile of a wine reflects its origins; to identify a taste of place.

Still, to this day, no one can agree on what, precisely, terroir is, or if it even exists. Some limit it to the gifts of nature, those ecological conditions — the chemistry of the soil (which the British wine writer Hugh Johnson described as “the unseen dankness where the vine roots suck”), levels of water and sunlight, climate, elevation and altitude, topographical contours, surrounding biodiversity — that predate the arrival of the vintner, whose interventions may enhance but not fundamentally change the ahistoric essence of the wine. Others point out that there is no scientific basis for a physical transmission of minerals from the ground to the final press of grapes. Instead, they argue, nature is but one factor, and terroir is best understood as a dialogue between land and vintner, who is no mere steward but a necessary partner, devoting labor and knowledge, and perhaps imparting something of the human soul.

In either case, terroir must be earned: coaxed out over decades, even generations. (In France, winemaking goes back to the sixth century B.C.) But Frazier does not hail from a long line of vintners. Now 77, he grew up a couple of miles away in Central, a Black neighborhood where [*Langston Hughes*](https://www.chateauhough.com/) wrote his first poems. The son of a church deacon and saloonkeeper who ran a thriving gambling operation on the side, Frazier became first a pipe welder and then, as he describes it, a “career counterfeiter,” with a specialty in credit-card fraud, before landing in prison. There he turned to the written word and, in 1995, his essay collection “From Behind the Wall: Commentary on Crime, Punishment, Race and the Underclass by a Prison Inmate” was published by the Minnesota-based Paragon House, which cast the author as “a latter-day Virgil, inviting us to descend with him into the modern American inferno.”

A few years after his release, Frazier headed home to Cleveland and settled in Hough, once among the city’s poorest neighborhoods, whose population as of the last census, in 2010, was 94 percent Black. The streets still bear the scars of the historic riots — “I prefer to call it the uprising,” he says — of July 1966, which were set off in the middle of a heat wave when a Black man was refused a glass of water at a white-owned cafe. (A grand jury report, released a month later, floated the false theory that “trained and disciplined professionals,” abetted by members of the Communist Party, had incited the violence, not unlike the accusations against “outside instigators” after last spring’s protests over the police killing of George Floyd.) With his wife, Brenda, Frazier built a home and a nonprofit organization to help prisoners re-enter society. He kept an eye on an apartment building across the street that he suspected had become a hub of drug activity, and when it was eventually torn down, he got a federal grant to convert the lot into an urban vineyard, and brought in formerly incarcerated people from a nearby halfway house to help build trellises and plant the vines.

Do the wines of Château Hough — Frazier’s favorite is a crisp, sweet white named Sassy — owe their character to soil enriched by the glacial lakes that covered Ohio thousands of years ago, or to the fires that ravaged these streets in 1966, or to the men who, working the vines, began a new life? “The grapes don’t know there was a riot here,” Frazier says. But he does.

WE INVOKE TERROIR today in all manner of food and drink, to praise the velvety finish of chocolate from the coast of Venezuela, say, or the icy clarity of [*uni from Hokkaido*](https://www.chateauhough.com/), Japan. But terroir wasn’t always desirable. When taken strictly as a matter of geology, it could yield flaws as well as virtues. In “[*Tasting French Terroir: The History of an Idea*](https://www.chateauhough.com/)” (2015), Thomas Parker, an American scholar of French literature, points to a 16th-century French treatise that snubbed wines in which the taste of soil was too dominant, a sign of coarseness. This sentiment persisted through the 1964 publication of the revered American wine importer and advocate [*Frank Schoonmaker*](https://www.chateauhough.com/)’s “Encyclopedia of Wine,” in which he defines go\xC3t du terroir as an “earthy flavor, somewhat unpleasant,” adding, “superior wines rarely if ever have much of this.”

Nevertheless, terroir — in the broader sense, place of origin — is now law in France, codified in a system designed to protect certain regional products from the diminishment of false rivals. Since 1927 no sparkling wine may be called Champagne unless its grapes are grown in the Champagne wine region in northeastern France; only Roquefort cheese made in the caves of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon may bear that name, as first decreed in 1411. This is at once a marketing tool and a cultural statement (with nationalistic undertones), championing literal roots in the land.

The United States is a young nation by comparison, and beholden instead to the formative myth that whatever your birth — your origin — you can be anything (even if that isn’t true). When it comes to character, terroir isn’t fixed; it can even be defeated, and certainly reinvented. And so the term is applied more loosely and freely here, not to recall some lost pastoral idyll but to conjure a more metaphorical state of rootedness, as an antidote to the industrialization in the wake of World War II that flooded American homes with processed and unnervingly uniform foods — “placeless and faceless” commodities, as the cultural anthropologist Amy B. Trubek writes in “[*The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey Into Terroir*](https://www.chateauhough.com/)” (2008). This cheap bounty promised an end to hunger, but at the expense of part of what makes us human: a connection to our surroundings and the labor with which we make them our own. In this context, terroir offers a way to distinguish the particular from the generic, the personal from the corporate, what is local and what could come from anywhere.

But what does place taste like? Two years ago, Nora Lidgus, a 39-year-old baker and artist then working at a three-Michelin-star restaurant in Manhattan, was asked by her boss to make a single loaf of bread — but it had to be, he told her, “the best bread in the world.” Instead, she set out to make bread that could exist only in New York. She filled sterilized jars with sourdough starters — a combination of flour from wheat grown in New York State and tap water — then planted them around the city to suck in wild yeasts from the air, along with microbes from passers-by, souvenirs from the crush of urban life. (This was long before the coronavirus, back when we shared microbes without thinking.) One jar went in the southern end of Central Park, where it was watched over by a guard at a kiosk; another stood outside a private dining room on the fourth floor of the [*Metropolitan Museum of Art*](https://www.chateauhough.com/) on the Upper East Side; and the third and riskiest was tied to a rope and slung over a beam off the [*Brooklyn Bridge*](https://www.chateauhough.com/).

Every day for two weeks she visited each site, lifted the cheesecloth covers and fed the starters flour and tap water, careful to check the jar on the bridge only when nobody was looking. (She’d petitioned the city for a permit but never heard back.) When it came time to bake the loaves, the Met’s turned out smooth and congenial, born of comfort, “the bread version of table wine,” she says, while Central Park’s was floral and crustier, a little rugged at the edges. The starter from the Brooklyn Bridge produced the most alcohol, which made the bread sweeter, so she added seeds and rye to balance it out. Still, not every locale yielded an intriguing result: When she attempted another starter near the Gowanus Canal, it never took on identity; instead, the resultant bread reminded her of the King Arthur starter kit. (She blamed this, symbiotically, on her lack of a personal connection to the neighborhood.)

To be a baker, Lidgus explains, is to be half control freak, half submissive to fate; to embrace a life of eternal adjustments. There was an element of uncertainty in hanging a jar off the Brooklyn Bridge, in that she would never know the whole story, what cars, birds and people roared, fluttered and shuffled by, or if someone spied the rope and hauled it up to take a peek. A sourdough starter effectively eats the air around us and takes part of us with it; this one, suspended at the heavily trafficked meeting point of two boroughs, had potentially invited the whole world’s microbes in. What — who — was in there, exactly? This was her ode to New York, and New York was chaos. “I like my city messy,” she says.

It’s a common misbelief that terroir is a concept singular to the French, and that no corresponding word exists in other cultures. But the Chinese “fengtu” and the Japanese “fudo” — literally, “wind and soil” — have long been used to define how geography and climate shape the character of both regions and the people who live in them. More intimately, the Korean “son-mat” translates as “the taste of your hands,” attributing the flavor of food to the touch of the person who makes it: almost a microterroir, distinct to each individual. For Lidgus’s New York project, she borrowed a term from the art world, saying, “All sourdough is site-specific” — work that is created in and for one place and would lose meaning if shifted elsewhere.

CHICORY AND CLOVER, dandelion and milkweed, catmint and hawthorn, mulberry and crab apple: This is the feast that awaits the bees of Detroit, where between 60,000 and 70,000 vacant lots, just under a third of the city’s land, brim with blossoms, and perennials like tiger lilies and asters still find their way out of the ground behind abandoned homes. In 2013, the city went broke, declaring the largest municipal bankruptcy in American history, with $18 million in debt. Nicole Lindsey, 37, and Timothy Paule, 36, lived through the gutting of public services in their neighborhoods and witnessed how talk of revitalization never seemed to include the voices of people in ***working-class*** communities. In 2017, they took matters into their own hands — “We can be our own heroes,” Paule says — and for $340 bought three partial lots in Detroit, a total of 3,500 square feet, where they set up three hives.

Today, through their nonprofit venture, [*Detroit Hives*](https://www.chateauhough.com/), Lindsey and Paule have expanded to 13 locations, partnering with local schools and community gardens, and tend more than three million bees. And while bee populations are declining precipitously across the country — each winter of the past decade, American [*beekeepers*](https://www.chateauhough.com/) have lost between a quarter and half of their colonies — scientists report the opposite here. Where bees in rural areas must often make do with pesticide-strafed monoculture crops, they find abundance in cities whose empty lots, conventionally considered signs of urban blight, teem with undisturbed and luxuriant life. These conditions affect not just the survival of the bees but the taste of their honey, which is “extremely local,” Paule says, and changes by the season. In spring, Detroit’s terroir has notes of mint; in fall, the hives give off the scent of clover and goldenrod.

To “eat local” is a modern mantra, driven by concern over climate change and the hulking trucks that haul produce and livestock from coast to coast. But it’s also a [*commitment to the idea of locality*](https://www.chateauhough.com/) — the transformation of the space we move through into a place that is recognizably ours, be it a region, a city or a single block. With honey, to eat local is to go a step further and become local, taking into your body the traces of nectar and pollen from the surrounding flowers and trees, which some believe might help your immune system learn to be in tune with your surroundings and less prone to allergies. (Paule notes that local honey put an end to months of his hacking cough.)

And maybe this is the true purpose of terroir, to anchor us in place, to give us a stake in the world. The French social theorist Henri LeFebvre, writing shortly before the May 1968 student demonstrations in Paris, which catalyzed a wave of protests and strikes and brought France to a standstill, famously declared a “right to the city” — a right to have a say in the shaping of the urban environment and to live in a place where use and pleasure are privileged over profit. A few decades later, the British social theorist and geographer David Harvey, amplifying the idea, argued that this right means more than simply access to urban resources: It is “the freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves.”

Belonging somewhere isn’t as straightforward as having an address, and even more so as the demands of virtual and global citizenship come to take precedence over the physical reality of neighborhoods. In cities like Cleveland, Detroit and New York, a neighborhood is never a constant or a given; it requires conscious engagement with others and daily traversals of space, fending off the intrusions and urgencies of capital, be they in the form of gentrification or real estate development, and wearing down what will become familiar paths, even if there’s no ultimate destination beyond returning home. Trubek writes that “locating food makes it ours,” but it also helps to tell us who we are. Before there can be a taste of place, we first must make a place of our own.

PHOTOS: In Cleveland, grapes benefit from their proximity to Lake Erie, resulting in wine that’s crisp and sweet; in New York City, a local baker placed her sourdough starter in various locations — hung off the Brooklyn Bridge; within Central Park — to determine how that influences the character of her homemade bread.; While bee populations have waned throughout rural America, urban hives are thriving in cities such as Detroit, producing honey that’s reminiscent of mint, clover or goldenrod. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICIA HEAL; PROP STYLING BY MARTIN BOURNE)

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2021

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[***A Novelist Breaks the Code of Being a Woman in Japan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YW7-PHX1-DXY4-X0W4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Mieko Kawakami, whose novel “Breasts and Eggs” was just published in English, has become something of a feminist icon in her male-dominated country.

**Body**

Mieko Kawakami, whose novel “Breasts and Eggs” was just published in English, has become something of a feminist icon in her male-dominated country.

TOKYO — To explain the pressure felt by women in Japanese society, the novelist Mieko Kawakami recalls a playground prank from elementary school.

The boys would run around and flip up the skirts of certain girls to catch a glimpse of their underwear. That was mortifying enough. Yet it was just as shameful for the girls whose skirts didn’t get flipped.

“It meant you weren’t popular,” said Kawakami, 43, the author of “Breasts and Eggs,” a best-selling novel in Japan that was published in English in April. “It’s a humiliation among women not to be desired by men. That’s a very strong code in Japanese society.”

It’s a code she knows well, but one that she — and her characters — have gone about transcending. “[*Breasts and Eggs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html),” which won one of Japan’s most coveted literary prizes in 2008, helped establish her as one of the country’s brightest young stars.

Kawakami has since become something of a literary feminist icon in Japan. Although “Breasts and Eggs” riled some traditionalists with its frank portrayal of women’s lives, those detractors are outnumbered by her fans, many of them younger women.

They relate to Kawakami’s sharp identification of society’s expectations for women and the efforts of her characters to upend them. In “Breasts and Eggs,” the narrator, Natsuko Natsume, muses about the tyranny of beauty as she tries to understand her elder sister’s obsession with breast implants.

“When you’re pretty, everybody wants to look at you, they want to touch you,” Natsuko writes. But she no longer cares if she is attractive to men. Natsuko, also a novelist, is interested in procreation, but not sex. Her editor is a single woman who says not having children feels “perfectly natural.”

Another writer, a divorced mother, skewers the oversize ego of a male peer at a literary reading and declares that “no man will ever understand the things that really matter to a woman.” A former colleague describes her mother — and herself — as little more than “free labor” for their husbands (and uses a vulgarity to describe female anatomy to boot).

Though Japan’s prime minister, Shinzo Abe, has promoted a platform of female empowerment, the country has lagged behind other developed nations in women’s representation in [*politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), the executive suite and   [*academia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html). At home, women are saddled with a   [*disproportionate amount of housework and child care*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html).

Still, there are signs that Japanese women are pursuing their own agendas. They are [*postponing or forgoing marriage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html) in record numbers. When a woman called for employers to stop making female workers wear   [*high heels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), she gathered tens of thousands of signatures on a petition and submitted it to the labor ministry, prompting some businesses to relax their dress codes for women.

In the literary world, too, Japanese women are carving out an increasingly prominent role. “Breasts and Eggs” won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize, and Kawakami has joined a growing list of Japanese women whose work is being translated and gaining attention in the West. They include [*Yoko Ogawa*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), whose novel “   [*The Memory Police*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html)” was a National Book Award finalist last year and is on the   [*shortlist for the International Booker Prize*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html);   [*Sayaka Murata*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), another Akutagawa Prize winner, for “Convenience Store Woman”; and Hiroko Oyamada, whose debut novel, “   [*The Factory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html),” was published in English in December.

Kawakami gained even more renown as a feminist voice after a 2017 interview she conducted with Haruki Murakami, perhaps Japan’s most celebrated modern novelist.

In that interview, which recently appeared in [*translation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), Kawakami — whose work Murakami has championed — questioned the “persistent tendency for women to be sacrificed for the sake of the male leads” in his fiction, echoing   [*the frustration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html) of other critics. (Murakami responded to Kawakami’s critique by noting that his focus was not on “individualistic characters,” but on how people interact with the world.)

To be described as a feminist writer in Japan “still has to some extent a negative image,” Kawakami said in an interview via Zoom.

When “Breasts and Eggs” won the Akutagawa Prize, Shintaro Ishihara, then Tokyo’s right-wing governor and a member of the prize committee, described the novel’s tone as “selfish” and “unpleasant and hard to listen to.”

After Kawakami told The Asahi Shimbun, one of Japan’s largest newspapers, that women should not have to use the word “shujin” — “master” — to refer to their husbands, critics took issue with her on social media.

But fans have made her works best sellers. “Breasts and Eggs” has sold more than 250,000 copies in Japan, and when Kawakami edited a special edition of a literary magazine, [*Waseda Bungaku*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), it sold out within days.

The English edition of “Breasts and Eggs” was published by Europa Editions in a translation by Sam Bett and David Boyd. The novel explores the extent to which women can get along without men, especially in the fundamental act of reproduction. Natsuko, who remains single throughout the novel, explores artificial insemination with a sperm donor, a rare path to motherhood for unmarried women in Japan.

“It’s not accepted among women who are in their 40s who have secure jobs and a certain income to come to a situation where they want to have a family but don’t have a partner,” said Kawakami, who researched the culture of in vitro fertilization while writing. “If they are looking for a sperm bank, they don’t come forward. Japan is so conservative when it comes to women and sex.”

Many of her characters are single mothers or the children of single mothers, as is Kawakami herself.

She grew up in Osaka, Japan’s third-largest city, as the middle child of a grocery store worker who still stocks shelves part-time. In “Breasts and Eggs,” she wanted to convey the city’s distinct dialect and humor.

When she was 14, Kawakami said, she lied about her age to secure a part-time job at a factory that made parts for air-conditioners. To help with the family finances, she worked as a convenience store cashier, a restaurant dishwasher, a dental assistant and a bookstore clerk.

Growing up ***working class***, she learned that “in most cases the rich stay rich and the poor remain poor,” she said. “Even with effort you cannot always change your life, and I had this severe lesson as a child.”

From its opening sentence, “Breasts and Eggs” is forthright about class: “If you want to know how poor somebody was growing up, ask them how many windows they had.”

To help support her younger brother when he was in college, Kawakami worked as a bar hostess. She later moved to Tokyo to pursue a music career, but it quickly stalled.

Makiko, Natsuko’s elder sister in “Breasts and Eggs,” works as a hostess at a down-at-the-heels bar. Kawakami depicts the economic insecurity of such work, and the shifting hierarchies among the hostesses, as younger women displace older ones for the favor of customers.

Their concerns are particularly salient in the time of the coronavirus.

With Japan under a [*state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html) of   [*emergency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), several cities have requested the closure of nightclubs and bars associated with the sex industry, to contain the spread of the virus. Women who work in such places are particularly vulnerable, as many of them are estranged from their families and have nowhere to go if they cannot work.

An economic relief package initially excluded workers in the sex industry, but they were later added after an outcry among advocates.

The coronavirus “is widening the gap in society, I must say,” Kawakami said.

She worries about blind spots among the mostly male policymakers who are crafting Japan’s response to the pandemic. The male lawmakers “know nothing about how women are managing child care or housework” with schools closed and office staff working from home, she said.

The English translation of “Breasts and Eggs” follows the publication of some of Kawakami’s shorter works in [*literary magazines*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html) and English-language   [*collections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html). A novella, “   [*Ms Ice Sandwich*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html),” was released in 2018 by Pushkin Press in a translation by Louise Heal Kawai.

In that work, narrated by a fourth-grade boy, Kawakami features a female character who may or may not have had cosmetic surgery and is cruelly judged for it.

“She’s foregrounding the things women go through to kind of achieve what would be considered to be a socially acceptable appearance,” said [*Kathryn Tanaka*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/breasts-and-eggs-mieko-kawakami.html), an associate professor of cultural and historical studies at Otemae University in Nishinomiya.

“We talk a lot about single motherhood or cosmetic surgery or infertility, but we talk about them on the surface,” she said. “Her works force you to go underneath and think about how these become issues through relationships, and how they are affecting individuals.”

Kawakami said young female fans often approached her at readings, asking for autographs and crying.

Something about the loneliness of her characters, or their desire for something more than what is expected of them, resonates emotionally. Kawakami said she would be pleased if her novels provided solace that readers ultimately outgrow.

“Maybe I will be happy if they look back from the future and say, ‘I used to read Mieko’s books when I was young,’” Kawakami said, “‘but now I don’t have any reason to read them.’”

Hisako Ueno contributed reporting.

Correction: May 9, 2020

An earlier version of this article misstated the title of one of Mieko Kawakami’s novellas. It is “Ms Ice Sandwich,” not “Ice Sandwich.”

PHOTOS: Mieko Kawakami’s books have made her something of a feminist icon, which in Japan is “to some extent a negative image,” she said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RYOHEI TSUKADA); “Breasts and Eggs” established Ms. Kawakami as a rising star. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EUROPA EDITIONS)

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2020

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[***Can Bernie Sanders Still Win?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YC0-YYN1-DXY4-X31B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 5, 2020 Thursday 20:33 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1493 words

**Byline:** Spencer Bokat-Lindell

**Highlight:** The senator fell short of expectations on Super Tuesday, but the race is far from over.

**Body**

The senator fell short of expectations on Super Tuesday, but the race is far from over.

This article is part of the Debatable newsletter. You can [*sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to receive it Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Bernie Sanders’s hopes of sweeping a divided electoral field on Super Tuesday, viewed as a distinct probability only days ago, were dashed as Democratic candidates and voters coalesced around Joe Biden in a stunning resuscitation of a candidacy that seemed to have breathed its last.

But as my colleague Astead Herndon [*observed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), “The same way things changed in the last 10 days, they could change again.” Does Mr. Sanders still have a path to the nomination, and if so, what does it look like? Here’s what people are saying.

‘Bernie’s revolution failed’

Mr. Sanders has run on the promise that he can remake the electorate by expanding it, as the Times columnist Michelle Goldberg [*has written*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). He has long claimed he would be able to turn out millions of young people who have never voted before, which would remove the need to win over more skeptical rank-and-file Democrats.

But the 2020 primaries have discredited Mr. Sanders’s strategy, Eric Levitz [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) at New York magazine. He notes that while Mr. Sanders has made impressive gains with Hispanic voters, the promised surge in youth turnout has not   [*materialized*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable): In many states, including Mr. Sanders’s home state, Vermont, young voters’ share of the electorate fell from 2016. And while total Democratic turnout did   [*increase significantly*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in most states, that increase tended to help Mr. Biden.

“The left isn’t going to maximize its ideological influence over Democratic voters, or its power within the party, by pretending that it commands an enormous army of nonvoters who are ready to storm the Democratic castle as soon as Sanders gives the signal,” Mr. Levitz writes. To get what it wants, “the left must first win with the electorate it has, not the one it wishes it did.”

[*[Related: “The Sanders Surge That Wasn’t”]*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable)

Mr. Biden’s delegate lead is small at the moment, but it could be hard to overcome, [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) The Times’s Nate Cohn. Although Mr. Sanders needs to defeat Mr. Biden by only three points in the remaining primaries to overtake him, Mr. Sanders will not have the advantage he enjoyed on Super Tuesday of early votes cast before Mr. Biden’s South Carolina victory, a showing that prompted other candidates to drop out. The remaining states are also projected to be less favorable to Mr. Sanders than, say, California was. “A three-point deficit is not a daunting handicap, certainly not when Mr. Biden was polling 20 points lower just a few days ago. But the Super Tuesday results do not augur well for Mr. Sanders’s odds of pulling it off,” Mr. Cohn writes.

Many people believe that Mr. Sanders is losing because voters see Mr. Biden as more electable. While Mr. Sanders is [*well liked*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) among Democrats and his platform   [*popular*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable), his candidacy demands a leap that many voters fear others are not willing to make, as the Times columnist Frank Bruni   [*has noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable).

Electability concerns were especially salient among older black voters in Southern states, which Mr. Biden won handily, according to Mara Gay, a member of the Times editorial board. “For those who lived through the trauma of racial terrorism and segregation, or grew up in its long shadow, this history haunts the campaign trail,” she [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). Many voters Ms. Gay talked to said they see in President Trump a revival of Jim Crow-era authoritarianism, against which they believe Mr. Biden is the safest bet. “Southern Democrats — particularly black Democrats — are hoping to keep the history that surrounds them in the past.”

In response to exit polling data showing Democratic support for single-payer health insurance, one of Mr. Sanders’s signature policy proposals, the activist Bree Newsome Bass tweeted:

‘Make no mistake: He can still win this thing’

Mr. Sanders can win if he modulates his message, [*according*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) to Elizabeth Spiers, the founder of a political consulting firm. As Ezra Klein   [*explains*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) at Vox, Mr. Sanders’s portrayal of himself as an insurgent against the system is central to his appeal among his most loyal supporters, but it also may be preventing him from winning over the rest of the Democratic electorate. “The campaign needs to articulate a vision that allows people to get on board if they regard Sanders as a flawed candidate or not totally aligned policy-wise,” Ms. Spiers said on Twitter.

To beat Mr. Biden, Mr. Sanders must also convince voters that he’s not just the better choice, but the safer choice, [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) Matt Karp, an associate professor of history at Princeton, in Jacobin magazine. In his view, it’s an easy case to make: “In a bare-knuckled battle with Trump, does real safety belong with this candidate, whose name is a synonym for the swamp around Capitol Hill, whose political career is an extended advertisement for Beltway malfeasance, and whose only real asset — a kind of musty aura of the Obama years — is considerably diminished by his inability to speak in complete sentences?”

Mr. Sanders could also make the case by comparing Mr. Biden’s candidacy to Hillary Clinton’s in 2016. The journalist Mehdi Hasan tweeted:

Mr. Biden’s weaknesses may become more apparent now that the race has narrowed. “He’s very obviously aged in a way that Bernie Sanders hasn’t really,” Ms. Goldberg [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) of Mr. Biden on “The Argument,” The Times’s opinion podcast. Mr. Sanders, despite his heart attack, “doesn’t seem that different than he seemed four years ago.”

If Mr. Biden wins the nomination, Miranda Devine [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) in The New York Post, his apparent decline in “mental acuity” will make him an exceedingly risky candidate. “The Democratic-friendly media may nurse him through the campaign, but President Trump will be merciless to ‘Sleepy Joe,’” she writes. “The campaign can’t keep him in witness protection forever. At some point, he’ll be caught without the teleprompter, and an off-the-cuff Joe is a ticking time bomb.”

Focusing less on ideological abstractions and more on specific policies will help Mr. Sanders win the electability argument, [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) Jeet Heer at The Nation. Mr. Biden, he says, is the weaker debater; when they face off again, Mr. Sanders should hit him hard on his record of calling for cuts to Social Security, as well as his support of the Iraq war. He should also highlight Biden’s support of NAFTA, which is unpopular with the ***working class*** of Michigan and Pennsylvania. Although Mr. Biden has his own electability case, “voters very much care about Social Security, about the endless wars in the Middle East, and about the free-trade agreements that ravaged the economy of the Midwest,” Mr. Heer writes.

Mr. Sanders should also emphasize his policies that would make life easier for families, Elizabeth Bruenig [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) for The Times. His proposals to guarantee free child care and pre-K and six months of paid parental leave, for example, are common-sensical in many other countries, and foregrounding them could win over “anxious suburbanites” who lean toward Mr. Biden. In Ms. Bruenig’s words, the senator’s pitch could be: “Go to the voting booth for Mr. Sanders, because he wants all kids — your kids, my kids — to be safe and happy. He wants to give all parents time to nurse, cuddle and bond with their newborns without sinking into debt or poverty.”

[*[Related: “Bernie Had a Rough Night, but Make No Mistake: He Can Still Win This Thing”]*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable)

And perhaps most persuasively:

Do you have a point of view we missed? Email us at [*debatable@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable). Please note your name, age and location in your response, which may be included in the next newsletter.

RECKONING WITH WHERE THE RACE IS NOW

[*“Elizabeth Warren Had a Good Run. Maybe Next Time, Ladies.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The New York Times]

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[*“What Bernie Sanders Supporters Are Telling Themselves Now”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The Atlantic]

[*“Another key factor behind Biden’s renaissance? The media.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [Columbia Journalism Review]

[*“Why Democrats Are Still Not the Party of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The New York Times]

[*“Bernie Sanders Is Going for Broke”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable) [The New York Times]

WHAT YOU’RE SAYING

Here’s what readers had to say about the last edition: [*After Super Tuesday, what happens if there’s no winner?*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/debatable)

Bob from the United Kingdom (via email): “Can we talk frankly talk about what might be politely described as Biden’s cognitive deficit? Liberals have no hesitation in diagnosing Trump with all types of cognitive failures. We did the same thing with Reagan, too. And though in both cases we had evident grounds to do so, if we are really serious about a candidate’s mental health, we should subject every candidate to the same scrutiny.”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; photographs by Erin Schaff/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2020

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[***The Tax Code Is Overtaxed; Your Taxes 2020***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YC4-TG01-JBG3-6007-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 6, 2020 Friday 22:14 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1512 words

**Byline:** Neil Irwin

**Highlight:** The I.R.S. has become the de facto administrator of a startling number of social welfare programs.

**Body**

When a ***working-class*** divorced couple takes turns caring for the kids, who deserves a hefty income subsidy to help offset the cost?

Do the fees that college students pay to join a club or play a sport count as an education expense? What about the books they buy?

Should at-home genetic tests count as a health care expenditure worthy of a public subsidy? How about acupuncture, or massage?

These are the types of questions that, under the U.S.’s peculiar approach, fall not to elected officials, nor to the agencies in charge of family welfare, education and health care. Rather, they are the province of the Internal Revenue Service.

They are part of a long and growing list of ways that Congress has made the I.R.S. its tool to help people in certain situations and penalize them in others. Although the government does directly give some checks to people who are judged to need help, it distributes a huge swath of social assistance through provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

The heaps of special deductions, exemptions and credits are part of what makes filing taxes an intimidating gantlet for many Americans — the reason that even an online tax service might ask you hundreds of questions to calculate your obligations.

The government subsidizes the working poor through the earned-income tax credit. It subsidizes health care by making health insurance benefits tax-free. It encourages retirement savings, college savings and child care spending through tax-free accounts.

And those are just the big ones. The United States also uses the [*tax code*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/27/us/politics/democrats-rush-rewrite-tax-code.html) to provide more obscure benefits; some people receive (tax-free) compensation for wrongful imprisonment or because they are legally blind.

Many of these tax provisions are popular, achieve important goals, and in many cases have good reasons for operating through the tax code as opposed to more straightforward channels. But taken in the aggregate, they cause a whole lot of problems compared with an alternate world in which the government subsidizes certain behaviors more directly.

Funneling subsidies through the tax code gives the tax-savvy a disproportionate advantage. Many tax provisions structured as deductions offer the most generous benefits to the highest earners as a matter of arithmetic. A married couple making $75,000 is in the bracket with a 12 percent tax rate on their last dollar of income, meaning a given deduction is only about a third as valuable as for a couple making $425,000 that faces a 35 percent rate.

What this means is that in effect, the I.R.S.’s tax collectors spend remarkably little time collecting taxes. Rather, they administer social welfare programs, regulate retirement savings and, well, adjudicate discounts on those 23andMe kits.

“The problem with the creep of social benefits into the Internal Revenue Code is that no one ever said, ‘Oh my God, we’ve got a new mission, we aren’t just a revenue collector, we’re a benefits administrator, so we need to hire different people and set different goals,’” said Nina Olson. She was the chief taxpayer advocate within the I.R.S. for nearly two decades before becoming executive director at the Center for Taxpayer Rights last year.

“You have a tax-enforcement-minded agency administering a benefits program, and that is the source of real problems,” she added.

Politics is at the root of this reality. Conservatives and centrist Democrats who might blanch at the idea of explicit government welfare — a federal agency cutting checks to families with low incomes, for example, or to help out with health expenses — are often more open to a tax subsidy that achieves the same thing.

And whereas new spending may have to survive a politically fraught appropriations process every year, a new provision in the tax code will typically remain law until a future Congress decides to overhaul the tax system, a more rare occurrence.

“Tax expenditures aren’t viewed the same way as an addition to the budget,” said Mark W. Everson, a former I.R.S. commissioner who is now vice chairman of Alliantgroup, a tax consulting firm. “It’s not quite as pejorative. That’s just the political reality, that people think a program can be swallowed more readily if it is run through the tax code as opposed to a payment from H.H.S. or some other agency,” he said, referring to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The United States’ biggest program to support lower-income workers is the earned-income tax credit. It supplements salaries by as much as several thousand dollars — paid when those workers file their tax returns.

There are some good reasons the program works through the tax code, rather than as a more traditional welfare program. Families do not need to make some special application to receive the benefit at a social service office; rather, it is applied automatically, as they file taxes. There is no stigma to receiving it, because it is just one more aspect of a complicated tax code. And for families whose income rises and falls, the earned-income tax credit also automatically pays benefits in years with lower income and takes them away when earnings turn out to be higher.

“When done through the filing of tax returns, people don’t have to go to an office, take time off from work, that sort of thing to claim their benefits,” said Bob Greenstein, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. “If the country were to contemplate moving various social programs for people with low or moderate incomes out of the tax code, it would be really incumbent to create something with service that is pretty different than what exists today.”

But there are also disadvantages to making the tax code the vehicle for social assistance. Some 36 percent of I.R.S. audits in 2017 were of families claiming the earned-income tax credit, even though those are usually households with relatively low incomes. Scammy providers of tax preparation services encourage some tax filers to lie about their situation. Even people trying to file their taxes with full integrity may run afoul of complex rules about whether a child counts as a dependent, for example.

It all means that for lower-income people, doing taxes correctly can mean the difference between receiving thousands of dollars in cash, or not. And the I.R.S. is in the position of deciding whether a particular household is worthy, the type of role that typically falls to welfare case officers in other parts of the government.

Many of the other areas in which the tax code administers public policy have even weaker claims toward some ideal of efficiency.

Take the case of 529 accounts for college savings and 401(k) accounts for retirement savings. Investment gains are untaxed for 529 accounts, and 401(k) accounts allow people to place untaxed dollars into an account on which any gains remain untaxed until funds are withdrawn. The potential advantage is highest for families who both have the means to save and would otherwise face high tax rates because of their high income.

And consider, for example, tax deductions for child care. The dependent child care tax credit has complicated rules that limit who can take advantage, including what qualifies as a child care expense. Those who work at companies that offer “dependent care savings accounts” receive some of the most favorable treatment. They can allocate up to $5,000 in pretax earnings toward day care or other forms of child care.

The highest benefits, in a sense, are for those in high tax brackets and available only to those who work at larger companies that offer the accounts.

When the Obama administration was pursing the Affordable Care Act, it channeled many key elements of the program meant to expand health coverage to the tax system, including the individual mandate and subsidies to help lower-income people afford insurance.

In general, the strongest case for a public benefit that goes through the tax code is when things are simple, said Chye-Ching Huang, director of federal fiscal policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. “The more you are trying to target a benefit, the less well suited it tends to be to being done through the tax code,” she said.

It’s probably inevitable that the I.R.S. will find itself in the middle of fraught questions that don’t seem to have much to do with tax collection.

“I’m comfortable having a lot of these calls vested in the service,” said Mr. Everson, the former commissioner of the agency. “Like it or not, the I.R.S. is less partisan and more efficient than a lot of pieces of the government.”

But there is a cost to conflating the core job of collecting revenue for the government with being the all-purpose agency in charge of administering social and economic problems. Millions of American tax filers will face the complexity of the I.R.S. in the weeks ahead, grappling with dozens upon dozens of complicated questions when they just want to figure out what they owe.

When practically every public policy is tax policy, it shouldn’t be surprising that taxes become an unwieldy burden.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Nicolas Ortega FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2021

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[***Tony Kushner, Oracle of the Upper West Side***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:646B-B1N1-DXY4-X4W0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 30, 2021 Tuesday 17:20 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 6343 words

**Byline:** A.O. Scott

**Highlight:** When Steven Spielberg asked Kushner, America’s most important living playwright, to take on ‘West Side Story,’ he thought, ‘He’s lost his mind.’ But he dared.

**Body**

Tony Kushner, Oracle of the Upper West Side

“MY FAVORITE QUOTE,” Tony Kushner says, “is from an American anarchist named [*Voltairine de Cleyre*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/26/obituaries/voltairine-de-cleyre-overlooked.html).”

It’s a warm Tuesday in October, and we’re talking on a bench in a quiet patch of Central Park, right behind John Quincy Adams Ward’s statue of William Shakespeare, which has stood since 1872 at the bottom of the park’s Literary Walk, a popular promenade dedicated to writers. Kushner is an enthusiastic quoter, citing famous and obscure people from the past as if they were old friends; de Cleyre, an associate of the turn-of-the-20th-century American revolutionary [*Emma Goldman*](https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/goldman/MeetEmmaGoldman/index.html), was a fervent advocate for workers’ rights and sexual equality — exactly the kind of little-known but nonetheless consequential figure that occasionally shows up in Kushner’s writing. The sentence in question, it will turn out, may or may not be from de Cleyre, and may or may not be exactly as Kushner cites it — we were on a park bench, after all, not in a library — but whoever said it first, it’s now among my favorite Kushner quotes: “Dare to participate in the great historical mistake of your time.”

The particular mistake he has in mind is “West Side Story,” a new movie, directed by Steven Spielberg, based on the beloved, problematic [*1957 Broadway musical*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/02/theater/west-side-story-confidential.html) set among the white ethnic and Puerto Rican youth gangs of Manhattan. The screenplay, which revises Arthur Laurents’s original book, is by Kushner, who has been collaborating with Spielberg for nearly 20 years, through “[*Munich*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/23/movies/an-action-film-about-the-need-to-talk.html)” (2005), “[*Lincoln*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/09/movies/lincoln-by-steven-spielberg-stars-daniel-day-lewis.html)” (2012) and other unconsummated and upcoming films.

Kushner doesn’t mean that he regrets the project. On the contrary, he’s intensely proud of the ways he, Spielberg and the rest of the creative team have reimagined a show that’s itself a reimagining of William Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet.” Citing de Cleyre seems to be his way of acknowledging the risks and contradictions inherent in any ambitious work of art that tackles the thorny American realities of race, class, immigration and identity. But he’s also, in the spirit of the present time, anticipating some of the criticism that might greet a 65-year-old white man’s attempt to tell a story largely about Latino teenagers.

Before we move on from de Cleyre, we’re interrupted by one of those New York encounters that are the city’s way of mocking the idea of coincidence. “Hey, there’s Tony,” someone calls out. I also go by Tony, so Kushner and I turn our heads in unison to see a distinguished-looking couple approaching, accompanied by an equally distinguished-looking dog. For a moment, I think the silver-haired man with the neatly trimmed beard is one of my in-laws or former editors but, in fact, it’s Steven Spielberg, out on a stroll with his wife, the actress Kate Capshaw, in town from California to celebrate their 30th anniversary.

A few days before, Spielberg and Kushner had been in Los Angeles, wrapping production of “The Fabelmans,” a story based on Spielberg’s own childhood. They had written the script together on Zoom over eight weeks in late 2020. “The fastest Tony Kushner has ever written anything in his entire life,” Spielberg says by phone a week later, describing the process for their previous collaborations: “Tony and I would meet about a story, I would download my entire position on the story and how I felt about it and Tony would go away and he’d write. He’d come back in seven years or five years with a script.”

“Very Steven Spielberg” is a famous line from “[*Angels in America*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/25/theater/angels-in-america-review-nathan-lane-andrew-garfield.html),” the two-part, more-than-seven-hour play that established Kushner as one of the leading dramatists of our time. “Angels” premiered in 1991, long before his creative partnership with Spielberg began; in the play, the filmmaker’s name is invoked to signal that something spectacular and cinematic is happening onstage — the arrival of a literal angel in America. The sudden appearance of Spielberg himself in Central Park strikes me, by contrast, as very Tony Kushner.

He has an imagination that brings to vivid life characters from history and fantasy, whether the 16th president Abraham Lincoln, the ghost of the 20th-century convicted Soviet spy [*Ethel Rosenberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/08/books/review/anne-sebba-ethel-rosenberg.html) in “Angels” or even a singing 1960s-era washing machine in “[*Caroline, or Change*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/27/theater/caroline-or-change-review.html),” his 2004 Broadway musical that returned this season after Covid-19 delayed the revival’s opening last year. These characters’ presence makes the world feel at once bigger and smaller, as the grand dramas and abstractions of history and politics settle into ordinary human interactions. The moment in Central Park feels similar: Here’s the most important living American playwright and the most successful living American filmmaker conversing in the shadow of the greatest writer in the English language. But it’s also just four people chatting in the park — about politics, movies, family, the weather — while a dog at their feet studies the pigeons and the passing toddlers doze in their strollers.

CENTRAL PARK LIES adjacent to the Upper West Side of “West Side Story,” where, six decades of urban renewal and gentrification later, Kushner lives with his husband, the film historian and journalist Mark Harris. They met at a party — and also, around the same time, in an AOL chat room — in 1998, then married in 2007. (Harris and I are professional acquaintances and share a book editor, and he contributes to this magazine.) In its in-between, mid-80s incarnation, Central Park figures prominently in “Angels in America”; the last scene, a poignant, defiant invocation of resilience and solidarity in the face of AIDS, takes place at the Bethesda Fountain, at 72nd Street midway between the East and West Sides, where the 19th-century sculptor [*Emma Stebbins’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/obituaries/emma-stebbins-overlooked.html) eight-foot bronze statue, “Angel of the Waters,” seems to float above the surface.

“Angels,” despite its continent-spanning title and scenes set in Utah and heaven, is a quintessential New York play. It draws on the specific demographic and geographic contours of the city to advance its capacious, intricate ideas about identity, ethical responsibility and human survival in a time of pandemic and political retrenchment. Kushner’s New York is a magnet for misfits of all kinds — Jewish, queer, renegade Mormon — but hardly an earthly paradise. Heaven is described as “a city much like San Francisco” (where “Angels” premiered at the Eureka Theater Company), though that’s where you go when you’re dead. New York is where everyone lives. In fact, the play’s rallying cry is “more life!” — a political demand during the AIDS crisis that might as well be the city’s motto. In what other place does such a cross-section of humanity — drag queens, underemployed intellectuals, lonely housewives, closeted Republicans, actual angels — commingle and contend? Where else does Kushner’s blend of high eloquence and borscht belt timing sound like the local vernacular? Nowhere but the city, where Kushner has lived since he arrived to attend college in 1974. (Speaking of God, one of the characters says to an audience of angels: “If after all this destruction, if after all the terrible days of this terrible century, He returned to see ... how much suffering His abandonment had created, if all He has to offer is death. ... You should sue the bastard.”)

Kushner grew up in Lake Charles, La., the setting of “Caroline, or Change,” the Broadway production of which had just started previews when we met, but even after five decades here, he is not, in any provincial, Woody Allen sense, a New York writer, obsessed with the social minutiae of a few select codes. And yet he’s undoubtedly a New York character. That isn’t code for Jewish or gay, though what the city owes its gay and Jewish citizens is beyond measure: It includes, among much else, the original “West Side Story,” created by Laurents, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim and Jerome Robbins, all of whom can be claimed by both tribes.

But it’s Kushner’s voice, in person and on the page, that is New York: erudite and profane, ironic and earnest, a brilliant cascade of points and counterpoints, jokes and footnotes. [*Jeanine Tesori*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/16/nyregion/public-lives-the-words-rule-but-her-music-sets-them-free.html), 60, who composed the music for “Caroline” and was part of the new “West Side Story” team, told me that “there’s no better debater than Tony Kushner.” This is true less in the high school forensic squad sense — though he was on the debate team as a teenager — than in the park-bench, deli-counter sense. Also in the passionate and demanding artistic-collaborator sense, which was Tesori’s point; she was referring to how intently he focused on every nuance in the “West Side Story” libretto. Argument is synonymous with many things: thought, breath, democracy, life. But argument is also secular Jewish scripture, encapsulated in the old joke that for every two Jews, there are three shuls. It’s likewise an undeniable element of gay style. The counterpointing of quasi-rabbinical disputation with camp-tinged sarcasm remains one of the central literary achievements of “Angels in America.”

Not that the play or its author is in any way parochial. “I’m not a tribalist,” he says. “I believe absolutely in identity politics as a great strategy for organizing power. I believe that oppression can create distinct cultures.” A brief pause. “At least recognizable cultures. They’re not distinct, because all boundaries are always blurred and are meant to be crossed.” This is an abstract way of explaining something that, throughout his work (including the six major plays, the Spielberg scripts and a steady stream of translations, adaptations, opera libretti and occasional essays), is breathtakingly specific — his ability to cross into the mental, emotional and experiential worlds of people who aren’t like him in a demographic or ideological sense. He isn’t Walt Whitman. He doesn’t mystically contain multitudes. He listens and studies and thinks.

Even in his 60s, his curly hair still dark and his short beard mostly gray, Kushner has a youthful energy that isn’t quite boyish but that might be described as studentlike. Maybe it’s the small round frames of his spectacles, or the iron gray denim jacket over the black T-shirt or the effortless, enthusiastic erudition of his speech, but he seems close to the Platonic ideal of a graduate teaching assistant, a guy you might encounter just uptown in a Columbia University classroom. The one who is a better teacher than the professor, and also much kinder and who is 100 times smarter than you, even though he couldn’t be that much older. Spielberg, recalling the research that went into “Lincoln,” quantified it this way: “I only read a dozen books on Lincoln. Tony read 400.”

KUSHNER HIMSELF WENT to Columbia, where he started as a medieval studies major before switching to English literature. But his New York roots go deeper than that. His maternal grandmother, a former seamstress, once heard Emma Goldman give a speech in Yiddish in Lower Manhattan (a detail that made its way into “Angels in America”). Kushner eventually learned that, around the same time, “she was living in a boardinghouse on St. Marks Place, and she was probably working as a seamstress in the area. This would have been 1911, so she would have been there during the [*Triangle Shirtwaist fire*](https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/100-years-later-examining-the-impact-of-the-triangle-shirtwaist-factory-fire/)” — a grim incident in American labor history that took the lives of 146 mostly female, mostly immigrant garment workers.

This speculation, recounted as we were comparing notes about our left-wing Jewish ancestors, hints at how Kushner thinks about history and geography. The important events we learn about in textbooks — the Triangle fire, the battle to ratify the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States and is central to the plot of “Lincoln”— are never distant from the everyday lives of actual people. Even works of imagination have an obligation to the truth of the past. “Tony doesn’t make up the history,” Tesori says. “The history is there.”

This can get complicated. For instance: “West Side Story.” Spielberg first proposed the project to Kushner over breakfast in 2014 at [*Cafe Luxembourg*](https://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/sunday-night-dinner-cafe-luxembourg-french-frites-on-the-upper-west-side/), a stalwart bistro on West 70th Street. After several years and five drafts, they had run into a wall on a different project, an adaptation of David I. Kertzer’s 1997 book “[*The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/92015/the-kidnapping-of-edgardo-mortara-by-david-ikertzer/),” a grand historical epic about an antisemitic crime perpetrated by the Vatican, set during the Italian Risorgimento. That morning, Spielberg switched tracks, in part because “he likes to scare himself,” Kushner says — and the playwright was, to say the least, a bit startled: “I went home and I said to Mark, ‘You’re not going to believe this. He’s lost his mind. He wants to do ‘West Side Story.’”

The challenge was not only recapturing some of the power of the original Broadway show and of the 1961 movie musical — which Kushner says has “the greatest cultural impact in various ways, except for maybe ‘The Wizard of Oz,’” in cinematic history — but also to right some of their wrongs, notably with respect to casting. The film, directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, earned an Oscar for [*Rita Moreno*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/25/movies/rita-moreno-interview.html) in the supporting role of Anita, but she was the only Puerto Rican member of the main cast: María, the lead, was played by the white actress Natalie Wood. In the decades since, even as the film has remained popular and the stage show a fixture of high school auditoriums, “West Side Story” has come to seem dated, even offensive. Last year, the Puerto Rican writer Carina del Valle Schorske published an op-ed in The New York Times with the headline, “[*Let ‘West Side Story’ and Its Stereotypes Die*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/24/opinion/west-side-story-broadway.html),” in which she argued that “the show’s creators didn’t know, or didn’t seem to care to know, much about their own material.”

“I was aware that there was a degree of criticism among Puerto Rican thinkers and artists about the representation of Puerto Ricans in West Side Story. [But] I didn’t really feel, and I don’t feel, that the musical is racist at all,” Kushner continues. “I would never have done it if I did.” Still, he knows there’s room for improvement: He cited, in particular, the way the lyrics of the anthem “America” express a view of Puerto Rico as a place of unmitigated hardship — “you ugly island, island of tropic diseases” — one that’s based in Jewish immigrants’ (and, potentially, its creators’) own feelings about Eastern Europe, which were shaped by recent memories of poverty and pogroms.

The cast, which features the newcomers Rachel Zegler as María and David Alvarez as Bernardo, is more culturally diverse and younger than before — appropriately, since they portray teenagers who aren’t old enough, as Kushner explains, “to know what death is.” Tony and María, the Romeo and Juliet equivalents, fall in love across boundaries of communal hatred. When Tony takes the life of María’s brother Bernardo (Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet), the young couple’s fate is sealed. Kushner’s book emphasizes that tragedy partly by restoring the original Broadway order of the songs, which the 1961 film had changed. “Tony felt that ‘West Side Story’ had very valuable things to contribute to our understanding of the consequences of racism, xenophobia and poverty,” Spielberg says. “He kept saying that this is going to be more relevant now than it was in 1957. And that turned out to be the case.” And Kushner signed on, in part, because he wanted to explore not only the persistence of intergroup hatred but also the way the story is framed by gentrification and economic striving. In the late 1950s, a ***working-class*** Puerto Rican neighborhood is about to be [*uprooted by the cranes and bulldozers*](https://www.americamagazine.org/arts-culture/2020/02/25/story-behind-lost-neighborhood-where-west-side-story-set) of the ruthless city planner [*Robert Moses*](https://www.nytimes.com/1974/09/15/archives/the-power-broker-if-you-want-to-see-his-monument-look-around.html), disrupting the life of the community to make way for, among other developments, the gleaming Lincoln Center arts complex.

Still, their update isn’t about improving the past, or even casting a judgmental shadow over a beloved classic, which both collaborators grew up on. “I was a good little gay boy,” Kushner says, noting that he and his two siblings (he’s the middle kid) were the children of musicians: His father, William, was a conductor and clarinetist; his mother, Sylvia, played the bassoon. Spielberg, now 74, recalls that the album “was the first musical theater record my parents ever brought home.” Tesori says she remains in awe of the “radicalism” of what Bernstein and his collaborators accomplished. Kushner goes even further, inscribing their gesamtkunstwerk — a heady fusion of ballet, opera, Shakespearean tragedy and nascent youth culture — in a pantheon of revolutionary modernist masterpieces. “You know, like [Igor Stravinsky’s] ‘The Rite of Spring’ [1913], or [Stephen Sondheim’s] ‘Company’ [1970] — these moments when people come up with something brand-new, and there’s some daring, radical energy trapped inside it,” he says. “A lot of [Jean-Luc] Godard. ‘Jaws.’ ‘Close Encounters.’ ‘Taxi Driver.’ ‘Mean Streets.’ ‘Badlands.’ I’m sorry — I’ll stop, but you know these things where somebody’s doing something that’s never been done before and you just can feel it, and it will always be there.”

I do know. There’s one title to add to the list, a seismic event in the history of American theater that I happen to have seen myself.

IN THE EARLY 1990s, when I was in my mid-20s and he was just past 50, my father came out as gay. How that came to pass — the years in the closet and the decision to exit — is his story to tell, not mine. But one of the ways he told it at the time, to the people who loved him, was through “Angels in America.”

When “Millennium Approaches,” the first part of Kushner’s now-canonical “Gay Fantasia on National Themes,” opened on Broadway in 1993, my father started buying tickets, for himself and everyone else. Throughout the rest of the run, as “Millennium” was joined later that year by its companion, “Perestroika,” there would be more tickets. As I recall, we could go back whenever we wanted — my mother, my sister, my wife and I, other friends and relations. In the decades since, I’ve lost track of how many times I went, and stopped trying to calculate my father’s credit card bills. What I’m certain of is that I saw three of the four Roy Cohns in that first New York run (Ron Liebman, Larry Pine and F. Murray Abraham), and that some of the characters (Prior Walter, Belize, Hannah Pitt) now seem like people who have always been in my life. I can’t think of a play I know better.

Or maybe I should say that knows me better. This isn’t a matter of literal identification, though like most people who qualify as complicatedly Jewish and vaguely intellectual, I inevitably see a lot of myself in the character of Louis Ironson, the perpetually guilt-ridden overthinker with a theoretical answer for everything and a practical inability to do what’s right. For a while I wondered if my father, who is not Jewish, saw himself more as the visionary Mayflower descendant Prior Walter or the self-negating Mormon Joe Pitt, but that was the wrong question.

The sense of recognition — which is to say of being recognized — that “Angels in America” has elicited from so many people over the years comes from how clearly and specifically it represents experiences that might have seemed both too intimate and too enormous to contemplate: the devastation of the AIDS pandemic and the politics of gay visibility that emerged in response to it; the cynicism and disenchantment, felt across various American liberal and leftist denominations, of the Reagan years; the weird intimation that, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, history had either reached its terminus or opened a confusing new chapter.

“Angels” was, in part, a re-enchantment of the American story, an attempt, by sheer force of imaginative and rational will, to square a tragic reality with an ideal of human progress. “The play doesn’t describe a time of great triumph,” Kushner said, in an interview for “[*The World Only Spins Forward*](https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/world-only-spins-forward-9781635571769/),” a 2018 oral history of the production. “It describes a time of great terror, beneath the surface of which the seeds of change are beginning to push upward and through.” Capturing that movement required a fusion of political didacticism, unabashed melodrama, stage supernaturalism and sitcom beats. The scale of the play is grand, but the tone is conversational, the epic gestures grounded in the bedrock of the everyday, the soaring themes articulated through arguments among friends, lovers, ex-friends, ex-lovers, enemies and chance acquaintances. Roy Cohn ([*an actual person*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/arts/television/roy-cohn-documentary-hbo.html), a lawyer, fixer and notorious hatchet man for Joseph McCarthy, whom Kushner transformed into a charismatic literary villain on the order of John Milton’s Satan) spars with Belize, a Black nurse, who mixes it up with Louis, an avatar of ambivalence, whose lover Prior Walter literally wrestles with an angel.

Change is visited upon all of them, whether they embrace it or struggle against it. There may have been references, idioms and moments that resonated with my own family history — the entwining of lefty-Jewish and high-goyish styles is a cultural double helix not far removed from my own DNA — but in 1993, the power of “Angels” came from a more primal source. My family was changing. I was changing. The world was changing. And here was a play — a playwright — able to perceive how those changes might be connected, to capture a frequently dissonant, occasionally harmonious counterpoint of personal destinies, collective histories and metaphysical principles in a way that felt like the truth.

“Angels in America,” Kushner’s second full-length play, after “[*A Bright Room Called Day*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/25/theater/a-bright-room-called-day-review.html)” (1985), is one of those early works that define an artist’s legacy no matter what else follows. But as the play itself reminds us, the world only spins forward. In “Caroline, or Change,” completed a decade later, the personal lives of two families in Lake Charles intersect with the public dramas of 1963: the Kennedy assassination; the civil rights movement; Vietnam. The action mostly unfolds on three levels of a typical middle-class house: the upper floors, where the distant clarinetist Stuart Gellman and his wife, Rose Stopnick Gellman, struggle to raise Stuart’s sulking 8-year-old son, Noah; and the basement, where the family’s maid, Caroline Thibodeaux, keeps company with a washing machine, a dryer and a radio (all of whom find occasion to burst into song). Noah’s mother, Betty, a bassoonist, has recently died of cancer, and Rose is his new stepmother, an old friend of Stuart and Betty’s from New York struggling to heal the family and maintain her own equilibrium in alien surroundings. There are some overt parallels with Kushner’s own family: His parents were both musicians. (His mother, Sylvia, died of lung cancer at 67 in 1990, while Kushner was writing the second part of “Angels.”) Noah, a sensitive, hyperarticulate proto-gay child, is a pretty clear authorial surrogate.

The center of the story, though — the person whose capacity and resistance to change the audience comes to feel most deeply — is Caroline, a divorced mother of four contending with her own pain. She is one of Kushner’s most incandescent creations, an operatic heroine whose passions and disappointments take shape in the interplay of performance, music and language. “The music lets you know how uncomfortable you should be feeling,” says [*Sharon D Clarke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/theater/sharon-d-clarke-caroline-or-change.html), the 56-year-old British stage star who plays Caroline with volcanic intensity and heroic restraint in the latest production.

Caroline is a character who courts misunderstanding, whose very presence onstage evokes painful racial tropes. “I knew that when I was writing the show that I was playing around with at least two things that were really scary,” Kushner says. “One is a Black woman in a white maid’s uniform ... and a show that was on a very important level about money, and about Blacks and Jews, and that also can push a lot of triggering things for Jewish people.” The “change” in the title literally refers to what’s left each week of Noah Gellman’s allowance, which Caroline retrieves from his pockets when she does the laundry. Rose tells Caroline to keep the money, both a clumsy attempt to teach the boy a lesson and a way to give Caroline a little something on top of her $30-a-week wages without actually giving her a raise.

“The first time it was on Broadway,” Kushner says, “people would come up to me and say things that made me want to crawl under a seat. ‘Oh, I was raised by a Caroline, too,’ or ‘My best friend was my maid also when I was a little kid.’” Never mind that one of the last things Caroline says to Noah is that they “weren’t never friends,” and that the show works to subvert, at every turn, the sentimental clichés that its premise seems to summon, what Clarke calls the expectation of “natural nurturing.” “It is not about a magical Black person who comes to take care of a bunch of sad white people,” Kushner adds. “It’s about her. It doesn’t end with them. She doesn’t heal them. ... I defend this very heatedly, but it’s good to remember that, when you dabble with these things, you are playing around with images of immense power and force.”

You also land yourself, in 2021, in a swirl of ongoing debates about representation, about how, to what extent — and, for that matter, whether — white artists can tell Black or Latino stories. Criticism has of late been leveled at works like [*Kathryn Bigelow’s “Detroit,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/movies/kathryn-bigelow-mark-boal-detroit-police-brutality.html) a 2017 film about the murder of three Black men during the city’s 1967 race riots; Jeanine Cummins’s 2020 novel, “[*American Dirt*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/17/books/review-american-dirt-jeanine-cummins.html),” about a family’s migration from Mexico to the United States; and the 2019 Best Picture-winning “[*Green Book*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/23/arts/green-book-interracial-friendship.html)” (2018), an interracial buddy movie set in the segregated South. Meanwhile, calls for greater inclusion and representation across the arts have grown more insistent. As Kushner himself admits, “If Steven had come to me in 2020, after George Floyd’s murder, and said, ‘I want to do “West Side Story,” and I want you to write it,’ I would certainly have asked a very different set of questions.”

But he wouldn’t necessarily have turned it down. And even as he acknowledges the history of exclusion and misrepresentation in movies and theater, he is troubled by the impulse to erect hard boundaries and strict rules: “I have a profound disagreement,” he says, “with anyone who says that a person imagining another kind of person, another culture, is an act of violence or supremacism or appropriation. I absolutely believe that one of the great pleasures of art, and one of the great reasons that we have it, is to be able to witness leaps of empathic imagination.”

ONE WAY TO see beyond yourself is to look backward. In a section of his 1940 “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” a key text in the composition of “Angels in America,” the German-Jewish critic Walter Benjamin imagines the angel of history flying into the future with his face “turned toward the past.”

Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

Indeed, Kushner’s best work is frequently retrospective, taking an angel’s-eye view of catastrophe and progress — of terror and darkness and the inklings of change sprouting in the gloom. All of his collaborations with Spielberg have been set in the past, and one of the reasons the scripts take so long to write is that he treats the conventions of period filmmaking with the rigor of a historian.

When it premiered on Broadway, “Angels” already had a rearview quality to it. Up until the very end, when the story moves into the ’90s, the scenes are set in 1985 and ’86, in the midst of an era that already seemed, in 1993, to be fading. The G.O.P. was no longer in the White House. Americans were still dying of AIDS in large numbers, but persistent activism had compelled the political and medical establishments to start paying attention to the epidemic. When I taught the play to a class of college freshmen a few years later, they read it as a period piece, something from “back in the ’80s.” On a higher-brow note, the Yale literary panjandrum Harold Bloom included the play in his idiosyncratic, best-selling “[*The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/23/books/review/how-would-a-book-like-harold-blooms-western-canon-be-received-today.html)” in 1994, a sign that the test of time had already been stood. The [*2003 HBO screen adaptation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/30/arts/television-finally-tv-drama-to-argue-about.html), directed by Mike Nichols, confirmed that impression, identifying the characters with movie stars — Al Pacino as Roy Cohn, Meryl Streep as Ethel Rosenberg and Hannah Pitt — and giving the luster and permanence of cinema to their stories.

But then, in the late 2010s, a few years after Barack Obama draped the National Medal of Arts over Kushner’s neck, “Angels” surged back into the present tense. A [*major revival in 2017*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/05/arts/angels-in-america-national-theater-review.html) galvanized audiences in London and then, the next year, in New York, where the play once again felt undeniably relevant: raw, uncanny and unavoidable. Prior Walter’s closing vow that “we will be citizens” — an assertion of gay visibility that seemed to have been confirmed by the victory of marriage equality in much of the Western world — took on a different inflection against a backdrop of anti-immigrant agitation. Roy Cohn’s protégé, Donald Trump, was president, and lamenting his erstwhile mentor’s absence even as Cohn’s brand of cynical, mendacious, power-obsessed politics moved from behind the scenes into broad daylight, where it proved impervious to shame, mockery or indignant appeals to decency.

“It’s infinitely more frightening now than it was back in the ’80s,” Kushner says of his masterwork today. “Complete with the plague.” Having identified an aspect of our “one single catastrophe,” he is still observing it. What happens now is a new iteration of what was already happening. And so, the 1963 of “Caroline, or Change” is not a version of the past that an audience in 2021 can look at with complacency, congratulating ourselves on how far we’ve come. The first thing you see on the revival’s stage is a Confederate monument, a statue of “the South’s Defender” whose presence signifies the not-even-pastness of the past. And while there are some charming period details — and echoes of the soul, pop and gospel sounds of the time in Tesori’s score — there is nothing dated in the play itself. “Tony is quite prophetic,” Clarke says. When the play transferred to London in 2018 after its original run in Chichester, England, the actress remembers passing by far-right, racist demonstrators on her way to the theater. “After growing up as a Black British child dealing with the National Front and the British National Party,” she says, “now I was coming into work and dealing with Caroline and feeling the eyes of English Defense League guys looking at me, wanting me not to be on the street, and just feeling, ‘We ain’t moved on.’”

During the show’s long pandemic pause between London and Broadway, the United States was convulsed by the Black Lives Matter protests and plunged into another round of arguments on old themes: the relationship between law and order and white supremacy; the persistence of structural racism and racial inequality; the deep historical roots of present-day injustice. The people onstage discuss these same issues, very much in the present tense and with their eyes turned toward an ever-elusive future. Caroline’s teenage daughter, Emmie, is drawn toward activism, and the boldness with which she expresses her opinions worries her mother, who has learned to keep her head down and her thoughts to herself, at least around white people. At a Hanukkah dinner, where Emmie is helping her mother serve latkes to the extended Gellman clan, Emmie is lured into debate with Rose’s father, a dyed-in-the-wool old leftist visiting from New York. He scolds her for being insufficiently militant, and scorns the civil rights movement for being too pacific, too slow-moving, to effect real change.

The ironies and tensions that ripple through the scene — the unexamined privilege of the white radical; Caroline’s unease among the employers who imagine themselves to be her allies; the impatience of the younger generation — will be familiar to anyone whose dinner table has been a site of political struggle. And no resolution to the conflict is offered, even as some small changes are visible. “Secret little tragedies” coexist with “costly, quiet victories.” Those phrases are sung one after the other near the end of the show, providing a musical landing place without settling the big issues. It’s not that the tragedies cancel out the victories but that they are bound up together.

IN ACT III, Scene 2 of “Millennium Approaches,” Louis asks, “Why has democracy succeeded in America?” It’s not exactly a rhetorical question, and Louis’s rambling attempt to answer it isn’t entirely persuasive, certainly not to his friend Belize, a Black, gay nurse who cares for men dying from AIDS-related illnesses, and who possesses an acute sense of the failures and compromises of the American experiment. (Louis’s monologue only ends when Belize, after trying to participate in the debate, finally responds, “POWER to the people! AMEN! ... OH MY GOODNESS! Will you look at the time, I gotta. ...”)

When we meet in Central Park for a second conversation (with no surprise appearances from major filmmakers), I tell Kushner that I think the argument between Louis and Belize — a defense of good intentions and progressive tendencies countered by an insistence on the hard structural facts of exclusion, oppression and hatred — is still ongoing, perhaps with more intensity and harder feelings than before.

We talk about that for a while, and also about how the censoriousness of the left isn’t symmetrical with the authoritarianism of the right, about what Kushner calls the “radical impatience of the young,” about Twitter and TikTok and the early 20th-century German playwright [*Bertolt Brecht*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/14/books/review/bertolt-brecht-collected-poems.html), a hero of Kushner’s, who once said, “Don’t start from the good old things but the bad new ones.” We agree more than we disagree, but the conversation nonetheless has a bracing, combative energy.

Kushner’s stage and screenwriting consists of a great many family quarrels — passionate debates among people who are fundamentally on the same side. Louis and Belize share not only their love of Prior, Louis’s former lover, who they are afraid will die of complications from AIDS, but a wary, queer New York kinship. In “Lincoln,” much of the dramatic conflict takes place within the cabinet, the Congress and the Republican Party, people committed at least in principle to the defense of union and the abolition of slavery. In “Caroline, or Change,” the Southern white supremacist position is represented by that silent statue; the Gellmans are outsiders, some of whom imagine themselves to be on the angelic side of history. Kushner’s ability to call forth those family quarrels within liberalism — their endlessness, their passion — may ultimately be what marks him as a great New York voice. That’s the music of the city, after all. It’s also the music of democracy, the soundtrack to the perpetually embattled American experiment.

Which is in a scary place right now. Eventually, Kushner jokes that Louis’s rhetorical question might have to be amended or scrapped altogether. Democracy may not be succeeding in America, and the grand argument that connects President Lincoln to Caroline Thibodeaux may be heading toward a murderous Jets and Sharks rumble.

Neutrality, for Kushner, is never an option. “I always get annoyed when people talk about theater that preaches to the converted,” he says. “That’s so stupid. Who do you expect to find in your synagogue? ... When I teach playwriting, I always tell my students — and it’s almost impossible to do this particular thing without having some sort of phantom audience in your head — that you should work really hard to populate that audience with people who fundamentally agree with you about certain things. Because if you don’t, then you start from a position of needing to educate them about that which you already know, which I think guarantees didacticism and a certain dullness. The place that you want to start is those great arguments that you have with your friends.”

What you want to do, in other words, is dare to participate in the great historical mistake of your time.

Audio produced by Parin Behrooz.

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PHOTOS: Tony Kushner, photographed at the Astor Place subway station in New York City on Oct. 22, 2021.; Clockwise from top: Sharon D Clarke as Caroline Thibodeaux in the current Broadway revival of “Caroline, or Change”; a portrait, “Tony Kushner With Karl Marx Pillows” (1995), taken by Robert Giard in New York City; Ellen McLaughlin, who played the Angel in U.S. productions of “Angels in America” from the first workshop through the original Broadway run, being fit for her wings; Stephen Spinella as Prior Walter and Joe Mantello as Louis Ironson in the 1993-94 Broadway production of “Angels in America: Millennium Approaches.”; From top: A scene from the 1993-94 Broadway production of “Angels in America: Perestroika,” including, from left, Kathleen Chalfant, Stephen Spinella, Joe Mantello and Jeffrey Wright; a dance number from the new “West Side Story” film, featuring David Alvarez (center) as Bernardo; Kushner and his husband, the writer Mark Harris, at their commitment ceremony in New York City in 2003, four years before they legally married. (PHOTOGRAPHS by SEAN DONNOLA; SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES; PHOTO BY ROBERT GIARD COPYRIGHT ESTATE OF ROBERT GIARD; SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES; PHOTOFEST FROM TOP: JOAN MARCUS/PHOTOFEST © JOAN MARCUS; NIKO TAVERNISE © 2020 TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED; FRED R. CONRAD/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 28, 2023

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[***At Arizona, Truth Without the Consequences; Sports of The Times***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YB8-KHJ1-JBG3-604T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 2, 2020 Monday 19:22 EST

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**Section:** SPORTS; ncaabasketball

**Length:** 1438 words

**Byline:** Michael Powell

**Highlight:** With the Wildcats on course for an N.C.A.A. tournament berth, Coach Sean Miller was happy to sit down for an interview. Until he heard the questions.

**Body**

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TUCSON, Ariz. — The good news came courtesy of a phone call from a University of Arizona spokesman.

Sean Miller, basketball coach of the [*University of Arizona Wildcats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/13/sports/ncaafootball/university-of-arizona-football.html), had agreed to sit for an interview after the game one night this past December. That pleased me as there was so much to discuss. Although his 23rd-ranked team is struggling a touch at 19-10, Miller had gathered the top recruiting class in the nation, five- and four-star athletes everywhere. He was a former coach of the year in the Pac-12 Conference.

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Two years back, federal prosecutors in New York had summoned the news media and promised to split open elite college basketball. Their F.B.I. agents had found [*coaches corrupting the game*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/sports/ncaa-adidas-bribery.html)! [*Players taking payments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/magazine/college-basketball-recruiting-bribery-case-rick-pitino.html)! [*Sneaker company executives complicit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/24/sports/ncaa-basketball-adidas-guilty.html)! Scandal!

Then came the indictments and the trials and the verdicts and the oddest thing happened: Nearly anyone of importance was left untouched. None of the head coaches mentioned in the trumpeting of the discoveries, not Miller of Arizona nor Bill Self of Kansas nor Will Wade of Louisiana State, was indicted. There had been no lack of intriguing evidence. A text message showed Self asked an Adidas executive — who supplied the cash that greased the recruiting gears — if he had sealed a deal for a prized recruit to attend Kansas. Wade was heard on a wiretap saying he made a strong — read: lucrative — offer to a prized recruit and his family.

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Self and the University of Kansas remain under N.C.A.A. investigation, not that it’s hurt much as the team is ranked first in the nation at 26-3.

For his part, Arizona’s Miller has embraced a jut-chinned bellicosity. When a reporter from the ABC television affiliate in Phoenix went to a news conference and persisted in asking about corruption allegations, Miller, whose salary of $2.6 million makes him the highest paid official at his state’s namesake university, glowered.

“No comment,” Miller said. “You can drive back to Phoenix.”

Miller’s defenders in Tucson are legion. I spoke to a dozen fans in the arena before the game on the night of our scheduled sit-down and they offered a collective shrug. Corruption in college hoops? “I’m a very positive person, and I don’t believe the accusations,” said Fran Strubeck, a retiree and longtime fan of the Wildcats. “Sean Miller is far too much of an upstanding man for that.”

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Dawkins is a worldly young fellow, a natty dresser with a short-clipped beard. His testimony at that trial last spring — which I attended — was a revelation, as with disarming candor he [*shined a klieg light*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/03/sports/college-basketball-trial.html) on the play-for-cash business that is major college hoops.

Yes, he told prosecutors, he was a part of a machine that ensured that college players and their families got some cash. Yes, that violated N.C.A.A. regulations, and so what? As a young player’s career blossoms, particularly those from poor and ***working-class*** homes, many hands are extended. “Me, personally, I don’t think there is anything wrong with paying players,” Dawkins said on the witness stand. “They are the only people in college basketball who can’t get paid.”

What, I asked him in this hotel lobby, did he make of Miller’s continued insistence that the Arizona program was clean?

Dawkins smiled faintly. He and Miller have spoken many times about many prospects. He did not hold a grudge; he just would appreciate reciprocal honesty.

“The assistant coach and I got in trouble; that’s fine,” Dawkins told me. “Miller did not get in trouble. That’s also fine, and I’m not mad.

“Now use your position to make change,” he continued. “If Miller and Coach Krzyzewski and John Calipari and all those dudes who make $5 million per year used their power to say to the N.C.A.A., ‘Hey, listen, tomorrow we’re changing and paying players’, it would change the game.”

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Email: [*powellm@nytimes.com*](mailto:powellm@nytimes.com)

PHOTOS: Sean Miller, the basketball coach for the University of Arizona, was linked to payments to recruits in wiretap recordings played at a corruption trial. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CODUTO/GETTY IMAGES) (D1); Christian Dawkins, above, is facing prison for directing money to recruits, but some fans, left, want accountability from senior staff. “The assistant coach and I got in trouble; that’s fine,” he said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KYLE GRILLOT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ALEX GOODLETT/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (D3)

**Load-Date:** October 13, 2021

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[***In Arizona's Recruiting Scandal, No 'Big Fish' Are Caught***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YB8-KK41-JBG3-6079-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 2, 2020 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Sports Desk; Pg. 1; SPORTS OF THE TIMES

**Length:** 1377 words

**Byline:** By Michael Powell

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/sports/ncaabasketball/arizona-sean-miller.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/sports/ncaabasketball/arizona-sean-miller.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Sean Miller, the basketball coach for the University of Arizona, was linked to payments to recruits in wiretap recordings played at a corruption trial. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CODUTO/GETTY IMAGES) (D1)

Christian Dawkins, above, is facing prison for directing money to recruits, but some fans, left, want accountability from senior staff. ''The assistant coach and I got in trouble

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ALEX GOODLETT/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (D3)

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2020

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[***How Joe Biden Talks About a Touchy Subject: His Son***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YV6-2F51-DXY4-X464-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 6, 2020 Wednesday 12:13 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1652 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kaplan and Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** As he runs for president, Mr. Biden has repeatedly faced questions about the overseas business dealings of his son, Hunter Biden. He has mostly kept his cool — but not always.

**Body**

As he runs for president, Mr. Biden has repeatedly faced questions about the overseas business dealings of his son, Hunter Biden. He has mostly kept his cool — but not always.

SPARKS, Nev. — [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) called an octogenarian voter a “damn liar” and challenged him to a push-up contest. He dismissed a heckler as an “idiot.” He commanded the news media to focus on President Trump instead of the overseas business dealings of his son,   [*Hunter Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html), demanding of one reporter, “Ask the right question!”

For months now, Mr. Biden has been confronted on the campaign trail with questions, attacks and misinformation concerning his son — encounters that have taken on a dramatic feel, given the uncertainty of how Mr. Biden will respond. As he began to address the crowd in a high school gym in Sparks this month, a group of protesters held up letters spelling out a taunt that Mr. Trump uses regularly: “Where’s Hunter?” Mr. Biden responded by saying his son “sends his best regards.”

As the Senate impeachment trial of the president continues this week, there is renewed focus in Washington on Hunter Biden, who held a seat on the board of a Ukrainian energy company at a time when his father was vice president and handling diplomacy with the country.

And Mr. Biden is no longer just dealing with questions about his son from hecklers: On Wednesday, he rejected the suggestion that he and his son testify in the trial in a swap for the testimony of current or former Trump administration officials, an idea raised by an attendee at an Iowa campaign event that has been dismissed by congressional Democrats. “This is a constitutional issue, and we’re not going to turn it into a farce, into some kind of political theater,” Mr. Biden said.

For Mr. Biden, the stream of questions about his son touches on a vulnerability for his candidacy and presents a fine line for him to navigate. As a former vice president, he wants to show that he exudes statesmanship but also wants to prove to Democrats desperate to oust Mr. Trump that he has the fortitude and temperament to take on the president.

He can be by turns calm or curt as he stresses that his son committed no wrongdoing in his overseas business dealings. For the most part, he has kept his cool, but he has also been prone to displays of anger.

“It’s a very personal issue,” said Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, who worked closely with Mr. Biden in the Obama administration when he acted as the de facto labor liaison. She said Mr. Trump was “an evil genius on the issue of trying to cut other people up, and cut them up this way.”

She said the “raw emotion” Mr. Biden displayed in response was perfectly understandable. “This is a dad defending his son,” she said.

At issue is an unsubstantiated theory pushed by Mr. Trump that Mr. Biden took action in Ukraine as vice president in order to help his son, who at the time held a lucrative position as a board member of Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian energy company.

Mr. Trump has [*claimed without evidence*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) that Mr. Biden pushed for the ouster of a Ukrainian prosecutor in order to derail an investigation into Burisma.   [*The president’s phone call*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) in July to the Ukrainian president asking him to investigate the activities of the Bidens in that country is at the center of the   [*impeachment charges*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html).

There is no evidence of any illegality by either Biden. But Hunter Biden’s position with Burisma — for which he was [*paid as much as $50,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) in some months —   [*worried*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) some members of President Barack Obama’s administration at the time, and Hunter Biden has since acknowledged that, in hindsight, he exercised “   [*poor judgment*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html)” in taking the position.

The scrutiny of his son could pose a difficult political problem for Mr. Biden: He is presenting himself to voters as a regular guy with ***working-class*** Pennsylvania roots, and his son’s high-paying position with an overseas business could strike some as the type of insider arrangement long familiar in Washington.

And for Democratic primary voters weighing how to defeat Mr. Trump, the fact that they can now picture the general-election playbook the president would use against Mr. Biden carries risk for him, some strategists have warned.

In subtle and overt ways, the issue remains alive on the campaign trail — even among people who are sympathetic to Mr. Biden. In Centerville, Iowa, on Sunday, Mr. Biden’s wife, Jill Biden, was asked whether her family was prepared for an onslaught of attacks. She replied that the Bidens are resilient.

Mr. Biden’s national poll numbers [*have been remarkably steady*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html), including in recent months after the news broke of Mr. Trump’s effort to get Ukraine to investigate the Bidens. Initially, many Democrats worried that Mr. Biden appeared slow and uneven in his response, as he vacillated between lashing the president and trying to change the subject. His advisers, too,   [*were torn in internal deliberations*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) over how to handle the developments.

Mr. Biden eventually settled on a rhythm of insisting that he and his son did nothing wrong, and seeking to bring the attention back to Mr. Trump. All along, Mr. Biden and his surrogates have argued that Mr. Trump’s attacks prove that the president is most concerned about facing Mr. Biden in a general election.

His campaign has also aggressively tried to shape the media narrative on Ukraine. This week, it circulated a memo urging the news media to make clear that Mr. Trump’s claims about Mr. Biden are unfounded. And it [*released a video*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) in which a Biden spokesman, Andrew Bates, walked through Mr. Trump’s claims and explained, sometimes in profane terms, why they were bogus.

“Why is Donald Trump doing this?” Mr. Bates asked. “He knows he can’t beat Joe Biden.”

But questions about Hunter Biden have followed Mr. Biden around the country — from a news conference in Los Angeles to a town hall event in rural Iowa to interviews with reporters aboard his campaign bus. On multiple occasions, he has been interrupted by protesters invoking his son.

Mr. Biden has occasionally flashed his anger and frustration.

“Let’s focus on the problem,” he [*told reporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) this fall, aiming his fire at Mr. Trump. “Focus on this man, what he’s doing, that no president has ever done. No president!” By the end of that declaration, he was practically shouting.

At other times he has responded calmly, as he did in Sparks when the protesters held up letters spelling out “Where’s Hunter?”

“This new Republican Party, I’ve been the object of their attention and affection for a while here,” Mr. Biden said later at that event. “You saw, for example — I understand what it’s like to have my surviving son maligned as he has. I understand what it is to have lies told about me.”

In late December, a succession of hecklers interrupted him at the beginning of a town hall event in Milford, N.H., [*including one who asked*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html), “How much money did you make in Ukraine with your son?”

Mr. Biden responded by saying that he had released 21 years of tax returns. “Your guy hasn’t released one,” he said. “What’s he hiding?” The crowd roared with approval. But as the disruption continued, Mr. Biden offered his own appraisal of the heckler: “He’s an idiot.”

[*A particularly combative moment*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) came in December at a town hall event in New Hampton, Iowa, when an 83-year-old man took issue with Mr. Biden’s age (he is 77) and then proceeded to accuse him, falsely, of having sent his son to work in Ukraine and having sold access to the president.

“You’re a damn liar, man,” Mr. Biden responded in a tense exchange that also included Mr. Biden challenging the man to a push-up contest or an I.Q. contest. At another point, Mr. Biden ordered the man, “Get your words straight, Jack!” (Mr. Biden later said he probably should not have challenged the man to a push-up contest.)

The reaction to that episode varied. In a primary race in which Democratic voters are eager for a candidate who can stand up to Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden’s fiery responses may provide encouragement that he can handle himself in a heated back-and-forth.

“If anybody’s wondering if Joe Biden can take on Donald Trump and is ready for a fight, I’d point you to the video in Iowa,” Symone D. Sanders, a senior adviser for the Biden campaign, said at an event hosted by Politico.

The day after the New Hampton event, Joe Stutler, 56, who came to see Mr. Biden in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, spoke approvingly of his response. As a cautionary tale, Mr. Stutler cited the discredited attacks on John Kerry’s military record made during the 2004 campaign by the group Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, and said he wanted a candidate “that has the gumption to push back.”

“There are folks that are saying, ‘Oh, well, you know, maybe he should have been a little nicer, blah, blah, blah, blah,’” he said. “No. If somebody’s going to talk smack, call him on it.”

But there is also a delicate line between fiery and bellicose. In response to the tense exchange with the Iowa voter, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee said Mr. Biden “became unglued,” adding, “A hallmark of Biden’s 2020 campaign is him losing it on voters and reporters when pressed about Ukraine.”

For his part, Mr. Biden has plenty of critical things to say about Mr. Trump, but he has publicly set a boundary for how he talks about the president. Campaigning in New Hampshire late last month, Mr. Biden noted that he had not “said a thing, and I’m not going to, about his family.”

“The way I was raised,” Mr. Biden said, “you don’t go after somebody’s kids.”

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PHOTO: Joseph R. Biden Jr. has been asked repeatedly on the campaign trail about the overseas business dealings of his son Hunter Biden. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TIFFANY BROWN ANDERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16)

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[***Anna Sui***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63W0-1441-DXY4-X501-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Inspired by the subcultures of New York City's punk and club scenes, the fashion designer has long mixed femme with grunge -- from her signature baby-doll dresses to her riotous layers of fabric and trippy saturated colors -- and created an inimitable aesthetic all her own.

If fashion is a language -- the way we tell others who we are, or who we want to be; the armor and the illusions with which we make our way through the world -- how do we speak when we're alone? If clothes are worn only at home, with no audience beyond the occasional disembodied visitor on a computer screen, do they lose their power to transform; do they become merely clothes?

In the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, with lockdowns in major cities and large in-person gatherings suspended, the fashion industry found itself deprived of perhaps its greatest selling point: spectacle. Gone were the strutting models of the runway shows, the preening of the front row, the nervy snap in the air. Gone, too, was the pageantry of a night on the town, when half the pleasure is wondering who might walk in. Look, look. What are they wearing?

For the New York-based designer Anna Sui, who started her ready-to-wear label in 1981, the isolation was all the more eerie because she has spent her career in pursuit of total immersion. Her work brooks no distance. From the beginning, she repudiated the dominance of '80s-era ''Dynasty''-inspired top-to-bottom glitz and power suits with hulking shoulders, offering instead lithe, unabashedly feminine clothes with a vintage feel and rocker soul, whose carefree but meticulously and densely layered textures and magpie rummages through time and space captured that heady liminal state of the archetypal American teen, the one who, in her bedroom, is trying on different selves -- hippie, preppy, punk, wild child and free spirit -- rebirthing herself again and again. Sui herself is a creature of rebirth: When she came of age in the 1970s, it was in the crucible of New York's downtown underground scene, in nightly pilgrimages to CBGB and Max's Kansas City. The clothes she makes aren't totems of some inaccessibly glamorous life but an invitation: to join the party, to be one of those girls, careless of time and most alive in a crowd, in the crush and heave of friends and strangers who by the end of the night will also be friends. How could a virtual version of this fantasy ever compete with the real thing? But last winter this is what Sui was consigned to -- presenting her collections at a remove, via digital upload, in lieu of the assault on the senses that is a runway show.

And so she made of her frustration a metaphor. The video for her fall 2021 collection, posted online last February, is a homage to Joe Massot's cult 1968 British film ''Wonderwall.'' Part comedy, part hallucination, the movie opens on a lonely scientist returning home to a dim, cramped apartment, accustomed if not wholly reconciled to the dinginess of his days. That night, a little hole appears in the wall of his study, marked like a radiant X from the light leaking in. Through it he spies his neighbor, a model played in sultry pantomime by the British actress Jane Birkin. Suddenly the dead butterflies he's kept as specimens in a box take flight, and he in turn awakens to this private cinema, entranced not just by Birkin's beauty but by her world: her louche parties, her polychrome armoire painted with flames and rainbow rays. In a frenzy, the scientist makes more and more holes in the wall until he has a constellation of tiny vistas aglow, each a promise of a more vivid -- a more lived -- life.

In Sui's video, the models walk out of a similarly psychedelic armoire (created by the backdrop artist Sarah Oliphant, a frequent Sui collaborator), wearing fuzzy cow-print bucket hats and windowpane tweed; ombré plaids and wide-eyed peacocks printed on crushed velvet; faux suede pants with frayed hems like fringed lampshades and boy-cut jeans hand-painted with clouds and stars; a high-necked blouse of geometric eyelets with slouchy sleeves and ruffled wrists, tucked into a sequin dress; a Lurex stripe knit vest that drops nearly to the floor, over matching thigh-hugging shorts and a ruched mesh top of flowers large and small; an almost bridal ivory caftan in prairie-proper lace. But unlike Birkin, these women know that they're being watched. They're a parade; they demand to be seen. And they stare at us, the voyeurs locked out on the other side of the screen, daring us to break through. Even in isolation, in the cloister of a closed set, Sui's clothes are commanding. They still have power.

In early May, I meet Sui, who is in her 60s, in her showroom above West 38th Street, in the garment district of Manhattan. The showroom is a world unto itself, of scarlet floors, lavender walls, replica Tiffany stained glass and flea market furniture lacquered black. Here and there are papier-mâché dolly heads with flapper haircuts, heavy eyelashes and heart-shaped lips. Inspired by the work of the Italian American artist Gemma Taccogna, they were handmade by Sui and a few friends to decorate her first boutique, which opened in 1992 on Greene Street in SoHo when it still had a touch of grime and offered haven to artists and creatures of the night. (In 2015, startled to find Greene Street subsumed in luxury, with Louis Vuitton as a neighbor, Sui moved the store two blocks south to the less forbidding Broome Street.)

Sui belongs in and to this room, a small, arresting figure in playfully elegant dark floral separates and chunky acrylic rings that invoke both toys and candy. It is hushed; we speak from behind masks. She is gracious but pensive, as if feeling the weight of this moment in time. ''We have this beautiful showroom, and nobody has been here for more than a year,'' she says.

At the start of the pandemic, she found herself spending whole days alone in her home in Greenwich Village. (She is unmarried; her father died in 2013 and her mother and two brothers live in Michigan, where she grew up.) Her apartment, which her close friend the fashion photographer Steven Meisel has described as her Narnia, was a lovely place to be marooned, a fantastical time warp of some of her favorite eras, with chinoiserie and elements of French Rococo, Victoriana, Art Deco and midcentury modern. Nevertheless, she was concerned by her inertia and began setting tasks for herself, like cooking, ''which I never did,'' she says. Her mom gave her lessons over the phone, and eventually Sui got comfortable enough in the kitchen to invite friends over for a soup whose recipe required simmering a whole chicken -- only to belatedly realize she'd forgotten to remove the paper bag of giblets tucked inside the bird. ''That was the end of my chicken soup,'' she says ruefully.

The clothes Sui makes are an invitation: to join the party, to be one of those girls, careless of time and most alive in a crowd, in the crush and heave of friends and strangers who by the end of the night will also be friends.

There is a quietude to Sui, a gentle modesty and meditative intelligence at odds with the flamboyant, imperious stereotype of the fashion designer. Known for her warmth and kindness -- she asks after my family and seems genuinely delighted when I tell her about my 13-year-old daughter's obsessive passion for interior design -- she is famously beloved in an industry where such qualities can be rare. At the same time, and perhaps for the same reason, she is often underestimated despite the breadth of her influence, which is manifest on both the runway and the street, from recent work by male couturiers who are heralded for playing with schoolgirl tropes and shape-shifting flirtation (as if Sui hadn't been doing that all along) to the guileless, happy heyday of Coachella, the California music festival replete with latter-day bohemians, beading and macramé, and to the young collectors on the thrifting app Depop, buying and selling vintage Anna Sui tees.

As has historically been the case for women, Sui's oeuvre is often viewed as an extension of herself, autobiography rather than art. That it is, in fact, rooted in autobiography is precisely what gives it much of its exuberance and verve. Sui imagined herself into being and out of a girlhood on the periphery in Dearborn, Mich., a predominantly ***working-class*** suburb of Detroit, in the '50s and '60s. At first, Sui's parents were the only people of Asian descent in their neighborhood (their rarity then can be attributed in part to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which effectively banned almost all Chinese from entering the United States until its repeal in 1943). Her father, Paul Wai Kong Sui, a merchant's son born in Tahiti and educated in China, with roots in Shenzhen in the southeast, and her mother, Grace Kwang Chi Fang, a politician's daughter whose lineage goes back to the 17th- and 18th-century writer-philosopher Fang Bao -- a champion of the so-called ancient prose style, stripped of flourish and ornamentation -- met in Paris as students (Paul in engineering, Grace in painting) and made their way to America after the 1949 Chinese Communist Revolution. There they raised three children, with Anna the lone daughter between two boys: Bobby, the eldest, who as a teen chaperoned his little sister to rock shows in Detroit, and Eddy, the youngest.

In later decades, the rising number of Asians in Michigan would bring a measure of unease to the state, but Sui says she never felt like she was stigmatized for being Chinese, although, she adds, ''I also didn't accept that stigma.'' She was, after all, an American girl and, like millions of American girls, she was unable to resist the siren call of Barbie, introduced to the market in 1959 with a penchant for pink, specifically Pantone 219 C, whose formula is 88 percent red. Then, Sui says, ''I discovered purple'' -- and with it, ambiguity. To this day, she's drawn to the bruise of blue that belies the kittenish blush, the tension between the girl next door and the demimondaine, who are not so far apart, who may even be one. There is a shadow even in Sui's most euphoric work, a hint of haze, of a plotline gone awry, but also its converse, the gleam at the end of the tunnel, the neon scrawl in the dark. ''It's a refusal to be beaten and bowed by the way things are,'' the fashion editor Tim Blanks writes in ''The World of Anna Sui,'' published in conjunction with the first major retrospective of her work, in 2017, at the Fashion and Textile Museum in London. ''I can always find that silver lining,'' Sui says. ''I'm kind of the ultimate optimist.''

For Sui, optimism and artistry lie in excess -- what Andrew Bolton, the chief curator of the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, describes in his 2010 book, ''Anna Sui,'' as her ''riotous cacophony,'' a piling on of fabrics, patterns, prints and every possible accessory. ''I'm more camp American than intellectual Chinese,'' Sui says. Which is not to say frivolous: Camp may be over the top -- ''the love of the exaggerated, the 'off,' of things being what they are not,'' as the cultural critic Susan Sontag writes in her 1964 essay ''Notes on 'Camp''' -- but at heart, it's in earnest. Artifice can be a kind of truth.

Part of the potency of Sui's vision is that she never forgets how much fantasy is anchored in yearning and anticipation. In the slink of silk and the slap of biker leather over lace, the fishnets disappearing into loafers and the beanies with swinging yarn braids, the promenade of humble gingham and workman's corduroy alongside glimmer and plush, she channels a nostalgia for the maximalism of adolescent desire -- to escape the most fearsome of fates (being ordinary); to discover the real life happening elsewhere. Of her suburban childhood, Sui says, ''That was my dreaming period.'' Her portal was Life magazine, which she scoured for pictures of models and proxy extraterrestrials like Twiggy and Baby Jane Holzer, who wasn't just a pretty face but a protégée of the artist Andy Warhol, another of Sui's idols.

Sui knew she wanted to make clothes, to outfit a life like those of the girl-women she idolized, but how? She'd read about two graduates of the Parsons School of Design in Manhattan who had moved to Paris and persuaded Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton to help them open their own boutique. This wasn't a story of striking out on your own -- one of the designers was the stepdaughter of the prominent fashion photographer Irving Penn -- but Sui, whose parents wanted her to be a doctor, took it as such. She found the address for Parsons on a back page of another girl's copy of Seventeen and wrote to the college to request a catalog. When she saw the list of requirements for applying, she signed up for art classes and studied harder, to boost her G.P.A. After she got in, she swanned around high school with a Vogue tucked under her arm.

But once at Parsons, she was put off by its elitism. She and her classmates in fashion design were advised not to mingle with students in other departments (illustration, graphic design, environmental design). ''Going to the lunchroom was forbidden,'' she recalls. ''So of course, what did I do?'' The transgression paid off: In the cafeteria, Meisel, a fellow student who would go on to become one of fashion's most virtuosic and revered photographers, waved her over. ''Do you ever go out?'' she remembers him asking; she replied, ''I'd like to.'' They made a plan to meet at a club, and when she showed up with a boyfriend, Meisel gave him a once-over, deemed him not up to Sui's standard and whispered, ''Get rid of the guy.''

After that, they met almost every night, Meisel's friends -- now hers -- gathering first at her railroad apartment on East 53rd Street and Third Avenue, a block then known for the young hustlers who cooled their heels on the stoops, eyeing potential tricks, and immortalized in a 1976 song by the Ramones (who were also in Sui's circle: In 1981, Joey Ramone posed for a rooftop photo shoot in a rakish buccaneer ensemble she'd designed). Sui had pasted leopard wallpaper in the kitchen and painted the living room red and the bedroom black, with floors and windows to match. ''At that point, none of us had any money, but we figured out if you go to a club at 9 p.m., you don't have to pay the cover yet,'' she says. ''So we'd go and hang out in the bathroom and wait until people started arriving at 11.''

Sui speaks wonderingly of the role of serendipity in her life, and the chance encounters that drew her into the orbit of artists and rockers, although I can see that this framing comes from modesty, since the narrative could easily be flipped -- they were drawn to her. Stories like hers testify to the peculiar Zelig-like symbiosis of that era in downtown New York. Meisel's best friend joined a band fronted by Patti Smith. The designer Norma Kamali, famed for her parachute silk jumpsuits, lived next door on East 53rd and sublet her apartment to the proto-punk rockers the New York Dolls, who invited Sui to their rehearsals and introduced her to David Bowie, first on vinyl, then in the flesh when she spotted him at one of their shows.

This was the milieu in which Sui began her life as an adult, dazzling and askew, all the brighter for its dark undertow. She staked a claim to CBGB and Max's Kansas City, nightly besieged by the famous, the soon-to-be famous and people who just looked famous, which was enough -- and soon became one of them herself, wearing the highest heels, mixing motorcycle zippers and boho-style petticoats, thrift-shop finds and Saint Laurent, the handle of her handbag tucked ''in the crook of her arm, and with her arm held up high,'' Meisel recalls in the introduction to Bolton's book. This was the template for the designs to come: As Meisel writes, ''You see Anna's life when you see her clothing.''

Yet she wasn't wholly lost in the moment. She was insider and outsider at once, of the crowd even as she observed it, stowing away images in her mind -- an archivist of the ephemeral. She took what she needed from the scene, all the while keeping an eye on her purse.

At Parsons, Sui rejected the primacy of couture. She was never drawn to $50-a-yard cashmere. ''I'd rather pick out a gingham and think, 'How do I make this look like a million bucks?''' she says. She wanted to make clothes destined for the clubs -- that her friends could wear. So in the early '70s she dropped out of school after taking a job at Charlie's Girls, a line of hippie-ish crochet vests and shepherdess shorts. (The prodigal student was later forgiven: Parsons awarded Sui an honorary doctorate in 2017.) After that label closed, she did stints at a series of sportswear companies, including the all-American Bobbie Brooks.

In 1981, Sui sold her first pieces to Macy's and Bloomingdale's at a trade show. When her boss found out about her side hustle, he fired her. For close to a decade, she worked out of her apartment -- she was now living downtown -- and soon her supermodel friends were walking into fittings for Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel wearing her flirty, defiantly girlish frocks. (''Who is this Anna?'' Lagerfeld reportedly asked.) In the front row at a 1990 Jean Paul Gaultier runway show in Paris, Madonna -- whom Sui had met through Meisel, after he shot the cover of the 1984 album ''Like a Virgin'' -- shucked off her coat to reveal one of Sui's baby-doll dresses, black with a mesh overlay. The exposure gave Sui the courage to mount her own runway show the following year.

Sui took girlishness seriously because she saw the hope in it, a kind of faith in all that could be. Still, being a girl has always been a complicated proposition, and her shows recognized that ambiguity. It wasn't clear if her models were women playing at being girls or vice versa, these cheerleaders in pompom hats and padlock-and-key belts, drifty-eyed hippie chicks caught between Woodstock and the Manson murders (events that took place only a week apart in the summer of 1969) and, most iconic of all, the giggling trinity of supermodels -- Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista and Christy Turlington -- who posed together for the finale of Sui's spring 1994 runway show in angel-whisper organza baby dolls and tiaras fountaining feathers from their heads. (The three looks were featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2019 ''Camp: Notes on Fashion'' exhibition, and one, with a pink fluffy stole, appears in the museum's current show, ''In America: A Lexicon of Fashion.'')

''You never know if it's a good girl or a bad girl,'' Sui says, speaking of the looks she presented; it could also be her mantra. Nowhere is this juxtaposition of innocence and corruption more manifest than that signature baby doll. The silhouette dates to early 20th-century gestures toward female emancipation, freed of corset or confining waist. As a term, however, ''baby doll'' didn't gain traction until World War II, when the U.S. War Production Board issued restrictions on fabric usage -- soldiers needed cloth for uniforms -- and the New York lingerie designer Sylvia Pedlar is said to have adapted by improvising a brief nightgown that barely touched the thighs. Cristóbal Balenciaga and Hubert de Givenchy took up the idea in the late '50s, making elegant, loosefitting trapeze dresses out of crepe de Chine, satin and shantung, but the baby doll as we know it today is street fashion, belonging to the women grunge rockers and riot grrrls of the early '90s, who co-opted the shape as part of the kinderwhore aesthetic, at once mocking conventional emblems of objectified femininity and making of them a strength.

Sui's versions of the same decade were more ethereal but no less subversive in intent. And she set a precedent. The form in its good-girl, bad-girl incarnation continues to haunt the runway: In 2013, Hedi Slimane at Saint Laurent produced a baby-doll dress priced at $68,000, and last year, before lockdown, Alessandro Michele of Gucci sent male models down the runway in Peter Pan-collared baby dolls of their own.

Conventional wisdom tells us that a true artist is not beholden to the demands of commerce. In fashion, this means that only the couturier, endowed with seemingly unlimited freedom and funds by a corporate overlord, can be considered an auteur, producing garments so expensive that few people ever actually wear them; whose very wearability may be beside the point. Sui, who focuses on ready-to-wear and has always maintained her independence, lacks the security of a major financial backer, relying on the market to support her vision. Yet in many ways she's been able to work like a couturier, following her whims. For each season, she does obsessive research (''the most exciting thing,'' she says) and revels in details, like the melancholy lines from the Victorian-era poet Christina Rossetti written on the walls of the scientist's apartment in ''Wonderwall.''

The latitude Sui has is in part because of canny business decisions: In the '90s, she jury-rigged a global empire out of fragrance, fashion and cosmetics license agreements in Japan and Germany, brokering unorthodox cross-distribution partnerships. But on a more fundamental level, she's simply attuned to the mind of a teenage girl and that exultant, never-forgotten tumult of feeling you get when you emerge on the sunny side of broody, recklessly, shamelessly sure of yourself and ready for the world. Most years, she says, she's sold 85 percent of what she shows on the runway.

At times her own popularity has unnerved her. ''If everybody gave me a good review, I'd think, 'Oh my God, I'm too commercial. I sold out. I've got to shake it up,''' she says. In 1992, she dispatched Campbell down the catwalk in studded suede backless chaps, with a temporary butterfly tattoo on one cheek. Five years later, she asked the swaggering guitarist Dave Navarro of Jane's Addiction and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, with his devil's goatee and black halos of eyeliner, to make a cameo on the runway. ''He said, 'Sure, if it involves lingerie,''' she recalls. And so she outfitted him in a royal purple camisole and leather pants that, mid-strut, he pushed down just enough to show off the lace panties beneath.

Sui tends to return to familiar themes, but her world of references is so capacious, she might never exhaust it. She's also constantly adding new, shining strands, be it the spirit of the Wiener Werkstätte, the early 20th-century Austrian artisans' cooperative that sought to exalt the everyday through the power of design -- which served as an inspiration for her resort 2022 collection, unveiled in June -- or the collage of images delivered by Instagram, leading her to collaborations with young artists like the Seattle illustrator and muralist Stevie Shao and the Brooklyn jewelry designer Bonnie Robbins of Daisy Chains, both of whom she met simply by DMing them. Blanks has described Sui as a ''cultural archaeologist,'' sifting through the sediment of other eras, taking scraps from history and turning them into clothes relevant to how we live now. I'd go further and call her an anthropologist, a scholar of pop culture's many tribes. She thrives on the cross-pollination of ideas, whether across time and borders or among her peers, and her oeuvre is perhaps best understood as an ongoing collaboration with the larger world -- the eddying of human life, on the streets and around her.

New Yorkers are a possessive lot, adamant that no one knows the city like we do. We live in a perpetual state of mourning, each generation in thrall to the map of private memories. The city as Sui knew it in the '70s and '80s was New York at its most romantic, or most romanticized -- all stumble-down streets, desperate and ecstatic, sucker punch and glory, dirty, dangerous and blessedly cheap. ''It was a dismal time,'' she says, and in the next breath recalls friends with giant lofts in the then-ghost town of TriBeCa, ''walk-ups with no hot water and the toilet was in the middle of the room, but you paid $200.'' She witnessed the theatricality and hedonism of glam rock and disco give way to the iconoclasm of punk, and then punk taking its rejection of authority to its logical conclusion to reinvent itself as the avant-garde, until the specter of AIDS in the '80s cruelly brought the curtains down, the great beauties and wits, artists and impresarios who had lent the night their luster disappearing one by one from their booths in the clubs, and with them the splendor that had defined her New York. Sui has never been overtly political in her work, but the joyfulness of her clothes may in part be a refusal to accept so much loss. Sometimes we need fantasy to survive.

By the mid-90s the city had lost its pulse and become tamed, a safe playground for neoliberalism's victors. ''We'll never have that underground scene again,'' Sui says. For her, the city's starkest change followed the market crash of 2008, when the economy rebounded and went into overdrive. ''Everything became so much more corporate,'' she says. ''Suddenly stores weren't owned by a family anymore.'' (Her own team remains tightly knit: The head of the sample room, Akiko Mamitsuka, and the director of production, Heidi Poon, have been with Sui for 32 years; the acclaimed makeup artist Pat McGrath and hairstylist Garren have created looks for her runway shows for more than two decades, Garren since her first show in 1991; her brother Bobby is C.F.O.; and her three nieces, the sisters Chase and Jeannie Sui Wonders and their cousin Isabelle Sui, all in their 20s, work in various roles, offering their skills in filmmaking, photography, modeling, illustration and accessory design.)

The subcultures that once inspired Sui still exist. But they can no longer thrive in the heart of the city, and the very idea of cool -- that you've stumbled on something singular, that you have knowledge and access, by virtue of whatever dark alleys or obscure paths you wander, that others don't and never will -- has become a full-throttle capitalist pursuit, with the distance ever shrinking between cult object and mainstream commodity. This presents a particular problem in fashion, since being fashionable often means spurning the mainstream -- keeping one step ahead, glancing back with a wink, defying others to follow. ''In the beginning you're a bit like, 'Never, that's so ugly,''' Sui says. ''Then it's like, 'Wait a minute.''' Once there was time, in the months it took for a collection to reach stores, to mull things over and accommodate change; to incubate desire; to submit. Now, with the immediacy of the internet, the waiting period is gone, and the quicker we are gratified, the more impatient we become. Demand is always for the next thing, to the point, Sui says, that ''newness is a kind of conformity.''

The day after our interview, Sui invites me to take a trip to Manhattan's Neue Galerie, one of her favorite retreats, but it is still closed because of the pandemic. So instead, we head downtown to the Whitney Museum of American Art to check out the exhibition ''Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950-2019.'' Sui has long championed independent artisans, especially those of New York's century-old garment district, whose livelihoods have been threatened by ever-accelerating mechanization and rising rents, and whose work in close quarters made them particularly vulnerable to Covid-19. In the '50s, almost all apparel sold in America was made in America, much of it in that blunt, unhandsome neighborhood halfway between Midtown and Chelsea, a patch of blocks less than a square mile, crammed daily with hundreds of thousands of workers. Today, only around 5,000 people still ply their trades there, and almost all of the country's clothing is imported.

Sui has come to see the Los Angeles-based artist Liza Lou's ''Kitchen'' (1991-96): a simulacrum of an archetypal American kitchen, built to scale out of plywood and papier-mâché and resplendently unutilitarian. Every surface -- from the dirty dishes half drowned in the sink, in what looks like a roiling sea, to a pie half-popped out of the oven, studded with cherries -- is covered in millions of tiny sparkling beads, tweezed and set one at a time, by hand, over a span of five years. It is garish yet reverent, a compulsive beautification that evokes the intricacy of church mosaics, at once a paean to domesticity and a demolishment of it, reminding us of the labor behind the shimmer.

Sui lingers here for a while, wanting to see the installation from every angle. Afterward, we head downstairs and sit outside, Sui's face alert, alive to the runway of the street, the city slowly flickering back to life. In the middle of a sentence, she breaks off and her voice drops to a whisper: ''Look at those shoes.'' An androgynous figure, all in black, is gliding past on platform boots with clinging calves and a high, ouroboroslike heel. We both peer after the boots, longingly, as they vanish up the stairs to the High Line.

During New York's pandemic lockdown, one of the things that kept Sui going was a series of nostalgic sketches, titled ''Places I'd Rather Be,'' posted to Instagram by her friend the celebrated stylist Bill Mullen. His idylls include Studio 54, with Bianca Jagger in a crimson beret; the late, lamented East Village bodega and egg-cream landmark Gem Spa, with the New York Dolls posing out front; and the uptown cafe Serendipity 3, with Sui, under a Tiffany lamp, of course, wearing an aquamarine fur coat accessorized with a bird in matching aquamarine (Mullen's pet parrot, Morticia). ''They're gorgeous,'' Sui says of the pictures. ''But -- ''

For a moment, she is silent. Then she says, ''I'd rather be there.''

Hair: Garren and Thom Priano for R+Co Bleu. Makeup: Jonathan Wu and Jen Evans. Production: Hens Tooth Productions. Digital tech: Nick Ventura. Lighting tech: Sebastiano Arpaia

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/14/t-magazine/anna-sui.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/14/t-magazine/anna-sui.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS

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[***Sanders Looks to Topple Warren in Her Home State***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y9X-3CJ1-JBG3-61DB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

A victory in Massachusetts would not just give Mr. Sanders a significant share of the state’s 91 delegates but also inflict a symbolic blow to his closest ideological rival.

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html) landed in   [*Elizabeth Warren*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html)’s home state on Friday night, stood before thousands of screaming fans and asked them to help him win it.

As Ms. Warren was campaigning hundreds of miles away in South Carolina, where voting in the state’s primary began Saturday morning, Mr. Sanders had departed for parts north, hoping to extinguish her candidacy — or at least deliver a stinging embarrassment.

With the race entering a critical phase, Mr. Sanders is looking ahead to big states like California and Texas to amass an insurmountable delegate lead next Tuesday, while also setting his sights on less glossy, but still delegate-rich states including Virginia and North Carolina.

Yet a victory in Massachusetts, where Ms. Warren was first elected to the Senate in 2012 and re-elected in 2018, would not only give Mr. Sanders, the senator from neighboring Vermont, a significant share of the state’s 91 delegates but also inflict a symbolic blow to his closest ideological rival, as he pushes to categorically establish himself as the standard-bearer of the liberal left.

His rally in Springfield, and one in Boston on Saturday, are clear signs of his take-no-prisoners approach to his 2020 campaign. If that means beating Ms. Warren in Massachusetts, so be it.

“People don’t get their own states walled off for them,” said Jeff Weaver, a top strategist to Mr. Sanders.

Mr. Sanders has similarly added an event in Minnesota, the home state of Senator [*Amy Klobuchar*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html), though her continued presence in the race is largely viewed as bleeding votes from other Sanders rivals rather than hurting him.

In a show of force Mr. Sanders rallied more than 13,000 people at the Boston Common on Saturday, according to his campaign. Referring to himself as “a U.S. Senator from your neighbor up north,” he expressed confidence in his ability to win Massachusetts.

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Still, there are causes for concern and even Mr. Kennedy was cautious about forecasting an outright victory. “No doubt she’ll put forth a strong showing,” he said.

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Perhaps the biggest challenge for Ms. Warren is that the race features such a fractured field. The UMass Lowell poll showed five candidates with double-digit support, including [*Pete Buttigieg*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html), the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., former Vice President   [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html) and   [*Michael R. Bloomberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/bernie-sanders.html), the self-funding former mayor of New York City. Ms. Klobuchar was at 9 percent, as well.

“One-on-one — if it was Elizabeth Warren vs. Bernie Sanders in the primary — she’d win comfortably,” said Barney Frank, the former Massachusetts representative. “But with the way it’s worked out, it’s not going to be that easy for her. Again, because she has all this competition for votes.”

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“Having a presidential candidate from your state is not a novelty if you live in Massachusetts,” he said. “You’re talking John Kerry, Michael Dukakis, Ted Kennedy, Mitt Romney. The thrill is gone with that.”

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PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders deployed about a dozen staff members, set up four field offices and had 1,500 volunteer events in Massachusetts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2020

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[***Sanders Works to Topple Warren in Her Home State***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YB3-HJS1-JBG3-611Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 1, 2020 Sunday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 29

**Length:** 1517 words

**Byline:** By Sydney Ember and Shane Goldmacher

**Body**

A victory in Massachusetts would not just give Mr. Sanders a significant share of the state's 91 delegates but also inflict a symbolic blow to his closest ideological rival.

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. -- Bernie Sanders landed in Elizabeth Warren's home state on Friday night, stood before thousands of screaming fans and asked them to help him win it.

As Ms. Warren was campaigning hundreds of miles away in South Carolina, where voting in the state's primary began Saturday morning, Mr. Sanders had departed for parts north, hoping to extinguish her candidacy -- or at least deliver a stinging embarrassment.

With the race entering a critical phase, Mr. Sanders is looking ahead to big states like California and Texas to amass an insurmountable delegate lead next Tuesday, while also setting his sights on less glossy, but still delegate-rich states including Virginia and North Carolina.

Yet a victory in Massachusetts, where Ms. Warren was first elected to the Senate in 2012 and re-elected in 2018, would not only give Mr. Sanders, the senator from neighboring Vermont, a significant share of the state's 91 delegates but also inflict a symbolic blow to his closest ideological rival, as he pushes to categorically establish himself as the standard-bearer of the liberal left.

His rally in Springfield, and one in Boston on Saturday, are clear signs of his take-no-prisoners approach to his 2020 campaign. If that means beating Ms. Warren in Massachusetts, so be it.

''People don't get their own states walled off for them,'' said Jeff Weaver, a top strategist to Mr. Sanders.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders deployed about a dozen staff members, set up four field offices and had 1,500 volunteer events in Massachusetts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2020

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[***Should Biden Emphasize Race or Class or Both or None of the Above?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62J8-FN91-JBG3-63PF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3208 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** A new paper heats up an old debate.

**Body**

Should the Democratic Party focus on race or class when trying to build support for new initiatives and — perhaps equally important — when seeking to achieve a durable Election Day majority?

The publication on April 26 of a scholarly paper, “[*Racial Equality Frames and Public Policy Support*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/),” has stirred up a hornet’s nest among Democratic strategists and analysts.

The authors, [*Micah English*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/) and [*Joshua L. Kalla*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), who are both political scientists at Yale, warned proponents of liberal legislative proposals that

Despite increasing awareness of racial inequities and a greater use of progressive race framing by Democratic elites, linking public policies to race is detrimental for support of those policies.

The English-Kalla paper infuriated critics who are involved in the [*Race-Class Narrative Project*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/).

The founder of the project, [*Ian Haney López*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), a law professor at Berkeley and one of the chairmen of the AFL-CIO’s Advisory Council on Racial and Economic Justice, vigorously disputes the English-Kalla thesis. In his view, “Powerful elites exploit social divisions, so no matter what our race, color or ethnicity, our best future requires building cross-racial solidarity.”

In an email, López wrote me that the English and Kalla study

seems to confirm a conclusion common among Democratic strategists since at least 1970: Democrats can maximize support among whites, without losing too much enthusiasm from voters of color, by running silent on racial justice while emphasizing class issues of concern to all racial groups. Since at least 2017, this conclusion is demonstrably wrong.

English and Kalla, for their part, surveyed 5,081 adults and asked them about six policies: increasing the minimum wage to $15; forgiving $50,000 in student loan debt; affordable housing; the Green New Deal; Medicare for All; decriminalizing marijuana and erasing prior convictions.

Participants in the survey were randomly assigned to read about these policies in a “race, class, or a class plus race frame,” English and Kalla write.

Those given information about housing policy in a “race frame” read:

A century of housing and land use policies denied Black households access to homeownership and neighborhood opportunities offered to white households. These racially discriminatory housing policies have combined to profoundly disadvantage Black households, with lasting, intergenerational impact. These intergenerational impacts go a long way toward explaining the racial disparities we see today in wealth, income and educational outcomes for Black Americans.

Those assigned to read about housing policy in a “class frame” were shown this:

Housing is the largest single expense for the average American, accounting for a third of their income. Many ***working-class***, middle-class, and working poor Americans spend over half their pay on shelter. Twenty-one million American families — over a sixth of the United States — are considered cost-burdened, paying more for rent than they can afford. These families are paying so much in rent that they are considered at elevated risk of homelessness.

The “race and class group” read a version combining both race and class themes.

English and Kalla found that

While among Democrats both the class and the class plus race frames cause statistically significant increases in policy support, statistically indistinguishable from each other — among Republicans the class plus race frame causes a statistically significant decrease in policy support. While the race frame also has a negative effect among Republicans, it is not statistically significant.

Among independents — a key swing group both in elections and in determining the levels of support for public policies — English and Kalla found “positive effects from the class frame and negative effects from both the race and class plus race frames.”

A late February survey of 1,551 likely voters by [*Vox and Data for Progress*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/) produced similar results. Half the sample was asked whether it would support or oppose zoning for multiple-family housing based on the argument that

It’s a matter of racial justice. Single-family zoning requirements lock in America’s system of racial segregation, blocking Black Americans from pursuing economic opportunity and the American dream of homeownership.

The other half of the sample read that supporters of multiple-family zoning

say that this will drive economic growth as more people will be able to move to high opportunity regions with good jobs and will allow more Americans the opportunity to get affordable housing on their own, making it easier to start families.

The voters to whom the racial justice message was given were split, 44 in support, 43 in opposition, while those who were given the economic growth argument supported multiple-family zoning 47-36.

After being exposed to the economic growth message, Democrats were supportive 63-25, but less so after the racial justice message, 56-28. Republicans were opposed after hearing either message, but less so in the case of economic growth, 35-50, compared to racial justice 31-60.

López founded the Race-Class Narrative Project along with [*Anat Shenker-Osorio*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), a California-based communications consultant, and [*Heather McGhee*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), a former president of Demos, a liberal think tank and author of the recent book, “[*The Sum of Us*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/): What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together.”

I asked López about the English-Kalla paper. He was forthright in his emailed reply:

As my work and that of others demonstrates, the most potent political message today is one that foregrounds combating intentional divide-and-conquer racial politics by building a multiracial coalition among all racial groups. This frame performs more strongly than a class-only frame as well as a racial justice frame. It is also the sole liberal frame that consistently beats Republican dog whistling.

Shenker-Osorio faulted English and Kalla’s work for being “unsurprising”:

If you tell someone to support a policy because it will benefit a group they’re not part of, and that doesn’t work as well as telling them to support a policy they perceive will help them — this isn’t exactly shocking.

Testing the effectiveness of messages on controversial issues, Shenker-Osorio continued, has to be done in the context of dealing with the claims of the opposition:

Politics isn’t solitaire and so in order for our attempts to persuade conflicted voters to work, they must also act as a rebuttal to what these voters hear — incessantly — from our opposition. A class-only message about, say, minimum wage, held up against a drumbeat of “immigrants are taking your jobs” or racially-coded caricatures of who is in minimum wage jobs doesn’t cut through. Neither does a message about affordable housing credits or food stamps when the opposition will just keep hammering home the notion of “lazy people” wanting “handouts.”

Unless Democrats explicitly address race, Shenker-Osorio wrote, millions of whites, flooded with Republican messages demonizing minorities, will continue to be

primed to view government as taking from “hard working people” (coded as white) and handing it to “undeserving people” (coded as Black and brown). If we do not contend with this basic fact — and today’s unrelenting race baiting from the right — then Nixon’s “Southern Strategy” will simply continue to haunt us. In other words, if the left chooses to say nothing about race, the race conversation doesn’t simply end. The only thing voters hear about the topic are the lies the right peddles to keep us from joining together to demand true progressive solutions.

The Race-Class Narrative Project, which has conducted extensive surveys and focus groups, came to the [*conclusion*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/)that race could effectively be addressed in carefully worded messages.

For instance:

No matter where we come from or what our color, most of us work hard for our families. But today, certain politicians and their greedy lobbyists hurt everyone by handing kickbacks to the rich, defunding our schools, and threatening our seniors with cuts to Medicare and Social Security. Then they turn around and point the finger for our hard times at poor families, Black people, and new immigrants. We need to join together with people from all walks of life to fight for our future, just like we won better wages, safer workplaces, and civil rights in our past.

The race-class project also tested the efficacy of a class only message — “We need elected leaders who will reject the divide and conquer tactics of their opponents and put the interests of working people first” — versus a race and class message that simply added the phrase “whether we are white, Black or brown” to read:

We need elected leaders who will reject the divide and conquer tactics of their opponents and put the interests of working people first, whether we are white, Black or brown.

The result? The race and class message did substantially better than the class alone message among both base Democratic voters and persuadable voters. Base Democrats approved of the class message 79-16 and approved of the race and class message 86-11. Fewer persuadable voters approved of the class message than disapproved, 42-45, while more approved than disapproved of the race and class message, 48-41.

I asked Shenker-Osorio how well she thinks Biden is doing when he talks about race:

It’s definitely hit or miss. Sometimes he uses what I shorthand as “dependent clause” messaging where you name race after you’ve laid out an economic problem or offered an economic solution — e.g. “It’s getting harder for people to make ends meet, and this impacts [X Group] in particular.” This doesn’t work. For many people of color, this feels like race is an afterthought. For many whites, it feels like a non sequitur.

At other times, Shenker-Osorio continued, Biden

does what we’ve seen work: begin by naming a shared value with deliberate reference to race, describe the problem as one of deliberate division or racial scapegoating, and then close with how the policy he is pushing will mean better well-being or justice or freedom for all working people.

In partial support of the Shenker-Osorio critique, [*Jake Grumbach*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), a political scientist at the University of Washington, emailed me to say:

The English and Kalla survey experiment was done in a particular context that did not include Republican messaging, media coverage and imagery, and other content that “real-world” politics cannot escape. If Republicans use race, whether through dog whistles or more overt racism, then it might be the case that Democratic “class only” appeals will fall flat as voters infer racial content even when Democrats don’t mention race.

Another “important piece of context,” Grumbach wrote, “is that Biden is an older white man, which, research suggests, makes his policy appeals sound more moderate to voters than the actually more moderate Obama proposals.”

There is no consensus in the world of liberal advocacy on the most effective approach to racial issues.

[*Celinda Lake*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), the Democratic pollster who conducted much of the research for the Race-Class Narrative Project, was outspoken in her criticism of the English-Kalla paper, writing in an email: “There are huge flaws in their study and therefore in their conclusions. No candidate would run on what they put forward as the ‘race’ message.”

When I asked Kalla about these criticisms, he countered:

The messages that we tested did come from the real world of politics. Our messages came from actual politicians. As we note in the paper: “To improve the external validity of these findings, we adapted the frames from real-world political sources.”

In addition, Kalla noted that the paper does not say “that ‘we cannot talk about race.’ We do not make such a blanket claim.”

Micah English described the larger purpose of her work with Kalla in an email:

We try to make two contributions to this literature in political science. First, much of the prior literature has shown how Republicans’ use of race-based messaging has been effective at decreasing support for the welfare state and other social safety net policies. We are studying something different. We are studying Democrats’ use of race-based messaging to promote their policies.

And, she continued, “we are studying a different period in American politics. Many believe that in the past few years, and especially the past year, [*racial attitudes*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/) have [*shifted*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/)leftward.” But, she wrote, “our results show that, despite these ostensible leftward shifts in racial attitudes, voters do not seem to be very positively inclined to race-neutral policies when they are described with a racial justice lens.”

In the past, English wrote, scholars studied how Republicans used racial frames to “undermine support for redistributive policies, but now Democrats have started doing the same thing — with, according to our data, the same effects.”

[*Nicholas Valentino*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), a political scientist at the University of Michigan, said the English-Kalla study “comports with a long line of work in political psychology demonstrating a gap between a widely shared principle of racial equity and resistance to policies intended to achieve it.”

From the standpoint of rhetorical strategy, Valentino continued,

there is a trade-off between persuasion and mobilization. Highlighting racial injustice may mobilize nonwhite constituencies and racially progressive whites to engage in politics more forcefully.

That anger could be crucial in motivating voters “to overcome the obstacles to voting being pursued by the G.O.P. in many states,” Valentino noted. “The downside is that policy support for racial redistribution among moderates may decline.”

Martin Gilens, a political scientist at U.C.L.A., praised English and Kalla, but was quick to add caveats:

It’s a very nice paper and solid work. Their findings suggest that even in this time of heightened public concern with racial inequities, Democrats are not likely to boost public support for progressive policies by framing them as advancing racial equality.

That said, Gilens added, “I would consider the English and Kalla results to be sobering but not, in themselves, a strong argument for Democrats to turn away from appeals to racial justice.”

[*Elizabeth Suhay*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/), a political scientist at American University, captured the complexity of the debate.

“English and Kalla’s findings are compelling,” she wrote by email:

Their findings are consonant with a great deal of conventional wisdom in political science. We would expect race-focused messaging to decrease support for a policy not only because of racism in the public, but also because many Americans perceive policies directed at specific population subgroups as unfair.

Suhay also noted: “Don’t forget self-interest. A longstanding definition of politics is that it’s a contest over ‘who gets what, where, when and how.’ ”

Suhay’s caveat:

Broad public approval is not the only thing politicians care about. From a strategic perspective, they must also be responsive to activists, interest groups, and donors. Given the intense focus on racial justice among some of the most active Democrats — including but not exclusively African Americans — Biden needs to not only deliver on this issue but also to tell people about it.

Suhay went on:

They face intense demands from Democratic activists for both policy and symbolic actions that address racial inequity; however, these actions do threaten to turn off many whites, especially those without a college degree.

Biden, Suhay argues, “seems to have no choice but to find some middle road: focusing communication on how his policies benefit most Americans while also, more infrequently but unmistakably, making clear his commitment to racial equality” and, she added, “he seems to be walking the tightrope well.”

This debate is not one that lends itself to resolution. Biden and his Democratic colleagues are cross-pressured in ways that date back at least to the early 1960s, in the run-up to the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

At the same time, the terrain undergoes constant change. Hispanics have eclipsed African-Americans as the nation’s largest minority, and there are signs of a slight but significant shift to the right among both groups. White Democrats have moved sharply to the left, but it’s not clear if that shift reflects an enduring commitment, a temporary response to the Trump phenomenon, or a reflection of social desirability bias. At the same time, generally speaking, residents of red states continue to fall behind as economic growth remains concentrated in deep blue regions, further adding to the volatility of voting and elections.

All of these trends, along with others I have written about in other columns, have an impact on the dynamics of race, which remain at the core of American politics. In these circumstances, the ideal form of Democratic messaging is a moving target, changing shape and substance across geography and time.

The race-versus-class debate within the Democratic Party is, perhaps, inevitable for a party with roots in the politics of the New Deal, politics that have evolved in recent decades from a preoccupation with social stratification — class — into a focus on the more specific rights of the once-marginalized: racial and ethnic minorities, women and the LGBT community.

A granular overview of racial attitudes emerges from looking at the instability of the public opinion trend line on the Black Lives Matter movement, as [*documented by the polling firm Civiqs*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/).

In December 2019, according to Civiqs data, more voters, 42 percent, supported BLM than opposed it, 33 percent. Immediately after the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, support shot up to 59 percent and opposition dropped to 29 percent. Since then, the difference between support and opposition has drifted back to the earlier levels, with the most recent measure on April 25 at 48 in support of BLM, with 40 opposed.

Last year, two psychologists, [*Steven O. Roberts*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/) of Stanford and [*Michael T. Rizzo*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/) of N.Y.U., published a trenchant paper, “[*The Psychology of American Racism*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/),” declaring that “American racism is alive and well.” They based their claim on

a large body of classic and contemporary research across multiple areas of psychology (e.g., cognitive, developmental, social), as well as the broader social sciences (e.g., sociology, communication studies, public policy), and humanities (e.g., critical race studies, history, philosophy).

In fact, there is a much more accessible source to make this case: the 2020 election results. Donald Trump, running explicitly as the candidate of white America, won [*74,216,154 votes*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/). The fact that Trump was narrowly defeated in the Electoral College remains the salient point, but the burden falls on the Democratic Party to keep Trump and the Republican Party he continues to [*lord over*](https://osf.io/tdkf3/) from regaining the White House and Congress.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jim Goldberg and Alessandra Sanguinetti/Magnum Photos FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Why This Trump-Leaning Corner of South Carolina Has the Jitters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y9N-1581-DXY4-X0BB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 28, 2020 Friday 14:40 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1546 words

**Byline:** Richard Fausset and Audra Melton

**Highlight:** The Upstate region, which has been transformed by global trade, is frustrated by the president’s tariffs and wary of a Democratic front-runner who embraces democratic socialism.

**Body**

The Upstate region, which has been transformed by global trade, is frustrated by the president’s tariffs and wary of a Democratic front-runner who embraces democratic socialism.

GREENVILLE, S.C. — At a luncheon this week where 600 business leaders gathered to celebrate the billions of dollars that global trade has pumped into their local economy, John Lummus, head of an economic development group, rattled off just a few of the successes: a 16 percent increase in total jobs over the last two decades, a 67 percent increase in per capita personal income.

For emphasis, Mr. Lummus, director of the Upstate SC Alliance, played a video clip of the pro wrestler Ric Flair, who let loose with [*his trademark triumphant exclamation*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw): “Woo!”

Indeed, this was by many measures a woo-worthy moment for the northwest corner of South Carolina, which global trade has transformed into an industrial powerhouse.

When the region — a conservative swath of 10 counties known as the Upstate — saw its textile industry dry up at the end of the last century, its leaders responded by aggressively marketing itself to foreign manufacturers as a cheap, practical place to do business.

The marketing campaign paid off.

Over the last two decades, more than 500 international companies have been lured to the region, including BMW, the undisputed game changer. The German auto giant opened for business a quarter-century ago; multiple expansions have made its sprawling, high-tech facility just outside of Spartanburg, S.C., the largest BMW factory in the world, employing 11,000 workers.

Other companies followed, like Bosch, Fujifilm and Adidas, and as they did, the region found itself edging toward something like cosmopolitanism, increasingly defined by global corporate executives, a booming arts scene and gobs of money.

The downtowns of the Upstate’s largest cities went from boarded up to spruced up. Downtown Greenville became downright fancy, with the hallmarks of a thriving city like food trucks and miles of bike trails.

Yet as voters statewide prepare to vote in Saturday’s Democratic primary, there is also a palpable undercurrent of anxiety among the Upstate’s executive class — and beyond.

Though the Upstate region, still defined by evangelical religion and social conservatism, and its 1.5 million residents heavily supported President Trump in the 2016 election, his tariffs and trade disputes with China — South Carolina’s No. 1 export market — and Germany have given business leaders three years of intermittent dyspepsia.

Some are now doubly worried that the Democratic front-runner is Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, [*an outspoken critic of globalization*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw).

Mr. Trump may have smacked the Upstate’s golden goose around a little, but Mr. Sanders “takes the ax to the head of the golden goose and cuts it off,” said David Britt, a Spartanburg County commissioner and vice president and general manager of Tindall Corporation, a locally based maker of precast construction components.

“We won’t only be changed,” he continued, “we’ll be dead.”

The dramatic metamorphosis of the Upstate has gone hand-in-hand with South Carolina’s broader strategy of marketing itself to international businesses as a “gateway” to the North American market — one “strategically located halfway between New York and Miami,” as the state’s [*promotional materials*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw) put it.

A succession of conservative governors has also emphasized South Carolina’s decidedly inhospitable climate for unions. Nikki Haley, the state’s former governor, used to talk about “[*kicking*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw)” organized labor with her high heels. And while that has been attractive to some big corporations based in the Upstate, not all boats have been lifted. The state ranks 43rd in median household income, and is   [*one of the nation’s 10 poorest*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw).

That helps explain why a candidate like Mr. Sanders, and his brand of democratic socialism, may do well here in the primary despite a statewide unemployment rate below 3 percent.

In Greenville, expensive condos, nice restaurants and downtown buzz are driving up prices in historically black and ***working-class*** neighborhoods like the West End, said the Rev. Patrick Tuttle of St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church.

“They’re simply being kicked out,” he said. “Maids, Family Dollar cashiers, people who set the tables and pour the water glasses at the many new hotels and banquet facilities, many of which were built in the last five years.”

Mr. Sanders’s campaign recently posted a video to Twitter decrying the gentrification pressure in Greenville, which is about 63 percent white and where the average household income is [*nearly $83,000*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw).

The Rev. Stacey D. Mills of Mountain View Baptist Church, which is historically African-American, was among the black activists who appeared in the video. In an interview this week, Pastor Mills said that he was not against free trade — but that he wants to see the local education system help train those who have been left out.

“My problem is not that we have free trade, or that we’re participating globally,” he said. “My problem is that the people I serve aren’t having access to that as the same rates as others. And where Greenville is concerned, we’re seeing an influx of people from outside of this region that are faring far better than those who are native to the region.”

Erin Turner, the marketing director for Greenville’s Metropolitan Arts Council, takes a similar position.

On Tuesday evening after work, Ms. Turner, 28, was sipping red wine with her colleagues at their headquarters on Augusta Street, a handsome thoroughfare lined with boutiques and performance spaces. Alan Ethridge, the executive director, spoke of the tremendous financial support that has helped the arts scene flourish here, and pointed out the children’s theater being built across the street.

When the talk turned to politics, Ms. Turner, who is white, said that she and most of her peers would vote for Mr. Sanders on Saturday. She liked the idea of universal health care, she said. And she thought Mr. Sanders would treat the golden goose just fine.

“I don’t think he’s against the good parts of capitalism,” she said of Mr. Sanders.

Down the street, the marquee of the Warehouse Theatre advertised its production of the gender-bending rock-and-roll drama “Hedwig and the Angry Inch”; a Wednesday night forum there [*promised to explore*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw) “the history and culture of drag in Greenville.”

In a city perhaps best known nationally as the home to Bob Jones University, a bastion of the religious right that [*once banned interracial dating*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw), it was certainly a statement.

At the arts council and elsewhere, residents wondered whether opening the Upstate region to global commerce has nudged it toward a new social liberalism. Those who market the city seem eager to iron out the rougher right-wing edges of the place.

In the “performing arts” section of the hip, colorful official visitor’s guide, Bob Jones University, which [*teaches creationism*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sSofokAIiw), is listed as “the largest private liberal-arts university in South Carolina” — a description that would probably not turn off a Darwin-embracing industrialist from Frankfurt.

And for some nonconformists, Greenville has become the kind of Southern city that one runs to — and not away from.

“It’s comfortable,” said Crystal Taylor, 40, a gay, married woman who moved to town about a decade ago. “We came from Darlington. It’s way worse there.”

If that augurs a leftward shift in Upstate politics, no one expects it to come before November.

Despite his trade stance, Mr. Trump is widely expected to win the region, which he handily took four years ago. Last month, he ameliorated some fears among the business class by signing an initial trade deal with China.

Mr. Britt, the Spartanburg County councilman and business executive, said his business continued to be affected by Mr. Trump’s steel tariffs. Still, Mr. Britt, a Republican, said he would never think of changing parties. Instead, he has been writing letters to Mr. Trump, inviting him to visit the Upstate and see for himself what free trade has achieved.

Even in a place so transformed by the powerful hand of commerce, there are, for some, yet more powerful forces that guide their political decisions.

Jerod Tafta was hanging out this week at Gather GVL, a new open-air food hall on Augusta Street. Bearded, tattooed and decked out in a flannel shirt and red-orange vest, Mr. Tafta, 31, would have fit in at any newfangled food hall in any large American city.

Mr. Tafta talked about his years working in some of Greenville’s hippest restaurants, his stint in sales, his recent layoff, and the fact that his family recently went on Medicaid because his wife is expecting a child next month. He said he was optimistic that he would eventually find new work in the Upstate.

In a long conversation, he also talked about his recently rekindled Christian faith, and how the Republicans, in general, seemed more closely aligned with that faith. He talked about voting for Mr. Trump in 2016, and how he had not ruled out voting for him again.

“Some core, fundamental beliefs,” he said, “I can’t get away from.”

PHOTO: As part of the booming Upstate region, Greenville, S.C., has a thriving downtown area with attractions like a new open-air food hall. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AUDRA MELTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20)

**Load-Date:** February 29, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Andy Warhol, Superstar; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6017-9BR1-DXY4-X310-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 3, 2020 Sunday 13:25 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1687 words

**Byline:** Luc Sante

**Highlight:** Blake Gopnik’s mammoth biography traces the life and career of the original King of Pop.

**Body**

WARHOL

By Blake Gopnik

Andy [*Warhol*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/24/theater/andy-gus-van-sant-warhol-review.html) was not just an artist; he was a giant evolving sensibility that angled itself through a great portion of the late 20th century, absorbing everything in its passage and altering it, often permanently. He affected painting, film, fashion, partygoing, record-keeping, packaging, branding and a very large manifest of items that fall under the heading of self-presentation. His corpus includes everything from major paintings and epic films to Mylar balloons and generic business portraits to monosyllabic interview responses and the standard italic font that became wholly identified with his rubber-stamped signature. You can’t really appreciate anything Warhol did without having some idea of its place in his evolution. Consequently Warhol, more than even van Gogh or Picasso, endures not as a mere collection of works but as a narrative, one that gets more complex the more closely you look.

Conveying that narrative, coherently and comprehensively, was the task faced by the art critic Blake Gopnik as author of the first true doorstop biography (there have been earlier efforts, but none on this scale). He had to account for how a shy, “effeminate” child of Carpathian immigrants in ***working-class*** Pittsburgh came to occupy a central position in American and even global culture, while reinventing his artistic practice again and again, often radically, from the 1950s to his death at 58 in 1987, and also turning his unprepossessing self — his bad skin, his passive and recessive personality, the toupees and wigs he wore to disguise his baldness, even his lifelong abject loneliness — into an internationally recognized and respected trademark.

Having interviewed more than 260 people and consulted some 100,000 documents, Gopnik succeeds in establishing the chronology and tracing the fine lines of Warhol’s many succeeding interests, decisions, departures, whims and relationships of all sorts. Few artists’ biographies can have recorded so many changes — in style, stance and social milieu — occurring often on a week-to-week basis for some 35 years, amounting to a density of information more akin to, say, military history. We will all find our favorite Warhol avatar, of the hundreds on offer, somewhere within these pages. Mine is 33-year-old teeny-bopper Andy, who worked accompanied by loud pop 45s played on repeat. After the artist Ray Johnson visited the studio, he wrote in a letter the phrase “We saw his recent paintings of Liz Taylor as we heard ‘That Little Town Flirt’” over and over for a page and a half. That period didn’t last long — Warhol was never much attuned to music, despite his association with the [*Velvet Underground*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/29/books/review/lou-reed-tlc-al-green-music-biographies.html) — but it resonates because his paintings of the early ’60s share many qualities with the girl-group records of the same era: brass, grit, immediacy, not to mention the impression that both are at once throwaways and for the ages.

Gopnik excels at disentangling the strands of the narrative and correcting common lore. Even someone who has been actively aware of Warhol’s career for more than half a century may forget that there were four separate Factories over 25 years and that the many famous superstars did not all coincide; Edie Sedgwick did not share a timeline with Candy Darling. (There is a way in which Warhol’s career resembles successive iterations of a long-running TV franchise.) Gopnik’s patient chronology brings a sense of proportion to the outline of the life. The Campbell’s Soup cans lasted only a couple of years (with commercial reprises much later), and Warhol’s body of work as a film director a mere five. By the same token, there are many generally overlooked pockets of his career, such as “Raid the Icebox” in 1969, when he compiled a touring collection of 404 objects from the storage rooms at the museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, including “closetfuls of antique shoes”; such retrieval shows are common now, but were unknown then. And Gopnik gives the “Time Capsules” their due. These boxes (1974-87, and perhaps beyond), into which were thrown everything from junk mail to reels of film, were a natural progression from such earlier cataloging projects as the “Screen Tests,” but represented a leap of conceptual logic nevertheless. “‘It’ll all get so simple that everything will be art,’ Warhol had predicted back in 1966. … Now he was finally making that prediction come true in full.”

Gopnik’s research turns up many testimonials by people who witnessed Warhol dropping his mask of robotic blankness and revealing the discerning intelligence within (few direct quotes, sadly), and he presses the case for Warhol remaining an “Old Radical” even while superficially resembling a “New Conservative.” That does not prevent him from second-guessing his subject at every turn. He makes Warhol seem vaguely imitative for incorporating silk-screening into his paintings in 1962 — a pioneering move, although he himself never made the claim — because an employee of his alma mater was doing something like that in Andy’s student days. He chides Warhol for his failures artistic and otherwise, and suggests he is being a conformist when he catches him coinciding with a general trend. He even scores Warhol for the angular signature logo of Interview magazine, “the scrawl of an artist too confident, too busy and above all too important to take care of his writing.”

There are several odd features to the book. Gopnik seems to think that too many proper names will confuse the reader, so that quotes are attributed to “one famous critic,” “a convert to Warhol,” “a hotshot young writer in New York,” “one of the founders of Dada,” “the same British critic who coined the term ‘Pop Art’” and so on, like so many blind items. When Gopnik cites a “book of French film theory that had links to his Marilyns. … Its inside front cover lined up 10 images of a gun-toting Marlon Brando that were perfectly echoed in Warhol’s line of Elvises,” he is obviously describing Edgar Morin’s “The Stars,” so why not just say so in the text? (The book’s [*endnotes*](https://www.harpercollins.com/warhol/) appear online and in its e-book edition.)

“Warhol” throws off such mixed signals that it is difficult to determine what kind of reader it was intended for. It is a 900-page brick that evinces much studious research, and yet it is pitched as if it were a feature in a newsmagazine, or as if its readers were primarily serial consumers of celebrity bios. Not expecting the reader to identify Marcel Duchamp or Robert Rauschenberg on first appearance may be standard practice, but Gopnik doesn’t trust you’ll remember them from one time to the next. As a consequence, only a handful of people ever appear without epithets. Any elder who exerted an influence on Warhol will have his or her name preceded by “hero”; contemporaries are tagged as “friend” or “rival.” Gopnik has no confidence in the reader’s attention span, so recapitulations are constant; every point is made, made again, recast slightly, made yet again. Any foreshadowing that occurs early in Warhol’s life — or its reverse, the echoing that happens later on — is liberally signposted, no matter how tenuous the connection. In 1967, a book by Warhol is published by Random House, “a big, mainstream firm recently acquired by RCA, itself a major 1950s client of Warhol’s that had also acquired Hallmark, the patron for Warhol’s Christmas tree.”

The writing is often lazy and reductive in ways that suggest the book is meant for immediate consumption rather than durability. Someone is said to be “blown away” by a nightclub; a gallery is described as “über-hip.” Gopnik writes, “It’s not clear how entertaining the plotless [*‘Lonesome Cowboys’*](https://www.nytimes.com/1969/05/06/archives/film-lonesome-warholtwo-theaters-showing-latest-a-western.html) could really have been for a moviegoing public accustomed to the adventures of Herbie the Love Bug” — could he have chosen a movie less likely to share an audience with a Warhol production? He hits the soup-can air horn again and again: “Presley … had a genuine importance that made him more Cordon Bleu than Campbell’s Soup”; Warhol “was canned soup, not eel bisque finished with smoked cotton candy.” And when Gopnik takes off on a literary flight, the vessel is likely to crash: “At his best, Warhol didn’t think outside the box. He thought outside any artistic universe whose laws would allow boxes to exist.”

All those things make the book much more difficult to read than it ought to be. Warhol made extraordinary work and led an equally extraordinary, unprecedented life that carried with it a significant budget of pain. He bridged the chasm between high and low as no one had before, and repeatedly found new ways to tilt the balance between art and life. He initiated or anticipated so many ways that people would later use communication and imagery that he could pass as having predicted Twitter and Instagram. He was gay, and presented himself to the world as a metonym of gayness (which did not prevent him from employing women as beards at times, nor his mother from trying to get him married off). He realized the social art that many had merely theorized before him; wherever he was, he turned his milieu into a spectacle, with every routine occurrence qualifying as an action, accruing documentation as it went. He played with the idea of business art as a kind of parody, then found himself ensnared in the real thing and dragged ever further into its depths, to the point of signing limited-edition prints of Superman, Mickey Mouse, Santa Claus and other characters who by then were sub-Pop. Gopnik gives the reader all the pertinent facts of Warhol’s life, yet his ever-present lecturer’s whiteboard obscures all but the occasional fugitive glimpse of Warhol’s soul.

Luc Sante’s new collection, “Maybe the People Would Be the Times,” will be published in September. He teaches at Bard. WARHOL By Blake Gopnik Illustrated. 961 pp. Ecco/HarperCollins Publishers. $45.

PHOTOS: Patriotic Andy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KAREN BYSTEDT); Warhol with some of his work in his studio on East 47th Street, 1964. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS, INC., VIA ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; SAM FALK, VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***South Carolina Feels the Jitters Over Its Future***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y9W-4YP1-JBG3-601X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 29, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1533 words

**Byline:** By Richard Fausset and Audra Melton

**Body**

The Upstate region, which has been transformed by global trade, is frustrated by the president's tariffs and wary of a Democratic front-runner who embraces democratic socialism.

GREENVILLE, S.C. -- At a luncheon this week where 600 business leaders gathered to celebrate the billions of dollars that global trade has pumped into their local economy, John Lummus, head of an economic development group, rattled off just a few of the successes: a 16 percent increase in total jobs over the last two decades, a 67 percent increase in per capita personal income.

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That helps explain why a candidate like Mr. Sanders, and his brand of democratic socialism, may do well here in the primary despite a statewide unemployment rate below 3 percent.

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Even in a place so transformed by the powerful hand of commerce, there are, for some, yet more powerful forces that guide their political decisions.

Jerod Tafta was hanging out this week at Gather GVL, a new open-air food hall on Augusta Street. Bearded, tattooed and decked out in a flannel shirt and red-orange vest, Mr. Tafta, 31, would have fit in at any newfangled food hall in any large American city.

Mr. Tafta talked about his years working in some of Greenville's hippest restaurants, his stint in sales, his recent layoff, and the fact that his family recently went on Medicaid because his wife is expecting a child next month. He said he was optimistic that he would eventually find new work in the Upstate.

In a long conversation, he also talked about his recently rekindled Christian faith, and how the Republicans, in general, seemed more closely aligned with that faith. He talked about voting for Mr. Trump in 2016, and how he had not ruled out voting for him again.

''Some core, fundamental beliefs,'' he said, ''I can't get away from.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/28/us/south-carolina-primary-greenville.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/28/us/south-carolina-primary-greenville.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: As part of the booming Upstate region, Greenville, S.C., has a thriving downtown area with attractions like a new open-air food hall. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AUDRA MELTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20)

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[***Radical, Exciting And Relevant, Especially Now***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60KX-FS81-JBG3-62CT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section TW; Column 0; SpecialSections; Pg. 8

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**Byline:** By Jessica Bennett and Veronica Chambers

**Body**

''This is not a boring history of nagging spinsters; it is a badass history of revolution staged by political geniuses.''

-- Kate Clarke Lemay, historian and curator at the National Portrait Gallery

As the story is often told, the path to women's suffrage began in Seneca Falls, N.Y., in 1848 and ended with the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which granted all women in America the right to vote. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were the leaders of the movement.

And yet we are learning, slowly, that that telling of the story is wildly incomplete. It was not only Stanton and Anthony who led the movement for voting rights in this country; women of color, ***working-class*** and immigrant women also paved the way.

The movement did not emerge out of nowhere in 1848; it had roots in the movement to abolish slavery. Many early suffragists were active in that fight.

And the 19th Amendment was not an end but a beginning: After its ratification, it would take four more years for many Native Americans even to be considered citizens with voting rights in this country, and it would take even longer for some Asian-Americans. Many Black women, while possessing suffrage on paper, could not freely exercise that right until 1965, when the Voting Rights Act banned racially discriminatory voting practices, such as literacy tests. Disenfranchisement at the polls, of course, still continues today.

As America nears the centennial of the 19th Amendment next month, The New York Times gathered seven scholars, authors and thinkers for a discussion about misconceptions, the women left out of the history books and just how much of what suffragists were fighting for is still relevant today.

Let's start by overturning some of the common misconceptions about suffrage. Where should we begin?

Susan Ware, historian: Can I raise an issue from the outset? It's about terms. ''Suffragette'' is a fraught term. American suffragists never used it, only their detractors.

Elaine Weiss, journalist and author: The term was made up by a journalist in The Daily Mail in London. It was 1906, and he was making fun of the more militant suffragists in the U.K. -- and so he used the diminutive ''-ette'' to belittle them. But then they turned around, as often happens in a movement, and they decided to own it. They said, ''OK, you're going to call us suffragettes? We're going to call ourselves suffragettes.'' But that was in Britain. The American press began using it too, just because it was cute, and expressed the disdain most American newspapers held for the movement. It's easier to say, I have to admit it.

Kate Clarke Lemay, historian and curator: I find it maddening that only two women's names -- Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton -- are consistently taught in core history classes. Suffrage was a movement of thousands of women -- including African-American women, who are often left completely out of the record.

Sally Roesch Wagner, historian: A lot of my work centers on the influence of Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois, women on the movement. These are Indigenous women who, for a thousand years, had political voice in their sovereign nations -- and continue to. The early suffragists knew Indigenous women had authority over their lives in their nations that U.S. women didn't: rights to their bodies, their possessions and their children, safety and political voice. Having this model showed some suffragists that equality was possible.

Adele Logan Alexander, historian: Can I add something about time? Clearly this year's centennial is a significant landmark, but it's not the only date we should be thinking of. The federal Voting Rights Act, which became law in 1965, was incredibly important too, because the passage of that legislation supposedly guaranteed the franchise to African-American women.

Lemay: I think the way we talk about suffrage needs attention. It is so often described in a way that makes it seem kind of dowdy and dour -- whereas, in fact, it is exciting and radical. Women staged one of the longest social reform movements in the history of the United States. This is not a boring history of nagging spinsters; it is a badass history of revolution staged by political geniuses. I think that because they were women, people have hesitated to credit them as such.

Those who learned anything about the suffrage movement in school probably learned about a handful of white, middle-class women from the Northeast. Who are some other leaders we should know?

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, historian: I think of women like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart, Harriet Forten Purvis and Ida B. Wells-Barnett -- African-American suffragists and abolitionists who advocated for the right to vote even when spurned by their white counterparts. These women were as committed to suffrage as their white counterparts, and yet their voices were often marginalized or silenced.

Alexander: I would say it is not one person nor one event, but the scarcely recorded efforts of anonymous women of all races, educational and economic levels who, for decades, talked with neighbors, held meetings, challenged their fathers, sons, husbands and employers -- often putting themselves in physical and economic jeopardy to do so. They are the unknown heroes of the movement.

Ware: I really hope we will get a lot more books and articles on what I call ''queering the suffrage movement.'' I think that as we diversify our understanding of the movement, making a place for queer people is really important.

Tina Cassidy, author: It's interesting, one of the first questions I always get about Alice Paul is, ''Was she married?'' Because people want to know, how did she have the time to dedicate her entire life to this? Was she gay? And I think that the truth is we don't actually know the answer to that.

Weiss: She didn't have a personal life!

Cassidy: Right, the fight for equality was her entire life. Also, she may have been asexual. I think there's so much more contemporary language now to describe this.

Lemay: Also, being single was empowering for many of these women. A lot of them chose to be single.

Weiss: Legally, it was a better thing to do.

Lemay: For a long time, once a woman got married, she suddenly lost her rights. She lost her right to sign a contract, to own property, to sue -- and in the rare case of divorce, she didn't have rights to her own children. Which is mind-boggling to us today!

Cassidy: Yes, though I also think the assumption that all the women in the movement were lesbians is an annoying stereotype. It assumes that women had men to take care of all of their needs and why should they want the vote, too?

Wagner: As a lesbian, I want to out every damn one of 'em! What I find helpful is thinking about Adrienne Rich's ''lesbian continuum.'' We tend to see the male sexualization of relationships as the model, and that's not the way that lesbian relationships necessarily develop. Often, the emotional may have more importance. So then you look at, well, were these women doing it in bed? Well, does that even matter? What matters is that many of these women had lifelong emotional relationships that sustained them in their movement work.

Adele, your grandmother, the suffragist Adella Hunt Logan, was once denied the opportunity to speak about the plight of Black women at a conference honoring Susan B. Anthony because Anthony feared her presence might offend some white politicians. How should we think about the flawed, complicated -- and sometimes flatly racist -- figures like Anthony who were also critical parts of a movement?

Alexander: There is sort of a simplistic assumption that we must avoid, which is that progress moves forward in straight lines. And boy, does it ever not go in straight lines. It twists back, it doubles over itself. And it crosses many categories, such as economics, gender and race. That's something that we may forget, and perhaps it goes against Dr. Martin Luther King's precept that the arc of justice always bends forward.

Wagner: I think as a culture, we are really grappling with what I call the ''both, and'' of our historic figures. How do we both hold accountability and celebrate? The suffragists both did this passionate, incredibly important creation of democracy -- which we didn't have before -- and they also need to be held accountable for furthering racist laws.

How do you see the parallels of what these women were fighting for and what is happening today?

Weiss: We're still fighting over voting rights, over citizenship rights and, yes, over women's rights. We're still grappling with inequality and racism -- we're in the streets marching for justice.

Cassidy: When Black Lives Matter protesters were recently in Lafayette Park, I couldn't help but think of the suffragists, led by Alice Paul, who burned President Wilson's own words -- from speeches he gave about democracy -- in that same location more than a century ago. They were arrested for it.

Alexander: I often think of the women, my grandmother among them, who wore white dresses to protest the denial of their political empowerment. There were echoes of that symbolic garb during the campaigns of Shirley Chisholm, and in the glorious display of white pantsuits worn by the record number of multiracial, multicultural women who went to Congress as result of the 2018 election. I smiled when I saw them!

Lemay: Suffragists were the predecessors to the contemporary feminist activists who we esteem and admire today for speaking truth to power.

Read or share the full article here

What else is happening

Here are three articles from The Times you may have missed.

''How many Black people do you know?'' Ziwe Fumudoh, a comedian, performs a kind of racial high wire act on her Instagram Live show, but she really just wants to heal. [Read the story]

''I couldn't do anything.'' Despite their often hero status, health care workers experience pressure that can be paralyzing. Here is one doctor's story. [Read the story]

''I feel incredibly vulnerable.'' Rebecca Trimble grew up thinking she was American. When she realized that she wasn't, her quest to fix the problem put her at risk of deportation. [Read the story]

This edition of In Her Words is written by Jessica Bennett and Veronica Chambers. Our art director is Catherine Gilmore-Barnes, and our photo editor is Sandra Stevenson.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/us/what-else-is-happening.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/us/what-else-is-happening.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ida B. Wells-Barnett in 1893, the year after she published ''Southern Horrors,'' her landmark book about lynching. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION) (TW9)

Adella Hunt Logan in 1888. An educator at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, she fought for suffrage, social reform and better health care for Black communities. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS ASKEW, REPRODUCTION BY MARK GULEZIAN) (TW10)

Alice Dunbar-Nelson, a suffrage field organizer and the first Black woman to serve on Delaware's Republican Committee, filled this scrapbook with newspaper clippings from the suffrage campaign. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALICE DUNBAR-NELSON PAPERS, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE LIBRARY)

Adelina Otero-Warren worked for suffrage in New Mexico and, in 1922, was the first Latina to run for Congress from any party. (TW11)

Surrounded by activists, Alice Paul stitched a star onto a flag to represent another state's ratification of the 19th Amendment. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS) (TW12)

**Load-Date:** August 16, 2020

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[***Why Did Racial Progress Stall in America?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61FT-C2G1-DXY4-X04C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Shaylyn Romney Garrett and Robert D. Putnam

**Body**

The answer may show us the path out of our fractured and polarized present.

In the popular narrative of American history, Black Americans made essentially no measurable progress toward equality with white Americans until the lightning-bolt changes of the civil rights revolution. If that narrative were charted along the course of the 20th century, it would be a flat line for decades, followed by a sharp, dramatic upturn toward equality beginning in the 1960s: the shape of a hockey stick.

In many ways, this hockey stick image of racial inequality is accurate. Until the banning of de jure segregation and discrimination, very little progress was made in many domains: representation in politics and mainstream media, job quality and job security, access to professional schools and careers or toward residential integration.

However, on a number of other measures, the shape of the trend is surprisingly different. In our book, ''The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again,'' we examine century-long data, tracking outcomes by race in health, education, income, wealth and voting. What we found surprised us.

In terms of material well-being, Black Americans were moving toward parity with white Americans well before the victories of the civil rights era. What's more, after the passage of civil rights legislation, those trends toward racial parity slowed, stopped and even reversed. Understanding how and why not only reveals why America is so fractured today, but illuminates the path forward, toward a more perfect union.

In measure after measure, positive change for Black Americans was actually faster in the decades before the civil rights revolution than in the decades after. For example,

The life expectancy gap between Black and white Americans narrowed most rapidly between about 1905 and 1947, after which the rate of improvement was much more modest. And by 1995 the life expectancy ratio was the same as it had been in 1961. There has been some progress in the ensuing two decades, but this is due in part to an increase in premature deaths among ***working-class*** whites.

The Black/white ratio of high school completion improved dramatically between the 1940s and the early 1970s, after which it slowed, never reaching parity. College completion followed the same trajectory until 1970, then sharply reversed.

Racial integration in K-12 education at the national level began much earlier than is often believed. It accelerated sharply in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, Brown v. Board of Education. But this trend leveled off in the early 1970s, followed by a modest trend toward resegregation.

Income by race converged at the greatest rate between 1940 and 1970. However, as of 2018, Black/white income disparities were almost exactly the same as they were in 1968, 50 years earlier. Even taking into account the emergence of the Black middle class, Black Americans on the whole have experienced flat or downward mobility in recent decades.

The racial gap in homeownership steadily narrowed between 1900 and 1970, then stagnated, then reversed. The racial wealth gap is now growing as Black homeownership plummets.

Long-run data on national trends in voting by race is patchy, but the South saw a dramatic increase in Black voter registration between 1940 and 1970, followed by decline and stagnation. What data we have on national Black voter turnout indicate that nearly all of the gains toward equality with white voter turnout occurred between 1952 and 1964, before the Voting Rights Act passed, then almost entirely halted for the rest of the century.

These data reveal a too-slow but unmistakable climb toward racial parity throughout most of the century that begins to flatline around 1970 -- a picture quite unlike the hockey stick of historical shorthand.

We draw attention to the unexpected shape and timing of these trends not as an attempt to argue that things are or were better for Black Americans than they might appear. Quite the contrary. Gains on the part of Black Americans -- though clear and surprisingly steady during the first two-thirds of the 20th century -- were due almost entirely to their fleeing the South by the millions during the Great Migration. Starting new lives in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia meant access to better health care, education and economic opportunities. But these destinations, too, were characterized by a persistent reality of exclusion, segregation and racial violence. It was Black Americans' undaunted faith in the promise of the American ''we,'' and their willingness to claim their place in it, against all odds, that won them progress between the end of Reconstruction in the 1870s and the end of the civil rights movement in the 1970s. Collectively, these migrants and their children and grandchildren steadily narrowed the Black-white gap over those years.

In the last half-century, however, that collective progress has halted, and many who fought so hard for this progress have now lived to see it reversed. U.W. Clemon, an African-American lawyer who won a precedent-setting Alabama school desegregation case over 40 years ago -- and recently took up a remarkably similar legal battle in the same county -- summarized the historical arc well, saying ''I never envisioned that I would be fighting in 2017 essentially the same battle that I thought I won in 1971.''

It is against this backdrop of stillborn hopes and intergenerational reversals that Black Lives Matter protesters have taken to the streets. The recent police killings have undoubtedly been sparks in the dry tinder boxes of over-policed Black communities. But those communities are also situated within a parched landscape of stagnant progress toward racial parity, half a century after the passage of landmark Civil Rights legislation, and a century and a half after Reconstruction. What to many white Americans are mere charts and graphs, to Black Americans are the contours of their genealogy.

But if Black Americans' advance toward parity with whites in many dimensions had been underway for decades before the Civil Rights revolution, why then, when the dam of legal exclusion finally broke, didn't those trends accelerate toward full equality? Why was the last third of the 20th century characterized by a marked deceleration of progress, and in some cases even a reversal?

We have two answers to these questions.

The first is simple and familiar: White backlash. Substantial progress toward white support for Black equality was made in the first half of the 20th century, but when push came to shove, many white Americans were reluctant to live up to those principles. Although clear majorities supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a national poll conducted shortly after its passage showed that 68 percent of Americans wanted moderation in its enforcement. In fact, many felt that the Johnson administration was moving too fast in implementing integration.

Lyndon B. Johnson's rejection, in 1968, of the Kerner Commission's recommendations of sweeping reforms to address racial inequality suggested that his fine-tuned political sensitivity had detected a sea change in white attitudes in the year since he -- more than any previous president -- had led the project of racial redress. This was a dramatic example of deliberate acceleration followed by deliberate deceleration, a pattern which mirrored the abandonment of Reconstruction.

And it is in that earlier period of American history where the second answer to the question of why racial progress stagnated after the civil rights era can be found, as made clear by new statistical evidence we present in ''The Upswing.''

On the heels of Reconstruction came a period that Southerners called ''redemption,'' a violent project on the part of vanquished Southern elites to restore white hegemony in the wake of the progress Black Americans had made after the Civil War. Redemption coincided with the vast upheaval of industrialization and urbanization, when the United States more broadly plunged into the Gilded Age. Gross extremes of wealth and poverty, a tattered social fabric rife with factionalism and nativism, a gridlocked public square and a culture of narcissism were its hallmarks. The late 1800s was thus, by nearly every measure -- including the stark retrenchment of nascent racial equality -- the worst of times.

But as the century turned and the Gilded Age gave way to the Progressive Era, America experienced a remarkable moment of inflection that set the nation on an entirely new trajectory. A diverse group of reformers grabbed the reins of history and set a course toward greater economic equality, political bipartisanship, social cohesion and cultural communitarianism. This shift and the long-run trends it set in motion are detailed in scores of statistical measures in ''The Upswing.''

Some six decades later all of those upward trends reversed, setting the United States on a downward course that has brought us to the multifaceted national crisis in which we find ourselves today, which bears a remarkable resemblance to the Gilded Age. The wide array of statistical evidence compiled in ''The Upswing'' -- ranging from the distribution of income pre- and post-taxes to bipartisanship in Congress and split-ticket voting and from civic engagement, church membership and social trust to parents' choice of their children's first names -- shows that the Progressive Era represented a fundamental turning point in American history.

These interconnected phenomena can be summarized in a single meta-trend that we have come to call the ''I-we-I'' curve: An inverted U charting America's gradual climb from self-centeredness to a sense of shared values, followed by a steep descent back into egoism over the next half century.

The moment America took its foot off the gas in rectifying racial inequalities largely coincides with the moment America's ''we'' decades gave way to the era of ''I.'' At the mid-'60s peak of the I-we-I curve, long-delayed moves toward racial inclusion had raised hopes for further improvements, but those hopes went unrealized as the whole nation shifted toward a less egalitarian ideal.

A central feature of America's ''I'' decades has been a shift away from shared responsibilities toward individual rights and a culture of narcissism. Economic inequality has skyrocketed, and along with it have come massive disparities in political influence and a growing concentration of political-economic power in the hands of a few billionaires. Polarization and social isolation have increased. Whatever sense of belonging Americans feel today is largely to factional (and often racially defined) in-groups locked in fierce competition with one another for cultural control and perceived scarce resources. Contemporary identity politics characterizes an era that could well be described as a ''War of the 'We's'.'' This is a reality that predated the election of Donald Trump, though his presidency threw it into sharp relief. And a new presidential administration will not by itself restore American unity.

It is difficult to say which came first -- white backlash against racial realignment or the broader shift from ''we'' to ''I.'' Perhaps America's larger turn toward ''I'' was simply a response to the challenge of sustaining a more diverse, multiracial ''we'' in an environment of deep, embedded and unresolved racism. But it is also possible that a broader societal turn away from shared responsibilities to one another eroded the fragile national consensus around race as all Americans began to prioritize their own interests above the common good. A selfish, fragmented ''I'' society is not a fertile soil for racial equality.

Indeed, the fact that landmark civil rights legislation passed at the very peak of the I-we-I curve suggests that an expanding sense of ''we'' was a prerequisite for the dismantling of the color line. Without what the historian Bruce Schulman calls the ''expansive, universalist vision'' that America had been building toward in the preceding decades, it is hard to imagine that such watershed change -- so long and so violently resisted -- would have been possible.

Through the ''long civil rights movement,'' as it has come to be called, Black activists had prevailed upon the white establishment to widen the ''we'' in important (though ultimately insufficient) ways across many decades. By the late 1960s, though the work of widening was not nearly complete, America had come closer to an inclusive ''we'' than ever before. But just as that inclusion began to bear tangible fruit for Black Americans, much of that fruit began to die on the vine.

The lessons of America's I-we-I century are thus twofold. First, we Americans have gotten ourselves out of a mess remarkably similar to the one we're in now by rediscovering the spirit of community that has defined our nation from its inception. America has turned the tide from ''I'' to ''we'' once before and we can do it again. And, to a greater extent than heretofore recognized, we made more rapid progress toward racial parity during the communitarian epoch than during the period of increasing individualism that followed.

But ''we'' can be defined in more inclusive or exclusive terms. The ''we'' we were constructing in the first two-thirds of the last century was highly racialized, and thus contained the seeds of its own undoing. Any attempt we may make today to spark a new upswing must aim for a higher summit by being fully inclusive, fully egalitarian and genuinely accommodating of difference. Anything less will fall victim once again to its own internal inconsistencies.

As Theodore Roosevelt put it, ''the fundamental rule in our national life -- the rule which underlies all others -- is that, on the whole, and in the long run, we shall go up or down together.''

Shaylyn Romney Garrett, a founding contributor to Weave: The Social Fabric Project, and Robert D. Putnam, a professor of public policy at Harvard, are the authors of ''The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again.''

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Students during a voting rights march in Savannah, Ga., 1963.

Students during a voting rights march in Savannah, Ga., 1963. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED BALDWIN)

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[***As the French Call for His Head, Macron Is Reshaping the Nation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y96-RCH1-DXY4-X1G8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

No recent president has had a deeper effect on France's economy, society and politics. And many French despise him for it.

PARIS -- One after another, the speakers in Parliament have denounced President Emmanuel Macron and his revolutionary plans, calling them ''cynicism'' and a ''flagrant crime.'' Outside, hundreds of protesters shout their fury. Other demonstrators, invoking a long French tradition, have called for his head.

But it's all theater, for now. The weeks of strikes that began in December and stretched into the New Year against Mr. Macron's plans to overhaul the French pension system have fizzled, even if the anger has not.

Mr. Macron, the youthful investment banker turned politician, now nearly three years into his presidency, is poised to win his latest battle. His government is hoping that his plan to eliminate France's 42 different pension schemes and merge them into one will pass the lower house of Parliament, where his party has a lock, by mid-March, and that it will be enshrined in law by the summer. It would change France deeply, like his other programs.

The real question now for the president and his country is: At what cost or benefit to France, now and in the future?

In the living memory of most French -- and perhaps even beyond -- no president has had a greater effect on his country's economy, society and politics, analysts and Mr. Macron's haters and backers all agree.

But Mr. Macron's turbulent reign is setting records in another area, too: social upheaval. He has governed against a backdrop of continuous turmoil.

The antipathy Mr. Macron inspires is no doubt a measure of the depth of the change he is introducing in France -- a country comfortable yet complacent to its critics -- where any tinkering with tradition comes with complaint and at great risk.

Mr. Macron has upset the French, and he is deeply unpopular for it. So it has become the defining paradox of his rule that he remains much despised, even as his changes begin to bear fruit.

The intractable unemployment rate, slayer of his predecessors, appears finally to be bending to a French president's touch, recently reaching its lowest rate in 12 years at 8.1 percent.

Working-age employment rates are up, worker-training programs are showing big gains, quality long-term job contracts are outpacing precarious, short-term ones.

All of those are advances plausibly attributed to Mr. Macron's landmark loosening of the rigid French labor market.

At the same time, Mr. Macron has remade French politics in his own image, eliminating the major political parties, killing the left and neutering the right, so much so that he is still the odds-on favorite to succeed himself in 2022.

''Emmanuel Macron is a bigger reformer than many of his predecessors,'' said Olivier Galland of the CNRS research institute, who has written a recent paper about the president's policies.

''He's got a more coherent vision. He thinks that French society is blocked, that a lot of these institutions have been in place for a long time, since the Liberation, for instance, and they are not adapted to today's society,'' Mr. Galland said.

''The pensions reform is emblematic, and it's very important,'' Mr. Galland added. ''The intensity of the critics shows how important it is.''

He noted that Mr. Macron's task was in many ways even more difficult than that of the great shaper of the postwar era, Charles de Gaulle: The general had the advantage of starting out with a ''blank slate'' at the end of the German occupation.

De Gaulle also had the stature that came with having led France during World War II. Mr. Macron is no de Gaulle, the French would agree, having come from a far different place -- the world of global finance -- that inspires equal parts disgust and distrust in much of the population.

But his changes to France's politics and society may be as lasting, though they have come at a sharp cost.

His pension changes provoked the longest transportation strike in French history -- no small feat in a country where labor strikes are so readily weaponized.

For nearly two months, the French struggled to get to work as trains shut down and mammoth demonstrations snarled the streets of Paris, and workers cursed the president and promised the same fate for him as befell Louis XVI. Mr. Macron's favorite restaurant was set on fire.

The strike came on the heels of the shock of the Yellow Vest uprising, which brought violent protest against economic inequality to Paris streets on a scale not seen in at least 50 years.

Only a huge cash infusion -- $19 billion in income boosts to low-earners -- and nonstop palaver by Mr. Macron himself in a marathon series of town halls all over the country, tamed it.

Discontent still boils in broad sectors -- lawyers, nurses, teachers, doctors -- making up French society's backbone.

Politically, the resistance has been no less fierce, if mostly ineffective. The protesters, furious at Mr. Macron's transformation of one of the world's most generous pension systems, have won some concessions. The government, for instance, scaled back its plans to raise the full-benefit retirement age.

In Parliament, Mr. Macron's opponents have loaded his pension bill with a record-setting 41,000 amendments in an avowed attempt to slow it down or kill it. Furious at the obstruction, members of Mr. Macron's government are now talking of forcing the bill through without a vote, which is allowed in the French Constitution. The tactic exposes the government to a confidence vote, but Mr. Macron's party would undoubtedly win.

His opponents are no less determined.

''We're going to be in the trenches as long as necessary, because the people will always be in the right in the face of your reactionary goals,'' the leftist leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon said in Parliament the other day, addressing the president from a distance.

But the procedural tactics -- likely to be quashed -- seem destined to founder on the number of Macronists who were swept into the Parliament with his En Marche party, as opponents collapsed around them.

And predictions from leftist economists that Mr. Macron's loosening of the labor market -- his reductions to the costs of firing, for instance -- would lead to widespread layoffs, have hardly panned out.

''Employment rates are going up,'' said Philippe Martin, an economist at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, commonly referred to as Sciences Po, who once worked in Mr. Macron's Finance Ministry under the previous president, François Hollande. ''There is something going on.''

Yet there are scars left behind by Mr. Macron's relentless reformism, in a country which, if not content, had achieved an egalitarianism solid enough to shield it from the crude populism and demagogy that has overtaken its Western allies.

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''There's a rejection of Macron which is enormous, and which is absolutely incomprehensible,'' said Gérard Grunberg, a political scientist at Sciences Po.

Some of it is stylistic. ''There's a great resistance to the way he exercises power in this country,'' Mr. Grunberg said. ''The result is that the French don't want to have anything to do with Macron anymore, and meanwhile the right is regrouping.''

''It is absolutely true that he's failed to create any kind of link with the French,'' he added.

On the streets the hostility is palpable. ''He's got contempt for ordinary people, the ***working class***,'' said Anne Marchand, a cashier wearing a yellow vest, demonstrating outside Parliament this week. ''He's just a banker. He doesn't understand a thing about politics.''

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Eva Mbengue contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/world/europe/macron-france-pensions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/world/europe/macron-france-pensions.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: President Emmanuel Macron's effort to overhaul the French pension system has provoked strikes and fierce protests, like one in Paris last month, left. But he has also pushed a stubborn jobless rate lower. GEOFFROY VAN DER HASSELT/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES

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DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A6)

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2020

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[***As Emmanuel Macron’s Impact Grows, So Does French Disdain***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y91-7281-DXY4-X4S6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 25, 2020 Tuesday 10:15 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1546 words

**Byline:** Adam Nossiter

**Highlight:** No recent president has had a deeper effect on France’s economy, society and politics. And many French despise him for it.

**Body**

No recent president has had a deeper effect on France’s economy, society and politics. And many French despise him for it.

PARIS — One after another, the speakers in Parliament have denounced [*President Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html) and his revolutionary plans, calling them “cynicism” and a “flagrant crime.” Outside, hundreds of protesters shout their fury. Other demonstrators, invoking a long French tradition, have called for his head.

But it’s all theater, for now. The weeks of strikes that began in December and stretched into the New Year against Mr. Macron’s plans to overhaul the French pension system have fizzled, even if the anger has not.

Mr. Macron, the youthful investment banker turned politician, now nearly three years into his presidency, is [*poised to win his latest battle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html). His government is hoping that his plan to [*eliminate France’s 42 different pension schemes and merge them into one*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html) will pass the lower house of Parliament, where his party has a lock, by mid-March, and that it will be enshrined in law by the summer. It would change France deeply, like his other programs.

The real question now for the president and his country is: At what cost or benefit to France, now and in the future?

In the living memory of most French — and perhaps even beyond — [*no president has had a greater effect*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html) on his country’s economy, society and politics, analysts and Mr. Macron’s haters and backers all agree.

But Mr. Macron’s turbulent reign is setting records in another area, too: social upheaval. He has governed against a backdrop of continuous turmoil.

The antipathy Mr. Macron inspires is no doubt a measure of the depth of the change he is introducing in France — a country comfortable yet complacent to its critics — where any tinkering with tradition comes with complaint and at great risk.

Mr. Macron has upset the French, and he is deeply unpopular for it. So it has become the defining paradox of his rule that he remains much despised, even as his changes begin to bear fruit.

The intractable unemployment rate, slayer of his predecessors, appears finally to be bending to a French president’s touch, recently reaching its lowest rate in 12 years at 8.1 percent.

Working-age employment rates are up, worker-training programs are showing big gains, quality long-term job contracts are outpacing precarious, short-term ones.

All of those are advances plausibly attributed to Mr. Macron’s landmark loosening of the rigid French labor market.

At the same time, Mr. Macron has remade French politics in his own image, eliminating the major political parties, killing the left and neutering the right, so much so that he is still the odds-on favorite to succeed himself in 2022.

“Emmanuel Macron is a bigger reformer than many of his predecessors,” said Olivier Galland of the CNRS research institute, who has written a recent paper about the president’s policies.

“He’s got a more coherent vision. He thinks that French society is blocked, that a lot of these institutions have been in place for a long time, since the Liberation, for instance, and they are not adapted to today’s society,” Mr. Galland said.

“The pensions reform is emblematic, and it’s very important,” Mr. Galland added. “The intensity of the critics shows how important it is.”

He noted that Mr. Macron’s task was in many ways even more difficult than that of the great shaper of the postwar era, Charles de Gaulle: The general had the advantage of starting out with a “blank slate” at the end of the German occupation.

De Gaulle also had the stature that came with having led France during World War II. Mr. Macron is no de Gaulle, the French would agree, having come from a far different place — the world of global finance — that inspires equal parts [*disgust and distrust in much of the population*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html).

But his changes to France’s politics and society may be as lasting, though they have come at a sharp cost.

His pension changes provoked the longest transportation strike in French history — no small feat in a country where labor strikes are so readily weaponized.

For nearly two months, the [*French struggled to get to work as trains shut down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html) and mammoth demonstrations snarled the streets of Paris, and workers cursed the president and promised the same fate for him as befell Louis XVI. Mr. Macron’s favorite restaurant was [*set on fire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html).

The strike came on the heels of the shock of the Yellow Vest uprising, which brought violent protest against economic inequality to Paris streets on a scale not seen in at least 50 years.

Only a huge cash infusion — $19 billion in income boosts to low-earners — and nonstop palaver by Mr. Macron himself in a marathon series of town halls all over the country, tamed it.

Discontent still boils in broad sectors — lawyers, nurses, teachers, doctors — making up French society’s backbone.

Politically, the resistance has been no less fierce, if mostly ineffective. The protesters, furious at Mr. Macron’s transformation of one of the world’s most generous pension systems, have won some concessions. The government, for instance, [*scaled back its plans to raise the full-benefit retirement age*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/17/world/europe/macron-positive-coronavirus-france.html).

In Parliament, Mr. Macron’s opponents have loaded his pension bill with a record-setting 41,000 amendments in an avowed attempt to slow it down or kill it. Furious at the obstruction, members of Mr. Macron’s government are now talking of forcing the bill through without a vote, which is allowed in the French Constitution. The tactic exposes the government to a confidence vote, but Mr. Macron’s party would undoubtedly win.

His opponents are no less determined.

“We’re going to be in the trenches as long as necessary, because the people will always be in the right in the face of your reactionary goals,” the leftist leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon said in Parliament the other day, addressing the president from a distance.

But the procedural tactics — likely to be quashed — seem destined to founder on the number of Macronists who were swept into the Parliament with his En Marche party, as opponents collapsed around them.

And predictions from leftist economists that Mr. Macron’s loosening of the labor market — his reductions to the costs of firing, for instance — would lead to widespread layoffs, have hardly panned out.

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**End of Document**



[***‘Normal People’ Takes Sex Seriously***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YP3-DKK1-DXY4-X2CK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Eleanor Stanford

**Highlight:** This adaptation of Sally Rooney’s best-selling novel is a rare TV show about teenagers that respects intimacy as a powerful storytelling tool, both on and off camera.

**Body**

This adaptation of Sally Rooney’s best-selling novel is a rare TV show about teenagers that respects intimacy as a powerful storytelling tool, both on and off camera.

DUBLIN — Paul Mescal, battling a cold, collapsed into a chair on the edge of a busy set just outside the city here.

The Irish actor was midway through a “beast” of a day, he said, shooting the high-profile adaptation, by Hulu and the BBC, of Sally Rooney’s wildly popular novel “Normal People.”

“It’s like I’ve been thrown into the sea, never mind the deep end,” Mescal said, laughing, of his leading role playing Connell. “But I’ve been looked after by the people I’ve been working with, so I’ve been given various life rafts.”

As a young actor, just two years out of drama school, making his television debut in an eagerly anticipated adaptation, it’s not surprising that Mescal, 24, was experiencing a steep learning curve. But “Normal People” brings an extra degree of difficulty: The novel focuses almost exclusively on the intimate, explicitly rendered relationship between Connell and Marianne, his on-again, off-again love. Rooney presents sexuality as a transformative, healing, complicated form of communication for both characters, and the series faithfully follows suit; both roles include full-frontal nudity in scenes of striking rawness and delicacy.

The result — 12 half-hour episodes landing on Hulu April 29 — is an unusually thoughtful and moving depiction of young people’s emotional lives. The sex between teenagers you’re likely to see on television at the moment is frequently fumbling and hilarious (“[*Sex Education*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html)”) or designed to shock (“[*Euphoria*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html)”). But in “Normal People,” the intimacy of these moments between Marianne and Connell is so distinct, especially their first time together, you almost feel like an intruder.

The production hired an intimacy coordinator, and thought carefully about how to translate the physical and emotional vulnerability of the book for television in a way that was respectful to both the original story and the actors performing it. The environment was warm and supportive, Daisy Edgar-Jones, the British actor who plays Marianne, said on set.

But she added that some of the heavier scenes had stayed with her. Filming the period when Marianne is very depressed and looking to violent sex for comfort left Edgar-Jones, 21, feeling “really strange for a few days; it’s hard not to take that stuff on.”

Overall, though, the show’s prevailing themes, as represented by Marianne and Connell’s relationship, are inspirational, she said.

“Hopefully people will watch it and learn from it how you should treat yourself,” she said, “and how you should be treated by others.”

We meet Marianne and Connell as schoolmates in a small town in West Ireland: He is athletic, popular, ***working class*** and quietly very clever. She is wealthy, lonely and droll, wielding her intelligence like a flamethrower. Connell’s mother cleans Marianne’s large family home, and the teenagers start sleeping together in secret before both heading to Dublin for college, where they spend the next few years oscillating between being friends and lovers.

“When they’re together, they’re just happy,” Mescal said. “It’s deeply frustrating when they’re not together.”

Rooney’s first novel, “Conversations With Friends,” was popular, but “Normal People,” released in Britain in 2018 and America the following year, was a sensation. It sold over 500,000 print copies in North America and over one million copies across all formats outside of the U.S., according to her publishers — huge numbers for literary fiction.

New York booksellers [*talked about*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html) trying to keep up with “Rooney fever,” and[*critics argued*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html) with themselves over whether she was “the first great millennial writer.” [*Her editor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html) at Faber &amp; Faber called her the “Salinger for the Snapchat generation.”

Rooney, though, continues to be wary of the breathlessness that has surrounded her work. “I live each day at present with a mild frisson of dread at the idea of becoming any more widely known than I already am,” she wrote in an email, adding she hopes the show is celebrated but that “my existence is kindly forgotten by all.” (With a BBC television adaptation of “[*Conversations With Friends*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html)” also in the works, this seems unlikely.)

Work adapting “Normal People” into a series began before the novel had even hit bookstores. Lenny Abrahamson (“[*Room*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html)”) and his producing partner Ed Guiney (“[*The Favourite*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html)”) at Element Pictures, had read the galley and mulled various approaches for a screen version. They settled on a half-hour TV show to suit the book’s linearity and lack of subplots.

The BBC signed on early to produce. The broadcaster had been looking for “a millennial drama series that would feel like an antidote to the bigger supernatural or sci-fi shows that are often aimed at a younger audience,”[*Piers Wenger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html), the BBC’s head of drama programming, said in a telephone interview. Hulu then came on as the U.S. distributor and producer.

Filming began last year in June; the producers wanted a quick turnaround to capitalize on the early buzz of the book’s popularity. Unlike recent literary adaptations that have used the source materials as jumping off points (“[*Little Women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html)” or “The Personal History of David Copperfield”), the “Normal People” mantra on set was “the book is the Bible.”

The novel’s narrative is always told from either Connell or Marianne’s perspective, and translating that interiority and shifting viewpoint onto the screen was one of the production team’s biggest priorities — and challenges. In many scenes, this looks like obliquely cropped close-ups of characters’ faces, or frames showing the back of their heads.

“It seems like a paradox,” Abrahamson said in a telephone interview. But “if you make it harder for an audience to see quite what’s happening in a character’s face, you think your way toward them, and it feels like you really are in the room rather than in some artificial space of perfect access.”

Abrahamson, who set the show’s tone by directing the first six episodes, wanted the book’s nuanced view of sexuality reflected onscreen. He had directed sex scenes before, but never with the nudity required for “Normal People,” and he wanted to get it right — and for his young actors to feel empowered.

“As an established director working with a youngish cast, when it comes to explicit scenes and nudity, part of me worried that they may say, ‘Yes, I do feel comfortable with it,’” he said, “because they don’t want to disappoint me, because we have a good creative relationship and I’ve got a reputation.”

Over the last couple of years, since the[*#MeToo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html) movement revealed extensive exploitation and abuse in the entertainment industry, there has been new focus on what is demanded of actors and actresses on set, especially when male directors and producers are involved. (Hettie Macdonald directed the latter six episodes.)

So the production turned to a professional[*increasingly sought after in the entertainment industry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/arts/television/sex-education-review-netflix.html): an intimacy coordinator. Ita O’Brien, the “Normal People” coordinator, sees her work as bringing the same professionalism to sex scenes that you have at other stages of a shoot, to keep actors from being coerced or left to work out the choreography themselves. She speaks with the director and actors one-on-one, hearing their concerns and establishing the scene’s shape, so there are no surprises when everyone is on set.

O’Brien’s work may have been especially valuable given Rooney’s approach to writing intimate moments. In the book, she grounds sex in sensation and the context of a character’s emotional life, rather than description. She also co-wrote the first six episodes of the show with Alice Birch, and described the sex scenes as “probably less ‘written’ than other parts of the script.” She wanted to leave room for Abrahamson, Edgar-Jones and Mescal to decide what worked best for them, she said.

Abrahamson and the cinematographer Suzie Lavelle were inspired by the photographer Nan Goldin, namely her work’s rich color palette and incidental nakedness. This influence is evident in the way the leads’ full frontal nudity, specifically, is shown in moments of quiet and repose. There is little sexualization or voyeurism to be found, just shared vulnerability.

Then there is Marianne’s exploration of B.D.S.M. and submissive sex, which emerges first in the book with Connell’s certainty that “She would have lain on the ground and let him walk over her body if he wanted,” and with subsequent partners hitting her during sex. In both the novel and the show, Marianne’s experiences are consensual — if not always positive — and a key way she comes to understand herself.

Through Marianne, the show depicts the complexity of a young woman’s sexuality with empathy, even avoiding some of the book’s tendency to pathologize her desires. Onscreen, the tone of Marianne’s intimacy is an effective shorthand for communicating her state of mind as we meet her at a new point in her life, similar to the way her outfits and hairstyles change.

Edgar-Jones said she’s proud of “Normal People,” including the sex scenes, and of the fact that the nudity is “50-50” between her and Mescal.

“I’ve watched the episodes,” she added, laughing. “I’m well prepared for the bits where I have to tell my flatmates and parents to look away.”

PHOTOS: “Normal People,” which debuts April 29 on Hulu, traces the relationship of Connell (Paul Mescal) and Marianne (Daisy Edgar-Jones) from high school to the end of college. Most of the show’s filming was done in Ireland, with Irish cast and crew. During shooting, Edgar-Jones stayed in Marianne’s Irish accent on and off the set. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ENDA BOWE/HULU)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***Why Did Racial Progress Stall in America?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61FC-V6H1-DXY4-X2CJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 4, 2020 Friday 19:41 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2416 words

**Byline:** Shaylyn Romney Garrett and Robert D. Putnam

**Highlight:** The answer may show us the path out of our fractured and polarized present.

**Body**

The answer may show us the path out of our fractured and polarized present.

In the popular narrative of American history, Black Americans made essentially no measurable progress toward equality with white Americans until the lightning-bolt changes of the civil rights revolution. If that narrative were charted along the course of the 20th century, it would be a flat line for decades, followed by a sharp, dramatic upturn toward equality beginning in the 1960s: the shape of a hockey stick.

In many ways, this hockey stick image of racial inequality is accurate. Until the banning of de jure segregation and discrimination, very little progress was made in many domains: representation in politics and mainstream media, job quality and job security, access to professional schools and careers or toward residential integration.

However, on a number of other measures, the shape of the trend is surprisingly different. In [*our book, “The Upswing*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149): How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again,” we examine century-long data, tracking outcomes by race in health, education, income, wealth and voting. What we found surprised us.

In terms of material well-being, Black Americans were moving toward parity with white Americans well before the victories of the civil rights era. What’s more, after the passage of civil rights legislation, those trends toward racial parity slowed, stopped and even reversed. Understanding how and why not only reveals why America is so fractured today, but illuminates the path forward, toward a more perfect union.

In measure after measure, positive change for Black Americans was actually faster in the decades before the civil rights revolution than in the decades after. For example,

* The [*life expectancy gap*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) between Black and white Americans narrowed most rapidly between about 1905 and 1947, after which the rate of improvement was much more modest. And by 1995 the life expectancy ratio was the same as it had been in 1961. There has been some progress in the ensuing two decades, but this is due in part to an [*increase in premature deaths*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) among ***working-class*** whites.

1. The Black/white ratio of [*high school completion*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) improved dramatically between the 1940s and the early 1970s, after which it slowed, never reaching parity. College completion followed the same trajectory until 1970, then sharply reversed.
2. Racial integration in K-12 education at the national level [*began much earlier*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) than is often believed. It accelerated sharply in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, Brown v. Board of Education. But this trend leveled off in the early 1970s, followed by a modest trend toward [*resegregation*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149).
3. Income by race [*converged at the greatest rate*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) between 1940 and 1970. However, as of 2018, Black/white income disparities were [*almost exactly the same*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) as they were in 1968, 50 years earlier. Even taking into account the emergence of the Black middle class, Black Americans on the whole have experienced flat or downward mobility in recent decades.
4. The [*racial gap in homeownership*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149)steadily narrowed between 1900 and 1970, then stagnated, then reversed. The racial wealth gap is now growing as [*Black homeownership plummets*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149).
5. Long-run data on national trends in voting by race is patchy, but the South saw [*a dramatic increase*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149)in Black voter registration between 1940 and 1970, followed by decline and stagnation. What data we have on national Black voter turnout indicate that nearly all of the gains toward equality with white voter turnout [*occurred between 1952 and 1964,*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) before the Voting Rights Act passed, then almost entirely halted for the rest of the century.

These data reveal a too-slow but unmistakable climb toward racial parity throughout most of the century that begins to flatline around 1970 — a picture quite unlike the hockey stick of historical shorthand.

We draw attention to the unexpected shape and timing of these trends not as an attempt to argue that things are or were better for Black Americans than they might appear. Quite the contrary. Gains on the part of Black Americans — though clear and surprisingly steady during the first two-thirds of the 20th century — were due almost entirely to their fleeing the South by the millions during the Great Migration. Starting new lives in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia meant access to better health care, education and economic opportunities. But these destinations, too, were characterized by a persistent reality of exclusion, segregation and racial violence. It was Black Americans’ undaunted faith in the promise of the American “we,” and their willingness to claim their place in it, against all odds, that won them progress between the end of Reconstruction in the 1870s and the end of the civil rights movement in the 1970s. Collectively, these migrants and their children and grandchildren steadily narrowed the Black-white gap over those years.

In the last half-century, however, that collective progress has halted, and many who fought so hard for this progress have now lived to see it reversed. U.W. Clemon, an African-American lawyer who won a precedent-setting Alabama school desegregation case over 40 years ago — and recently took up a remarkably similar legal battle in the same county — summarized the historical arc well, [*saying*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) “I never envisioned that I would be fighting in 2017 essentially the same battle that I thought I won in 1971.”

It is against this backdrop of stillborn hopes and intergenerational reversals that Black Lives Matter protesters have taken to the streets. The recent police killings have undoubtedly been sparks in the dry tinder boxes of over-policed Black communities. But those communities are also situated within a parched landscape of stagnant progress toward racial parity, half a century after the passage of landmark Civil Rights legislation, and a century and a half after Reconstruction. What to many white Americans are mere charts and graphs, to Black Americans are the contours of their genealogy.

But if Black Americans’ advance toward parity with whites in many dimensions had been underway for decades before the Civil Rights revolution, why then, when the dam of legal exclusion finally broke, didn’t those trends accelerate toward full equality? Why was the last third of the 20th century characterized by a marked deceleration of progress, and in some cases even a reversal?

We have two answers to these questions.

The first is simple and familiar: White backlash. Substantial progress toward white support for Black equality was made in the first half of the 20th century, but when push came to shove, many white Americans were reluctant to live up to those principles. Although clear majorities supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a national poll conducted shortly after its passage showed that [*68 percent of Americans*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149)wanted moderation in its enforcement. In fact, many felt that the Johnson administration was moving too fast in implementing integration.

Lyndon B. Johnson’s rejection, in 1968, of the Kerner Commission’s recommendations of sweeping reforms to address racial inequality suggested that his fine-tuned political sensitivity had detected a sea change in white attitudes in the year since he — more than any previous president — had led the project of racial redress. This was a dramatic example of deliberate acceleration followed by deliberate deceleration, a pattern which mirrored the abandonment of Reconstruction.

And it is in that earlier period of American history where the second answer to the question of why racial progress stagnated after the civil rights era can be found, as made clear by new statistical evidence we present in “The Upswing.”

On the heels of Reconstruction came a period that Southerners called “redemption,” a violent project on the part of vanquished Southern elites to restore white hegemony in the wake of the progress Black Americans had made after the Civil War. Redemption coincided with the vast upheaval of industrialization and urbanization, when the United States more broadly plunged into the Gilded Age. Gross extremes of wealth and poverty, a tattered social fabric rife with factionalism and nativism, a gridlocked public square and a culture of narcissism were its hallmarks. The late 1800s was thus, by nearly every measure — including the stark retrenchment of nascent racial equality — the worst of times.

But as the century turned and the Gilded Age gave way to the Progressive Era, America experienced a remarkable moment of inflection that set the nation on an entirely new trajectory. A diverse group of reformers grabbed the reins of history and set a course toward greater economic equality, political bipartisanship, social cohesion and cultural communitarianism. This shift and the long-run trends it set in motion are detailed in scores of statistical measures in “The Upswing.”

Some six decades later all of those upward trends reversed, setting the United States on a downward course that has brought us to the multifaceted national crisis in which we find ourselves today, which bears a remarkable resemblance to the Gilded Age. The wide array of statistical evidence compiled in “The Upswing” — ranging from the [*distribution of income pre- and post-taxes*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) to [*bipartisanship in Congress*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) and split-ticket voting and from civic engagement, [*church membership*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) and [*social trust*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) to parents’ choice of their [*children’s first names*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) — shows that the Progressive Era represented a fundamental turning point in American history.

These interconnected phenomena can be summarized in a single meta-trend that we have come to call the [*“I-we-I” curve*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149): An inverted U charting America’s gradual climb from self-centeredness to a sense of shared values, followed by a steep descent back into egoism over the next half century.

The moment America took its foot off the gas in rectifying racial inequalities largely coincides with the moment America’s “we” decades gave way to the era of “I.” At the mid-’60s peak of the I-we-I curve, long-delayed moves toward racial inclusion had raised hopes for further improvements, but those hopes went unrealized as the whole nation shifted toward a less egalitarian ideal.

A central feature of America’s “I” decades has been a shift away from shared responsibilities toward individual rights and a culture of narcissism. Economic inequality has skyrocketed, and along with it have come massive disparities in political influence and a growing concentration of political-economic power in the hands of a few billionaires. Polarization and social isolation have increased. Whatever sense of belonging Americans feel today is largely to factional (and often racially defined) in-groups locked in fierce competition with one another for cultural control and perceived scarce resources. Contemporary identity politics characterizes an era that could well be described as a “War of the ‘We’s’.” This is a reality that predated the election of Donald Trump, though his presidency threw it into sharp relief. And a new presidential administration will not by itself restore American unity.

It is difficult to say which came first — white backlash against racial realignment or the broader shift from “we” to “I.” Perhaps America’s larger turn toward “I” was simply a response to the challenge of sustaining a more diverse, multiracial “we” in an environment of deep, embedded and unresolved racism. But it is also possible that a broader societal turn away from shared responsibilities to one another eroded the fragile national consensus around race as all Americans began to prioritize their own interests above the common good. A selfish, fragmented “I” society is not a fertile soil for racial equality.

Indeed, the fact that landmark civil rights legislation passed at the very peak of the I-we-I curve suggests that an expanding sense of “we” was a prerequisite for the dismantling of the color line. Without what the historian Bruce Schulman calls the [*“expansive, universalist vision”*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149)that America had been building toward in the preceding decades, it is hard to imagine that such watershed change — so long and so violently resisted — would have been possible.

Through the “[*long civil rights movement*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149),” as it has come to be called, Black activists had prevailed upon the white establishment to widen the “we” in important (though ultimately insufficient) ways across many decades. By the late 1960s, though the work of widening was not nearly complete, America had come closer to an inclusive “we” than ever before. But just as that inclusion began to bear tangible fruit for Black Americans, much of that fruit began to die on the vine.

The lessons of America’s I-we-I century are thus twofold. First, we Americans have gotten ourselves out of a mess remarkably similar to the one we’re in now by rediscovering the spirit of community that has defined our nation from its inception. America has turned the tide from “I” to “we” once before and we can do it again. And, to a greater extent than heretofore recognized, we made more rapid progress toward racial parity during the communitarian epoch than during the period of increasing individualism that followed.

But “we” can be defined in more inclusive or exclusive terms. The “we” we were constructing in the first two-thirds of the last century was highly racialized, and thus contained the seeds of its own undoing. Any attempt we may make today to spark a new upswing must aim for a higher summit by being fully inclusive, fully egalitarian and genuinely accommodating of difference. Anything less will fall victim once again to its own internal inconsistencies.

As Theodore Roosevelt [*put it*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149), “the fundamental rule in our national life — the rule which underlies all others — is that, on the whole, and in the long run, we shall go up or down together.”

Shaylyn Romney Garrett, a founding contributor to Weave: The Social Fabric Project, and Robert D. Putnam, a professor of public policy at Harvard, are the authors of “The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Upswing/Robert-D-Putnam/9781982129149).

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PHOTOS: Students during a voting rights march in Savannah, Ga., 1963.; Students during a voting rights march in Savannah, Ga., 1963. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED BALDWIN)

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[***‘We Are Definitely Not Out of the Woods’; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:606T-RF01-JBG3-60G6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1770 words

**Highlight:** The I.M.F. cut its forecasts and warned of “scarring” to the global economy, as a surge of coronavirus infections sows doubts about the recovery.

**Body**

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‘This is a crisis like no other and will have a recovery like no other’

Markets [*turned sharply lower*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) yesterday on data showing a surge of coronavirus infections in several parts of the U.S. and around the world, sowing doubts about the path of economic recovery as businesses reopen and social distancing guidelines are relaxed. Futures suggest a flat open to trading today.

The I.M.F. cut its forecasts and warned of “scarring” to the global economy. “We are definitely not out of the woods,” [*said Gita Gopinath*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), its chief economist. “This is a crisis like no other and will have a recovery like no other.”

The fund said that the decline in global G.D.P. this year would be worse than forecast two months ago, and that the strength of a bounce next year would be weaker than expected.

Some states and companies have reimposed restrictions.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York said yesterday that anyone coming from [*eight states undergoing a sharp rise in cases*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) — Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Utah — would have to quarantine for two weeks when entering the state, or face a fine. He also delayed the reopening of [*malls, gyms and movie theaters*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). The New York City Marathon, which would have celebrated its 50th race in November, [*was canceled*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

Disney [*delayed the reopening*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) of its California theme parks, which had been scheduled for July 17, as new cases in the state [*spiked this week*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

Within weeks of reopening, Apple has closed stores in virus hot spots, including [*seven in Houston*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) yesterday. Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas is scrambling to contain [*a rise in cases*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) in the state, which had imposed fewer restrictions than many others.

A stumble in the recovery is appearing in data, with a weekly index of U.S. economic activity assembled by Oxford Economics showing a small deterioration after 10 weeks of improvement. The index collects high-frequency stats on consumer demand, employment, financial markets, health, mobility and production. According to this measure, the U.S. economy is operating at around 73 percent of what had been the norm as of Jan. 31.

“Looking ahead, we stress that the foundation to this recovery is an improving health outlook,” Gregory Daco, the consultancy’s chief U.S. economist, wrote in a note to clients. “If that measure continues to deteriorate, confidence will follow suit. This will lead to reduced mobility, less employment, and eventually slower demand and production growth with significant financial market risks.”

Here’s what’s happening

Wirecard plans to file for bankruptcy protection. The German payments processor, which said it faced “[*impending insolvency and over-indebtedness*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529),” has seen its shares plummet after it admitted to a $2.1 billion hole in its accounts, following a yearlong investigation by The Financial Times.

Bayer will pay more than $10 billion to settle legal claims over a weedkiller. [*The settlement over Roundup*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) is one of the biggest in U.S. civil litigation history. Bayer acquired the product, which has been accused of causing cancer, when it bought Monsanto two years ago.

SoftBank’s chief stepped down from Alibaba’s board. Masa Son, whose early investment in the Chinese e-commerce giant became a multibillion-dollar home run, [*resigned as a director*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) a month after Alibaba’s co-founder, Jack Ma, left SoftBank’s board.

Amazon’s $575 million investment in Deliveroo is closer to completion. Britain’s antitrust regulator [*provisionally approved the deal*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), saying that it would not hurt consumers — a year after halting the transaction on those concerns.

CrossFit sold itself. Greg Glassman, the brand’s co-founder — who stepped down as C.E.O. after making comments about George Floyd and facing reports of sexual harassment under his management — [*agreed to sell the company*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) to the owner of a CrossFit gym in Boulder, Colo.

The business lobby takes on racial inequality

As protests over the police killing of George Floyd and other black people have raised the issue of systemic racism in the national consciousness, corporate America [*has spoken up*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). Now, one of the country’s biggest lobbying groups, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, is weighing in.

The chamber published a report on opportunity gaps that hinder black Americans, outlining [*inequality in several key areas*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), including:

Employment. The unemployment rate for black Americans has been twice that of white Americans for the past four decades, and nearly twice as many black workers are in the lowest-earning occupations as white workers.

Entrepreneurship. Black Americans represent 12 percent of all U.S. workers but only 9 percent of business owners. And black entrepreneurs have a much tougher time obtaining financing. (“We’re over-mentored and under-capitalized,” the investor Kanyi Maqubela [*told Bloomberg*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).)

Education. Black students enter kindergarten with math scores 21 percent lower than that of white students and are twice as likely to attend high-poverty schools.

The group is hosting an online event today to discuss solutions to the report’s findings, including guests like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the former N.B.A. star and current education activist; Wayne Frederick, the president of Howard University; Gayle King, the CBS host; and Randall Stephenson, AT&amp;T’s C.E.O. It’s free to attend and begins at 1:30 p.m. Eastern ([*register here*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529)).

The Hertz stock price roller coaster

We can’t stop obsessing about this stock, and apparently neither can investors. The share price of the bankrupt — we cannot stress that often enough — car rental company doubled at one point yesterday, before closing with a 30 percent gain.

The rally was apparently spurred by an analyst’s speculation about a potential deal. [*Jefferies’ Hamzah Mazari suggested*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that auto dealers like CarMax and AutoNation might bid for some of Hertz’s fleet of rental cars.

As many have noted, Hertz shares appear to be a playground for day traders. The company itself warned, as part of its abandoned effort to sell new shares while in Chapter 11, that its stock could be rendered worthless by the bankruptcy process.

Hertz’s share price is down 90 percent for the year, but the day-to-day moves are enough to cause whiplash.

The jobs we need

Kevin J. Delaney is the editor of a Times Opinion project on economic inequality called [*The America We Need*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). Here, he discusses the latest chapter in the series, published this week, about work and the economy. You can follow him on Twitter at [*@delaney*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

A few weeks ago, the Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban [*wrote in a tweet*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that executives needed to better reward workers, rather than just themselves, or their “brand and business could get CRUSHED.” He was concerned by the bad optics of stock market gains and hefty pay packages for the wealthy during a national crisis.

But it’s too late to hide the truth: Owners, executives and investors have increasingly enriched themselves at workers’ expense over the past four decades.

American corporate leaders once bragged about how well they treated their employees and how much they contributed to society through taxes. But the focus for many C.E.O.s now is cutting labor costs, thwarting unionization, reducing benefits and outsourcing jobs — and reaping the huge personal rewards made possible by those actions.

Our [*lead editorial*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) this week recounts the history of this shift, including the little-told story of how the burning of a Bank of America branch near Santa Barbara, Calif., in 1970 added to its momentum. In a piece out today, The Times’s David Leonhardt [*examines recent research*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) showing that the wage gap between black and white workers is, shockingly, as large as it was in 1950, before the end of enforced segregation across much of the South.

We all lose when American workers don’t have the opportunity to achieve their potential or support their families with dignity — things a wealthy country like the United States can easily afford. So what can be done to fix things?

As David notes, raising the pay of all ***working-class*** families would make a big difference. Robert B. Reich, the former labor secretary, proposes that businesses adopt the [*profit-sharing plans for employees*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) common during the last century. The Ford Foundation’s president, Darren Walker, who began his career on Wall Street, [*calls on the wealthy to sacrifice things*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) like legacy college admissions and favorable tax treatments that compound inequalities. He also suggests changing the rules for stock buybacks, which since the 1980s have prompted companies to increase their share prices at the expense of worker pay and benefits.

When it comes to how we value workers, this is only a starting point. History shows that it was once a point of pride — and not fear of bad P.R. — for corporate executives to treat their people fairly. It was good business, too.

More from the latest chapter in the series:

[*American Workers Deserve to Live With Dignity*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529)

[*The Future of Work Isn’t What People Think It Is*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529)

[*Tax the Rich and Their Heirs*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529)

The speed read

Deals

Olympus plans to sell its 84-year-old camera business to a private equity firm after facing pressure from the activist investor ValueAct. ([*WSJ*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

The parent company of Chuck E. Cheese, the arcade-and-restaurant chain, has filed for bankruptcy protection. ([*Bloomberg*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Politics and policy

The Pentagon has compiled a list of 20 Chinese companies — including Huawei, China Telecom and China Mobile — that it says have ties to the Chinese military, a potential step toward punishments from Washington. ([*FT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

President Trump should “put a bunch of cotton” into the mouth of the White House trade adviser who briefly roiled markets by saying that the China trade deal was dead, said Senator Chuck Grassley, Republican of Iowa. ([*Business Insider*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Tech

California’s attorney general moved to force Uber and other gig-economy companies to classify their contractors as employees. ([*FT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

A federal judge dismissed a defamation lawsuit filed against Twitter by Representative Devin Nunes, Republican of California, over a parody account that pretended to be a cow. ([*WaPo*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Best of the rest

New rules for Major League Baseball’s shortened season: social distancing in the clubhouse, and no spitting or getting in the umpire’s face. ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

R.I.P. to the Segway personal transporter, used by police officers, tourists … and few others. ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

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PHOTO: Gita Gopinath, the I.M.F.’s chief economist, said the fund had cut expectations for an economic rebound next year. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***G.O.P. Falls Back on Pattern of Insults***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60K8-78F1-DXY4-X4YP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 13, 2020 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1873 words

**Byline:** By Annie Karni and Jeremy W. Peters

**Body**

'Radical leftist' or not progressive enough? In the hours after Ms. Harris's announcement as Joe Biden's vice president, the Trump campaign struggled to launch a clear attack on the Biden-Harris ticket.

WASHINGTON -- Opening an ugly new chapter in the 2020 campaign, President Trump and allies in the Republican Party and on Fox News have swiftly gone all-in on sexist and personal attacks against Kamala Harris, the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, from Mr. Trump demeaning her as ''angry'' and ''horrible'' to commentators mocking her first name to comparing her to ''payday lenders.''

Hours after Ms. Harris was announced, Mr. Trump described her as ''nasty'' or ''nastier'' four times -- terms he often uses for female opponents -- and complained that her tough questioning was disrespectful to Brett M. Kavanaugh during Supreme Court confirmation hearings. And on Wednesday, after Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Ms. Harris held their first joint appearance, Mr. Trump claimed without evidence that Ms. Harris was furious when she left the Democratic primary race after falling in the polls.

''She left angry, she left mad,'' he said. ''There was nobody more insulting to Biden than she was.''

One right-wing commentator, Dinesh D'Souza, appeared on Fox News to question whether Ms. Harris, the junior senator from California and a child of immigrants from Jamaica and India, could truly claim she was Black. And on Tuesday night, Tucker Carlson, the Fox News host, mispronounced her first name, even growing angry when corrected.

''So what?'' he said, when a guest told him it was pronounced ''Comma-la.'' (Fox News declined to comment on the exchange.)

On Twitter, Eric Trump, one of the president's sons, favorited a tweet, which was later deleted, that referred to Ms. Harris as a ''whorendous pick.'' Jenna Ellis, a senior legal adviser to the Trump campaign, posted during Ms. Harris's first speech as Mr. Biden's running mate on Wednesday, ''Kamala sounds like Marge Simpson.''

Mr. Trump added to the barrage with a racist tweet on Wednesday morning claiming that Mr. Biden would put another Black leader, Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey, in charge of low-income housing in the suburbs. That tweet did not mention Ms. Harris, but it continued Mr. Trump's tactic of playing into white racist fears about integration efforts as he declared, ''The 'suburban housewife' will be voting for me.''

''They want safety & are thrilled that I ended the long running program where low income housing would invade their neighborhood,'' Mr. Trump wrote. ''Biden would reinstall it, in a bigger form, with Corey Booker in charge!'' The president did not explain why he referred to Mr. Booker, whose first name he misspelled.

But the harsh personal criticisms, and a fixation on Ms. Harris's race, reflected a serious problem for the Trump campaign -- its inability to launch a clear attack on the Biden-Harris ticket. The lack of a frame to respond to the significance of the Harris selection underscored how the president and his campaign, without any senior strategist, are floundering as they try to decipher what their own re-election message should be.

Standing in the White House briefing room on Tuesday, Mr. Trump read from some prepared notes, assailing Ms. Harris for being against fracking and ''very big into raising taxes.'' At another point, Mr. Trump appeared unfamiliar with his own campaign's line of attack. When a reporter with The New York Post asked the president about his own campaign ad calling Ms. Harris a ''phony,'' the president asked for clarification.

''She was a what?'' Mr. Trump said.

And hours after the campaign and the Republican National Committee called Ms. Harris the ''most liberal'' member of the Senate, the R.N.C. sent out an email blast saying that progressives hated her because she was not progressive enough.

Ms. Harris ran her own presidential campaign last year, and was widely seen as the most obvious pick for Mr. Biden: at once a conventional and groundbreaking choice. Despite plenty of time to prepare for her, Mr. Trump and his allies appeared to be caught without a coordinated game plan, lurching from one attack to another, when the Democrats finally announced their ticket on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump's high-profile female surrogates, like former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina and Gov. Kristi Noem of South Dakota, were notably absent from any coordinated response to the announcement, choosing to remain silent.

''Steve Bannon offered a populist North Star for them in the 2016 campaign, and Hillary Clinton gave them a lot of fodder for populist attacks,'' said Tim Miller, a former top strategist for former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. He was referring to Mr. Bannon, the strategist who worked for Mr. Trump in 2016 and helped frame him as the populist candidate on the right.

A 2016 version of Mr. Trump might have attacked Ms. Harris as a Wall Street-funded, coastal elite, and a former cop, in an attempt to undermine the Democratic ticket with ***working-class*** voters, while also trying to suppress the Black vote. Sam Nunberg, an adviser to Mr. Trump's campaign early on in 2015, noted that Mr. Trump had donated twice to Ms. Harris when she was a candidate for attorney general in California, where he has business interests. Mr. Trump, he said, could have argued that ''he knew how to play the game and he played her,'' Mr. Nunberg said. ''You can't trust her because she was there at Trump Tower groveling for cash, just like Hillary.''

Instead, the campaign and the R.N.C. were trying to make the argument that the Biden-Harris ticket is both a tool of the far left and despised by it. ''They wanted Bernie and Warren,'' Mr. Miller said. ''That would have made the attack that the party is enthralled by the left easier. It's a hard sell to say Joe Biden is a puppet for Kamala Harris, who is a puppet for the Squad.''

Tim Murtaugh, the communications director for the Trump campaign, disputed there was any confusion about what the selection of Ms. Harris represented. ''She pushes Biden further to the left than he had already moved by himself,'' Mr. Murtaugh said, noting her support for sanctuary cities, her opposition to the death penalty even for MS-13 gang members, and her decision as a prosecutor to hand out plea deals while homicides in her city were on the rise.

He said the campaign was not responsible for news releases from the R.N.C. or for commentary on Fox News. ''We are focused strictly on talking about how she completes the radical leftist takeover of Joe Biden,'' he said.

In an email on Wednesday night, the campaign sought to fund-raise off Ms. Harris's selection, calling her ''the meanest, most horrible, most disrespectful, MOST LIBERAL of anyone in the U.S. Senate,'' saying she and Mr. Biden wanted to ''DESTROY America.''

A new ad released by the campaign ran through a list of accusations against Ms. Harris, several of them false, saying she wanted to ''confiscate your guns by force'' and ''give cop killers a pass'' -- more conventional Republican attempts to stir passions on public safety and social change.

But that flag was not being waved by the campaign's usual echo chambers. Instead, there were disparate messages. On Tuesday night, Mr. Carlson said that there were ''time-share salesmen you could trust more'' than Ms. Harris and ''payday lenders who are more sincere,'' alluding to an institution long accused of exploiting poor communities of color.

On Fox News, Mr. D'Souza said that because Ms. Harris's Jamaican father had traced his ancestry to a slave owner, her racial identity as a Black woman was in question.

The Fox News host Sean Hannity, meanwhile, called Ms. Harris a senator with a ''radical extremist record'' whose selection ''solidifies what's the most extreme radical far-left out-of-the-mainstream ticket of any major political party in American history.''

Some Trump allies even praised her, in an attempt to raise expectations ahead of the fall campaign. Senator Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who is one of the president's closest allies on Capitol Hill, called Ms. Harris ''smart'' and ''aggressive'' and predicted she would be a ''formidable opponent.''

But some Republicans, including ones often critical of the president, cautioned that presidential tweets and pundit chatter would not have nearly the impact on voters that advertising would. And the Trump campaign's ability to be more focused and consistent in its messaging online and on television is where it can do the most potential damage by defining an opposing running mate.

''They can't control Trump,'' said Mike Murphy, a media adviser to several Republican presidential candidates. ''He'll be tweeting, name calling -- and the difference between this time and last time is that Trump has half a billion dollars in resources at his disposal from the R.N.C.''

Mr. Murphy said that Ms. Harris, and her support for certain policies, would be easier for conservatives to attack than their initial, disjointed, response suggests. ''The machinery under the Trump campaign knows how to do the mediocre, standard version of this,'' he said. ''Kamala Harris is the pick. Here's the résumé: As attorney general she opposed the death penalty, even for cop killers; as senator, she supported reparations for slavery and said she would take away private health insurance. She is the future.''

On Wednesday, Mr. Biden made it clear he expected the campaign to go in the opposite direction, and become more personal.

''Donald Trump has already started his attacks, calling Kamala 'nasty,' whining about how she's 'mean' to his appointees,'' he said. ''Is anyone surprised Donald Trump has a problem with strong women across the board? We know that more is to come.''

But Mr. Trump has struggled to define Ms. Harris with that kind of precision since the Democratic primary, when he failed to land on a quick-hit way to undermine her candidacy. The president reveled in battering Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts as ''Pocahontas'' and making fun of Mr. Biden's mental acuity by referring to him as ''Sleepy Joe.''

Ms. Harris never earned a nickname -- in part, because she never managed to break out, for long, as a serious threat. Instead, Mr. Trump complimented the large crowd size at her kickoff rally. And his few attempts to criticize her were vague. ''She's got a little bit of a nasty wit,'' Mr. Trump told Mr. Hannity in an interview during the primary, a comment that could be taken as a criticism or a compliment.

If Ms. Haley and Ms. Noem were not available as surrogates on Tuesday, at least one prominent Republican woman was ready to defend Mr. Trump.

On Wednesday, Ronna McDaniel, chairwoman of the R.N.C., tried to dampen critiques of sexism by defending Mr. Trump's use of the word ''nasty'' to describe a woman in power.

''If not 'nasty,' what is the politically correct term for calling your opponent a racist on national TV for having the same view as you on busing so you can hawk campaign T-shirts,'' Ms. McDaniel tweeted, drawing attention to the most heated debate exchange between Mr. Biden and Mr. Harris, when she confronted him about his record on busing and segregation.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/us/politics/kamala-harris-gop-attacks.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/us/politics/kamala-harris-gop-attacks.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Senator Kamala Harris with Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Wednesday in Wilmington, Del. ''Her story's America's story,'' Mr. Biden said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

President Trump wasted little time disparaging Senator Kamala Harris on Tuesday after she was named the Democratic vice-presidential candidate. And on Tuesday night, the Fox News host Tucker Carlson joined in, mispronouncing her first name. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

RICHARD DREW/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A16)

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2020

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[***Nevada Is Booming. But Not Everyone Is Feeling the Gains.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y86-F9J1-JBG3-61WP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 21, 2020 Friday 18:03 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1595 words

**Byline:** Jack Healy and Roger Kisby

**Highlight:** In a state that has become a Democratic stronghold, housing prices have rebounded and Las Vegas is shattering visitor records.

**Body**

HENDERSON, Nev. — The signs of Nevada’s resurgent economy are everywhere in this community outside Las Vegas, the [*fastest-growing*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) city in one of the country’s fastest-growing states.

New housing developments are spilling up the mountainsides, filled with families and retirees fleeing California and the East Coast for sunshine, cheaper land and lower taxes. Warehouses are sprouting beside a huge new practice facility for the Las Vegas Raiders football team — another set of California transplants. Even the names on new apartments and Spanish-tiled subdivisions mirror the optimism of a state on a hot streak after years of a plodding economic recovery: Elysian. Inspirada.

“It’s a boomtown,” said Ivonne Hernandez, 28, who was in high school when her family lost their home in the housing crash.

But Ms. Hernandez and other middle-class voters say they are not sharing in Nevada’s jackpot. As the state handed out millions in [*tax incentives*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) to lure businesses here, ***working-class*** voters say they are struggling to keep up with rising rents and still feel economically vulnerable more than a decade after the recession plunged Las Vegas’s tourism and construction-dependent economy into disarray.

Today, Ms. Hernandez has a good-paying job at a gas company, but said she has been unable to afford an apartment of her own. She has already voted early for Senator Bernie Sanders ahead of Saturday’s Democratic caucuses. “There’s just not opportunity out here for me.”

Nikki Peters, who markets time shares in Henderson, said that despite the booming economy, her family struggles. She and her husband voted early for Mr. Sanders this weekend because they feel he cares about people like them.

“It’s not better,” said Ms. Peters. “We can’t afford to take vacations. We can only pay bills.”

Nevada lagged in recovering from the chasm of the recession, but it is now growing at a faster clip than much of the country. In southern Nevada, median home prices have increased by 40 percent to $305,000, according to the Las Vegas Realtors group, and builders now complain they cannot find [*enough workers*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/).

As new neighborhoods sprawl into the creosote desert, local officials here in Clark County have begun warning they are running out of space, and have proposed opening new federal lands to development. In Reno, a [*flood*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) of newcomers from the Bay Area and companies including the electric-car maker Tesla have set off a   [*runaway spree*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) of growth.

To President Trump’s supporters, Nevada’s growth has become the strongest argument for his re-election. Housing prices have rebounded. Marquee projects like a $4 billion Resorts World development and the Raiders’ onyx-black stadium are reshaping the Vegas skyline.

Victoria Seaman, a Republican Las Vegas councilwoman, lauds the president for it all. She recently wrote an op-ed [*declaring*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) that Nevada was the beneficiary of a “blue-collar boom” driven by Mr. Trump’s tax cuts and trade policies. Over the past six months, 500 new businesses have opened in her ward on the west side of the city.

“I don’t think he gets enough credit,” Ms. Seaman said in her seventh-floor city offices overlooking a jumble of half-built buildings, shortly before she dashed off for a security screening to meet Mr. Trump as he made a campaign swing through Las Vegas.

Henderson, the second-largest city in Nevada, with 316,000 residents, cultivates an image as Vegas’s genial kid sibling, a spread of subdivisions, golf courses and master-planned communities knit together by the decidedly un-Sin City slogan, “A Place to Call Home.”

It is [*whiter*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) than the rest of Nevada, which is nearly   [*30 percent Latino*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) and 10 percent black, but local officials and demographers say waves of new arrivals are transforming it into a more diverse suburb with an   [*increasing*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) number of foreign-born residents.

“There was a lot of empty real estate here for many years after the recession,” said Scott Muelrath, chief executive of Henderson’s Chamber of Commerce, as he drove down St. Rose Parkway. And now, “You can go two weeks and come down this street, and there’ll be something new going on.”

He passed just-opened big-box stores and bulldozers leveling the rocky ground for new shipping and distribution warehouses. Henderson, like the rest of Nevada, has tried to diversify its economy since the crash to make it less vulnerable to Nevada’s boom-and-bust cycles. Google has opened a data center, and plans are underway to build a machine-tool plant and a huge Amazon fulfillment center.

Of the more than 141,000 people who [*moved*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) to Nevada in 2018, about 50,000 of them were from California, The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported, amplifying an eastward flow that goes back decades. Today, nearly a third of the eligible voters in Clark County, which contains about 70 percent of Nevada’s population, were born in California, said Robert Lang, the executive director of Brookings Mountain West. Only one in 10 is from Nevada.

Political analysts argue the recent surge in migration has helped Democrats solidify their control in Nevada. Democrats have about 110,000 more [*registered voters*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) than Republicans, and have a powerful turnout machine in the unions that represent thousands of casino and hotel workers.

The culinary union, for instance, is particularly powerful because it represents many of the workers in Las Vegas’s casinos. Leaders of the group, which is over half Latino, have said they are opposed to Mr. Sanders’s single-payer plan.

“This is a very difficult state for any Republican to win statewide,” said Jon Ralston, the editor of The Nevada Independent.

But Nevada is also drawing people fed up with blue-state liberalism. Tamra West, 42, a real estate office manager, and her husband decided on a whim to sell their house in Riverside, Calif., and move to a rental in Henderson. Ms. West said Nevada’s low taxes hewed more to her conservative economic values.

Though Ms. West’s husband is a registered Democrat, she said they are both solidly behind Mr. Trump’s re-election. As the [*Democratic candidates debated*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/) this week at the Paris resort, Ms. West said she worried that their economic policies would torpedo the housing market by raising interest rates and taxes.

“Democrats are not pro-business,” she said.

Nevada’s growth is at the heart of Ms. Hernandez’s job. She coordinates natural-gas hookups for the new businesses that have helped lift job growth here to an annual rate of 2.5 percent since the end of 2016, a full percentage point higher than the national average, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

After working as a contractor for two years, she celebrated getting hired full time last year by renting her first apartment. It was more than a milestone: Her parents lost their home and declared bankruptcy during the crash. She lost her college scholarship in Nevada after she and her family relocated to Utah looking for construction work for her stepfather.

Ms. Hernandez loved the one-bedroom apartment she found in Henderson, but said she could not cope with the $1,468 she paid on rent, utilities and internet. Rents across Nevada have increased about 15 percent since 2016, about double the national average, according to Zillow. Ms. Hernandez moved out a month ago and is now living with her boyfriend’s mother.

“It feels like you can’t catch up,” she said.

With the national economy growing and unemployment at 3.6 percent — slightly lower than Nevada’s rate of 3.8 percent — the fight to frame the economy is an election-year battlefield.

Mr. Trump boasts about a “[*great American comeback*](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/henderson-keeps-title-as-nevadas-fastest-growing-city-1671183/)” while the Democratic candidates hoping to replace him focus on slow wage growth, soaring student debt and a chasm between the rich and everybody else.

Adjusted for inflation, Nevada’s median household income of $61,864 is still about $4,000 less than families earned before the recession. The lagging pace of wage growth has sharpened debates about whether Nevada’s boom-and-bust economy is growing sustainably this time, or building another bubble that will hurt the poorest when it bursts.

When Rita Story, 61, lost her telecom job in 2018, she said that family and the promise of a fresh start in a growing economy pulled her to move from Indiana to Las Vegas with her 24-year-old daughter.

There is plenty of work, but Ms. Story said they have struggled to find anything full time. She is earning $13 an hour doing tax-season work at an accounting office, and her daughter works part-time retail shifts. They are sleeping on a rollout bed and couch in her sister’s home, and hoping that a Democratic president will lift their wages and lower their $500 monthly health care costs.

“That’s my No. 1 — jobs that pay you enough,” Ms. Story said as she waited in line to vote early for the California businessman Tom Steyer in the caucuses this week. “I’m starting over. I thought it might have been better.”

Nelson D. Schwartz contributed reporting from New York.

PHOTOS: A new complex for the N.F.L.’s Raiders. The team is part of a wave of transplants to Las Vegas. (A1); A flood of new subdivisions with names like Inspirada, above, in Henderson, reflect a feeling of optimism in Nevada, where builders say they can’t find enough workers.; Rita Story has struggled to find full-time work since losing her telecom job in 2018. She said she was voting for Tom Steyer.; “It’s a boomtown,” said Ivonne Hernandez, center, with her mother and stepfather. Ms. Hernandez has a good-paying job but can’t afford her own apartment. She said she voted for Bernie Sanders. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROGER KISBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12)

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Her Voice? Her Name? G.O.P.’s Raw Personal Attacks on Kamala Harris***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60K6-H1N1-DXY4-X3YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 12, 2020 Wednesday 10:26 EST

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**Byline:** Annie Karni and Jeremy W. Peters

**Highlight:** ‘Radical leftist’ or not progressive enough? In the hours after Ms. Harris’s announcement as Joe Biden’s vice president, the Trump campaign struggled to launch a clear attack on the Biden-Harris ticket.

**Body**

‘Radical leftist’ or not progressive enough? In the hours after Ms. Harris’s announcement as Joe Biden’s vice president, the Trump campaign struggled to launch a clear attack on the Biden-Harris ticket.

WASHINGTON — Opening an ugly new chapter in the 2020 campaign, President [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/trump-kamala-harris.html) and allies in the Republican Party and on Fox News have swiftly gone all-in on sexist and personal attacks against [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/trump-kamala-harris.html), the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, from Mr. Trump demeaning her as “angry” and “horrible” to commentators mocking her first name to comparing her to “payday lenders.”

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“They want safety &amp; are thrilled that I ended the long running program where low income housing would invade their neighborhood,” Mr. Trump wrote. “Biden would reinstall it, in a bigger form, with Corey Booker in charge!” The president did not explain why he referred to Mr. Booker, whose first name he misspelled.

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“She was a what?” Mr. Trump said.

And hours after the campaign and the Republican National Committee called Ms. Harris the “most liberal” member of the Senate, the R.N.C. sent out an email blast saying that progressives hated her because she was not progressive enough.

Ms. Harris ran her own presidential campaign last year, and was widely seen as the most obvious pick for Mr. Biden: [*at once a conventional and groundbreaking choice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/trump-kamala-harris.html). Despite plenty of time to prepare for her, Mr. Trump and his allies appeared to be caught without a coordinated game plan, lurching from one attack to another, when the Democrats finally announced their ticket on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump’s high-profile female surrogates, like former Gov. [*Nikki Haley*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/trump-kamala-harris.html) of South Carolina and Gov. Kristi Noem of South Dakota, were notably absent from any coordinated response to the announcement, choosing to remain silent.

“Steve Bannon offered a populist North Star for them in the 2016 campaign, and Hillary Clinton gave them a lot of fodder for populist attacks,” said Tim Miller, a former top strategist for former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. He was referring to Mr. Bannon, the strategist who worked for Mr. Trump in 2016 and helped frame him as the populist candidate on the right.

A 2016 version of Mr. Trump might have attacked Ms. Harris as a Wall Street-funded, coastal elite, and a former cop, in an attempt to undermine the Democratic ticket with ***working-class*** voters, while also trying to suppress the Black vote. Sam Nunberg, an adviser to Mr. Trump’s campaign early on in 2015, noted that Mr. Trump had donated twice to Ms. Harris when she was a candidate for attorney general in California, where he has business interests. Mr. Trump, he said, could have argued that “he knew how to play the game and he played her,” Mr. Nunberg said. “You can’t trust her because she was there at Trump Tower groveling for cash, just like Hillary.”

Instead, the campaign and the R.N.C. were trying to make the argument that the Biden-Harris ticket is both a tool of the far left and despised by it. “They wanted Bernie and Warren,” Mr. Miller said. “That would have made the attack that the party is enthralled by the left easier. It’s a hard sell to say Joe Biden is a puppet for Kamala Harris, who is a puppet for the Squad.”

Tim Murtaugh, the communications director for the Trump campaign, disputed there was any confusion about what the selection of Ms. Harris represented. “She pushes Biden further to the left than he had already moved by himself,” Mr. Murtaugh said, noting her support for sanctuary cities, her opposition to the death penalty even for MS-13 gang members, and her decision as a prosecutor to hand out plea deals while homicides in her city were on the rise.

He said the campaign was not responsible for news releases from the R.N.C. or for commentary on Fox News. “We are focused strictly on talking about how she completes the radical leftist takeover of Joe Biden,” he said.

In an email on Wednesday night, the campaign sought to fund-raise off Ms. Harris’s selection, calling her “the meanest, most horrible, most disrespectful, MOST LIBERAL of anyone in the U.S. Senate,” saying she and Mr. Biden wanted to “DESTROY America.”

A [*new ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/trump-kamala-harris.html) released by the campaign ran through a list of accusations against Ms. Harris, several of them false, saying she wanted to “confiscate your guns by force” and “give cop killers a pass” — more conventional Republican attempts to stir passions on public safety and social change.

But that flag was not being waved by the campaign’s usual echo chambers. Instead, there were disparate messages. On Tuesday night, Mr. Carlson said that there were “time-share salesmen you could trust more” than Ms. Harris and “payday lenders who are more sincere,” alluding to an institution long accused of exploiting poor communities of color.

On Fox News, Mr. D’Souza said that because Ms. Harris’s Jamaican father had traced his ancestry to a slave owner, her racial identity as a Black woman was in question.

The Fox News host Sean Hannity, meanwhile, called Ms. Harris a senator with a “radical extremist record” whose selection “solidifies what’s the most extreme radical far-left out-of-the-mainstream ticket of any major political party in American history.”

Some Trump allies even praised her, in an attempt to raise expectations ahead of the fall campaign. Senator Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who is one of the president’s closest allies on Capitol Hill, [*called*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/trump-kamala-harris.html) Ms. Harris “smart” and “aggressive” and predicted she would be a “formidable opponent.”

But some Republicans, including ones often critical of the president, cautioned that presidential tweets and pundit chatter would not have nearly the impact on voters that advertising would. And the Trump campaign’s ability to be more focused and consistent in its messaging online and on television is where it can do the most potential damage by defining an opposing running mate.

“They can’t control Trump,” said Mike Murphy, a media adviser to several Republican presidential candidates. “He’ll be tweeting, name calling — and the difference between this time and last time is that Trump has half a billion dollars in resources at his disposal from the R.N.C.”

Mr. Murphy said that Ms. Harris, and her support for certain policies, would be easier for conservatives to attack than their initial, disjointed, response suggests. “The machinery under the Trump campaign knows how to do the mediocre, standard version of this,” he said. “Kamala Harris is the pick. Here’s the résumé: As attorney general she opposed the death penalty, even for cop killers; as senator, she supported reparations for slavery and said she would take away private health insurance. She is the future.”

On Wednesday, Mr. Biden made it clear he expected the campaign to go in the opposite direction, and become more personal.

“Donald Trump has already started his attacks, calling Kamala ‘nasty,’ whining about how she’s ‘mean’ to his appointees,” he said. “Is anyone surprised Donald Trump has a problem with strong women across the board? We know that more is to come.”

But Mr. Trump has struggled to define Ms. Harris with that kind of precision since the Democratic primary, when he failed to land on a quick-hit way to undermine her candidacy. The president reveled in battering Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts as “Pocahontas” and making fun of Mr. Biden’s mental acuity by referring to him as “Sleepy Joe.”

Ms. Harris never earned a nickname — in part, because she never managed to break out, for long, as a serious threat. Instead, Mr. Trump complimented the large crowd size at her kickoff rally. And his few attempts to criticize her were vague. “She’s got a little bit of a nasty wit,” Mr. Trump told Mr. Hannity in an interview during the primary, a comment that could be taken as a criticism or a compliment.

If Ms. Haley and Ms. Noem were not available as surrogates on Tuesday, at least one prominent Republican woman was ready to defend Mr. Trump.

On Wednesday, Ronna McDaniel, chairwoman of the R.N.C., tried to dampen critiques of sexism by defending Mr. Trump’s use of the word “nasty” to describe a woman in power.

“If not ‘nasty,’ what is the politically correct term for calling your opponent a racist on national TV for having the same view as you on busing so you can hawk campaign T-shirts,” Ms. McDaniel tweeted, drawing attention to the most heated debate exchange between Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris, when she confronted him about his record on busing and segregation.

PHOTOS: Senator Kamala Harris with Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Wednesday in Wilmington, Del. “Her story’s America’s story,” Mr. Biden said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); President Trump wasted little time disparaging Senator Kamala Harris on Tuesday after she was named the Democratic vice-presidential candidate. And on Tuesday night, the Fox News host Tucker Carlson joined in, mispronouncing her first name. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES; RICHARD DREW/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A16)

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1793 words

**Highlight:** Jay Clayton, the nation’s top securities regulator, has been thrust into a political firestorm. Where does that leave the S.E.C.?

**Body**

Want this in your inbox each morning? [*Sign up here*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

The S.E.C.’s new headache

Jay Clayton, the nation’s top securities regulator, was thrust into a political firestorm over the weekend. He was unexpectedly nominated as the next U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, amid [*the controversial firing of Geoffrey Berman*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) from that role. It leaves Mr. Clayton — and the S.E.C. — facing questions about what comes next.

Mr. Clayton is an unlikely choice to lead the S.D.N.Y. He was never a prosecutor, having spent a career as a corporate lawyer at Sullivan &amp; Cromwell, helping banks like Goldman Sachs and I.P.O. clients like Alibaba. (We’ve heard that peers and colleagues expected him to return to the private sector at the end of President Trump’s term.)

As S.E.C. chairman, he was known for having a light touch on regulatory issues, [*The Times’s Matt Goldstein and Ben Protess note*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). His biggest fight to date has been with Elon Musk over the Tesla chief’s market-moving tweets.

The S.E.C. now faces new scrutiny:

Mr. Clayton’s reputation for being apolitical — something he has long cultivated — is suddenly being questioned. Though he appears to have a good working relationship with Mr. Trump, the two weren’t seen as especially close. That perception is now likely altered, whatever happens to his nomination (see below).

A big item on the S.E.C.’s agenda is [*how to regulate cryptocurrencies*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). Mr. Clayton is seen as a critic of crypto (though [*not all of his S.E.C. colleagues*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) share that view), with several attempts to launch bitcoin E.T.F.s blocked [*on his watch*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). If he goes, will the commission become more amenable to new crypto offerings?

And the fate of the S.D.N.Y. is unclear. The district, based in Manhattan, has [*long been known*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) for going after Wall Street and high-profile corruption cases — its past leaders have included Rudy Giuliani and Preet Bharara. Mr. Berman had stoked Mr. Trump’s ire by prosecuting his former lawyer, Michael Cohen.

The interim U.S. attorney, Audrey Strauss, is expected to [*keep pursuing investigations*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that get under the president’s skin, including an inquiry into his current lawyer, Mr. Giuliani.

Mr. Clayton isn’t going anywhere, for now. [*He told staff members*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) yesterday, “We will be together for at least some meaningful period of time.” He may not have much choice in the matter. Democrats and Republicans were outraged by Mr. Berman’s ouster, making it challenging for Mr. Clayton to win Senate confirmation.

Senator Lindsey Graham, the Republican chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said that he would defer advancing Mr. Clayton’s nomination to the district’s home state senators, the New York Democrats Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand. Mr. Schumer has called for Mr. Clayton to [*withdraw his name*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) from consideration, “and save his own reputation from overnight ruin.”

Here’s what’s happening

Federal pandemic aid helped prevent a huge rise in poverty, [*two new studies found*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). But trouble may lie ahead: That aid expires next month, and Republican lawmakers are [*uneasy about spending*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) billions on more economic stimulus.

Apple’s big apps conference begins today. Its Worldwide Developers Conference, one of the biggest events in the tech industry every year, [*will be held virtually*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) for the first time. But it [*will take place under a cloud*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529): Apple’s App Store has been accused of antitrust abuses, straining relations with app makers.

Wirecard admits that it has a $2 billion hole. The German payments processor says that €1.9 billion in cash that its auditors couldn’t account for last week [*probably doesn’t exist*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), the latest twist in a two-year accounting scandal that led to its C.E.O.’s resignation on Friday.

SoftBank gets into trouble in China. The tech conglomerate’s chip-making division reportedly [*fired the head of its China joint venture*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), Allen Wu, over the weekend, after discovering that he had set up a competing business. There’s one problem: Mr. Wu still has the company’s corporate seal, which is needed for important legal functions under Chinese regulations. (This sort of thing [*has happened before*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).)

Did social media dampen President Trump’s rally in Oklahoma? TikTok users and fans of Korean pop groups claimed to have [*registered for thousands of tickets*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) for the gathering in Tulsa on Saturday, with no intention of going. (Having a smaller-than-expected crowd [*angered Mr. Trump*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).) But the real effect of that campaign on the Tulsa turnout is [*probably mixed*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

A time for U-turns

“There’s probably never been more uncertainty,” Randal Quarles, the Fed’s vice chairman, said [*in a recent speech*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). That notion is manifesting in a series of recent reversals, rethinks and U-turns, reacting to economic unease, public health concerns and the uproar over racial injustice and inequality.

Masks: A day after saying that requiring moviegoers to wear masks would draw AMC into an unwanted “political controversy,” an ensuing political controversy led the company to [*make mask-wearing mandatory*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) when its theaters reopen. Rivals like Regal Entertainment quickly followed suit.

Names: After weeks of backlash over a lack of transparency, the Treasury Department said it would [*release the names*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) and other details of borrowers in the government’s $660 billion small-business rescue loan program.

Technologies: For months, the British government said it would develop its own app to track and trace coronavirus infections. But last week it [*gave up that effort*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) — which was originally intended to go live last month — and joined an international effort to design apps based on software from Apple and Google.

Deals: Hertz won approval from a bankruptcy court in Delaware to sell $500 million in shares, until concern from the S.E.C. prompted it to [*scrap the plan*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). Mergers agreed just before the pandemic are falling apart [*right and left*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). Companies are also [*selling investment holdings*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) to raise cash, in some cases undoing partnerships that stretched back decades.

Brands: The names, images and packaging of long-established consumer brands considered racist or culturally insensitive are being scrapped or significantly altered. The parent companies of [*Aunt Jemima*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), [*Uncle Ben’s, Mrs. Butterworth’s and Cream of Wheat*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) all said last week that the brands would be either retired or overhauled, and this weekend they were joined by the maker of [*Eskimo Pie*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

Take Note: Pandemic paychecks

Michelle Leder is the founder of the S.E.C. filing site [*footnoted\**](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529). Here, she looks at companies that are reversing pay cuts for executives enacted at the start of the pandemic. You can follow her on Twitter at [*@footnoted*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

As economies reopen, companies that cut salaries in the dark days of March and April have already started to reinstate them.

Rollins Inc., the parent company of the Orkin pest-control brand, recently [*disclosed*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that it was restoring the executive salaries it had [*cut as much as 35 percent*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) two months earlier. Rollins is one of dozens of companies that slashed top managers’ paychecks as sales fell and costs rose in the early stages of the pandemic.

Darden Restaurants, which runs the Olive Garden and LongHorn Steakhouse chains, was one of the first companies to restore its executives’ salaries, which it had cut in early April. On May 28, the company [*disclosed*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that its C.E.O., Gene Lee, who gave up his $1 million salary entirely, was being reinstated effective June 1, along with four other executives who had taken 50 percent pay cuts.

Other companies have made a point of maintaining some of the reductions to top executives’ pay. Dick’s Sporting Goods recently [*said*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that in addition to reinstating its dividend, it was also ending temporary pay cuts and furloughs for many of its employees — “except for certain executives.” Another retailer, The Buckle, [*said*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that its chairman and C.E.O., who gave up their salaries in late March, would receive 50 percent of their pay in June and July.

Although airlines are showing some modest signs of recovery, executive pay cuts are likely to stick around for longer. United Airlines, which initially said that its top two executives would forgo their base salaries through June 30, has now extended that for [*the remainder of the year*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

The week ahead

The I.M.F. updates its economic forecasts on Wednesday. Gita Gopinath, the organization’s chief economist, [*said last week*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) that the numbers were likely to show negative growth rates even worse than previously estimated.

Albertsons is expected to price its I.P.O. on Thursday, raising up to $1.3 billion. The grocery chain, which has been owned by the private equity firm Cerberus since 2006, scrapped a previous effort to go public a few years ago.

Nike is the highest-profile company disclosing earnings this week, with its report on Thursday expected to show a steep drop in sales because of store closures around the world. It may also be asked for details on its [*$40 million commitment*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) to support black communities and other initiatives to improve “diversity, inclusion and belonging.”

The annual rebalancing of FTSE Russell stock indexes, which takes place on Friday, is usually one of the heaviest trading days of the year. With trillions of dollars linked to the indexes, investors try to anticipate the comings and goings, with health care and tech stocks expected to feature prominently among the [*stocks winning promotions*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529) in the indexes.

On this day in history: On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt [*signed the G.I. Bill into law*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529), establishing a range of benefits for military veterans returning from World War II. Low-cost loans led to a boom in home buying, and tuition support expanded access to higher education for millions of ***working-class*** veterans.

The speed read

Deals

American Airlines plans to raise $3.5 billion in new financing to stay aloft. ([*Reuters*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

A rise in retail day traders has increased profits for Citadel Securities, the biggest market maker for those investors. ([*FT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Politics and policy

President Trump said he had held off on punishing China over the mass detentions of Uighur Muslims to avoid disrupting trade talks. ([*Axios*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Tech

EBay’s former C.E.O., Devin Wenig, has denied any role in the company’s harassment of two newsletter writers. But he reportedly wanted to create a competing publication to hurt their business. ([*Recode*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Robinhood is changing how options are traded on its app after the suicide of a 20-year-old user distraught over what he thought was a $730,000 negative cash balance. ([*Business Insider*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

Best of the rest

The pandemic has weakened the diamond industry’s most powerful players. ([*Bloomberg*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

News you can use: “How to Succeed in Your Office Job When There Is No Office” ([*NYT*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529))

We’d love your feedback. Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](http://p.nytimes.com/email/re?location=&amp;campaign_id=0&amp;instance_id=0&amp;segment_id=0&amp;user_id=f4577a56bcf773214e9a1d55b5fe9d24&amp;regi_id=0nl=dealbook&amp;emc=edit_dk_20180529).

PHOTO: Jay Clayton (PHOTOGRAPH BY Erin Scott/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***The High Price of Hockey Begins in the Pocketbook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8K-R1K1-DXY4-X1R6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 23, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SP; Column 0; Sports Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 1500 words

**Byline:** By Étienne Lajoie and Ahmad Salimi

**Body**

Colorado Avalanche defenseman Samuel Girard was a teenager when his parents sat him and his older brother Jérémy down in their Roberval, Quebec, home for an uncomfortable conversation that would dramatically alter their lives.

The Girard family could afford to enroll only one of its sons in elite hockey for that year. Samuel's father, Tony, drives forklifts at a nearby forest products factory; his mother, Guylaine, is a family day care educator.

At the time, Samuel and Jérémy were at a level for players aged 15 to 17 eligible for major junior leagues. Facing registration fees, equipment, travel and payments to billet families -- a necessity since the Girards lived about an hour and a half drive away from the closest team -- forced the family to make a choice: they could only afford for one son to keep playing. Jérémy, aware of his younger brother's potential, hung up his skates while Samuel continued to pursue the sport in Canada's junior hockey system.

Samuel went on to get drafted by the Nashville Predators in 2016, at age 18. He was traded to the Avalanche in 2017 and, this past summer, signed a contract extension that will pay him $35 million over seven seasons.

''Let's not kid ourselves, hockey's expensive,'' Girard said. ''My parents needed help.''

Those conversations are happening more frequently in Canadian households as the price of ice hockey is forcing many parents to choose different sports for their boys.

''If I were starting out to play hockey now, my parents wouldn't have been able to afford to put me in the sport, that's just the reality of it,'' said Joe Thornton, a 23-year N.H.L. veteran who grew up in St. Thomas, Ontario.

''It's a pricey sport to get into, that's for sure. I don't know how my parents did it but I always had new skates every year. We had wood sticks and those would cost $12. Now it's $100 for a composite stick. It's just going up,'' Thornton said.

Devils forward Wayne Simmonds also knows firsthand how expensive minor hockey can be.

The 31-year-old grew up in Scarborough, a section of Toronto where the median household income was roughly 63,000 Canadian dollars (about $48,000) in 2015, according to city data. His family organized barbecues, among other efforts, to help pay for his hockey dreams.

''The cost is extremely high and it's not really manageable for most ***working-class*** families to afford to put their kids in hockey,'' he said. ''Never mind if they had two kids or three kids that wanted to play the sport.''

A 2019 Scotiabank Hockey Club and FlipGive survey of Canadian parents found that 47 percent spent, on average, between 500 and 1,000 Canadian dollars (between $380 and $760) on hockey equipment every season. WinterGreen Research, a Boston-based sports research organization, found that the average Canadian family spends 1,700 Canadian dollars (about $1,300) a year on equipment, registration, tournaments, and other fees. Those costs are only ballooning as technical advances in gear force elite players to restock year after year.

''I couldn't afford the high-end, thousand dollar skates for a few years and people would make fun of me about them,'' said Akim Aliu, who has played in the N.H.L., American Hockey League and a number of European leagues, during his 12-year professional career. ''It's the same with sticks. Obviously there's the $250, $300 sticks that we couldn't afford at the beginning, so we were using wooden sticks while everyone else was using composite sticks.''

Those costs have come under increased consideration as minor hockey registration totals among boys decreased throughout the country for the fourth consecutive year, according to a 2018-19 report by Hockey Canada, the country's governing body over the sport's development. The number of boys registered to play in Canada has dropped by 2 percent over the past four seasons. Participation among girls jumped almost 18 percent in the same span.

As the Toronto Raptors continue their quest to repeat as N.B.A. champions and Canadian-born tennis phenoms like Bianca Andreescu build their careers, Canadians are increasingly becoming enamored with other sports. In Ontario, registration for youth basketball increased by more than 6 percent from 2017-18 to 2018-19, and Tennis Canada reported a 32 percent increase from 2016 to 2018 of children under 12 who played at least once a week during an eight-week period.

But among the leagues that feed the professional ranks, cost signals elite status. Parents hoping to propel their boys' professional careers are investing more money on training, seeking an edge in the competition for college roster spots and draft positioning. Hockey camps, power-skating classes and preparatory schools with elite hockey programs -- like Hill Academy and the Canadian International Hockey Academy, both in Ontario -- have risen in popularity. Current N.H.L. stars like Sidney Crosby, Connor McDavid, and Mitchell Marner, among others, attended such academies, where tuition can cost as much as $40,000 annually.

Ryan Compton, an economics professor at the University of Manitoba and a hockey dad himself, believes that the reward in Canada for progressing to the next level is greater in hockey than in other sports -- a theory he associates with the tournament theory. Developed by the American economists Edward Lazear and Sherwin Rosen, the model stipulates that awards are based on relative rank rather than overall output. The theory predicts that participants -- in this case minor hockey players -- have a tendency to overspend to outdo their opponents, which might mean paying for hundreds of hours on the ice to practice shooting.

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In response to concerns about cost, some hockey associations have waived registration fees for new players. Hockey Canada and its equipment partner, Bauer, have also added introductory programs where children get equipment at reduced prices or for free. The N.H.L., through its newly expanded Learn To Play program, provides opportunities for kids in cities around the league to experience the sport. Though there is a participation fee of about $170, equipment is provided.

''We make sure that there's equipment exchange programs available, we've gotten N.H.L. clubs involved,'' said Rob Knesaurek, a league vice president in charge of developing youth hockey. The league, he said, also subsidizes renting ice time.

''It's all about capturing that youthful enthusiasm so that we can sustain it for a long time,'' said Tom Renney, Hockey Canada's chief executive and a former Rangers head coach.

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These efforts come as hockey faces criticism about its lack of diversity and a pattern of racial incidents. In November, Calgary Flames head coach Bill Peters was fired after it was revealed he used a racial slur toward a black player in 2009. A.H.L. defenseman Brandon Manning was suspended five games for using a racial slur during a game on this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The percentage of the league's players who are from minority groups has remained stagnant over the past 20 years at roughly 5 percent. The N.H.L. has conceded that ''hockey has the perception in some circles as being 'not for some' and 'only for others,''' and that it needs to adapt to North America's changing demographics.

''Culture trumps cost,'' said Kim Davis, an N.H.L. executive responsible for social impact initiatives. ''If we're able to set the right culture the cost won't be as prohibitive as it appears to be.''

In Toronto, Canada's largest city, almost half of the population was born outside of Canada. The city is home to Hockey 4 Youth, a grass-roots organization partnered with the Toronto Maple Leafs that is attempting to foster social inclusion by helping new Canadians play the game.

''When you get to a certain point, when you are 8 or 9, when players start to separate themselves on skill level, that's when the difficulty comes in because now there's an investment in dollars,'' said Moezine Hasham, the group's director. Despite the initiatives by the sport's governing bodies, N.H.L. teams, and sport-focused charities, there is still concern that ice hockey will remain off-limits to much of the Canadian population because of its price tag.

''It's a crime it's that expensive but I know there are programs out there and there are a lot of hockey guys that give back to their communities and try to get kids on the game of hockey so they can enjoy it,'' Simmonds said.

''Obviously I believe it's the best game in the world but I don't think a lot of people are able to experience it because of the costs.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/23/pageoneplus/23rex8.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/23/pageoneplus/23rex8.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: While Samuel Girard, left, pursued his hockey career, finances forced his brother to stop. Wayne Simmonds, below left, was ex- tremely conscious of expenses as he grew up. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY T. BARNES/ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILL KOSTROUN/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2020

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[***In Canada, the Cost of Youth Hockey Benches the Next Generation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8D-GTB1-DXY4-X0PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 22, 2020 Saturday 01:11 EST

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**Section:** SPORTS; hockey

**Length:** 1533 words

**Byline:** Étienne Lajoie and Salim Valji

**Highlight:** The price of ice hockey is forcing many parents to choose different sports for their boys.

**Body**

Colorado Avalanche defenseman Samuel Girard was a teenager when his parents sat him and his older brother Jérémy down in their Roberval, Quebec, home for an uncomfortable conversation that would dramatically alter their lives.

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Those conversations are happening more frequently in Canadian households as the price of ice hockey is forcing many parents to choose different sports for their boys.

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A 2019 [*Scotiabank Hockey Club and FlipGive survey*](https://www.flipgive.com/stories/flipgive-scotiabank-report-on-the-real-cost-of-hockey?utm_source=pr&amp;utm_medium=media-outreach&amp;utm_campaign=hockey-state-of-play&amp;utm_term=pr-hockey) of Canadian parents found that 47 percent spent, on average, between 500 and 1,000 Canadian dollars (between $380 and $760) on hockey equipment every season.   [*WinterGreen Research*](https://www.flipgive.com/stories/flipgive-scotiabank-report-on-the-real-cost-of-hockey?utm_source=pr&amp;utm_medium=media-outreach&amp;utm_campaign=hockey-state-of-play&amp;utm_term=pr-hockey), a Boston-based sports research organization, found that the average Canadian family spends 1,700 Canadian dollars (about $1,300) a year on equipment, registration, tournaments, and other fees. Those costs are only ballooning as technical advances in gear force elite players to restock year after year.

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**Load-Date:** February 25, 2020

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[***Honestly, This Was a Weird Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DX-X7F1-DXY4-X3X6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 2, 2020 Wednesday 07:38 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2611 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** Biden soared among crucial suburban voters. Democrats? Not so much.

**Body**

Biden soared among crucial suburban voters. Democrats? Not so much.

In battleground congressional and statehouse districts, the same pattern appeared over and over again this year. At the top of the ticket, [*Joe Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) won, often handily. Further down the ticket, in contests for seats in the House and state legislatures, Democratic candidates repeatedly lost.

The surge of suburban Democratic voting in 2018 for House and state legislative collapsed in 2020, with Republicans [*gaining 179*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) state legislative seats and [*at least 11 seats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) in the House of Representatives.

Take the [*34th State Senate District*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) in the northwest suburbs of Minneapolis. The district has all the earmarks of an ideal Democratic target in the era of Donald Trump. It has a median household income of $101,644, far higher than [*the $68,703 national median*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html); it is 86.8 percent white but 49.3 percent of residents over 25 have a college degree, compared [*with 36 percent nationally*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html).

The 34th is just the kind of upscale, well-educated community that has found the Trump presidency repellent.

At the presidential level, that calculation proved dead right. Biden beat Trump there, carrying what had traditionally been a Republican community by a solid 7.6 percentage points.

But at the state legislative level, it was a different story: Bonnie Westlin, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor candidate for the State Senate, [*lost*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) to Warren Limmer, the Republican incumbent, by just under 2 percentage points. Westlin was not alone.

As more detailed analyses of the 2020 election emerge, one thing is clear: For millions of voters, a vote against Trump did not mean a vote for the Democratic Party.

In 2018, Democratic gains in congressional and legislative races were clearly the result of animosity to Trump that found expression in voting against Republicans not named Trump — because Trump was not on the ballot. With Trump on the ballot this year, however, these same voters discovered that they could voice their disapproval of him by voting against his re-election, while returning to their more conservative instincts by voting Republican in the rest of the races.

A spate of recent news stories illustrates the Democratic conundrum.

The headline “[*How Democrats Suffered Crushing Down-Ballot Losses Across America*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html),” topped the piece my Times colleague Trip Gabriel published on Nov. 28:

Across the country, suburban voters’ disgust with Mr. Trump — the key to Mr. Biden’s election — did not translate into a wide rebuke of other Republicans, as Democrats had expected after the party made significant gains in suburban areas in the 2018 midterm elections. From the top of the party down to the state level, Democratic officials are awakening to the reality that voters may have delivered a one-time verdict on Mr. Trump that does not equal ongoing support for center-left policies.

Or take California, which had been a Democratic gold mine in recent decades. Not only did Republicans win back three of the seven House seats the party lost in 2018, but as Ben Christopher [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) on the nonprofit news site Cal Matters, “the blue wave of 2018 yielded to a red riptide.”

Jeremy B. White [*elaborated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) at Politico:

The myth of lock step liberal California took a hit this election. Voters in the deep-blue state rejected a progressive push to reinstate affirmative action, sided with technology companies over organized labor and rejected rent control. They are poised to reject a business tax that had been a decades long priority for labor unions and Democratic leaders.

Liberals, White continued, “thought 2020 was their moment to secure long-desired changes: California’s electorate has become steadily more diverse and Democratic in recent decades, relegating its once-mighty Republican Party to the political margins,” but they “miscalculated. There was no bigger example than voters’ decisive rejection of Proposition 16. The ballot measure would have reinstated affirmative action and directly repudiated what liberals consider a racist chapter of California’s recent past.”

In a major win for the tech giants of the gig economy, California voters defied organized labor and liberal interest groups to [*approve Proposition 22*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html), exempting such firms as Uber, Lyft, DoorDash and Instacart from requirements that they treat their workers as employees qualifying for benefits and worker protections, rather than as independent contractors.

In Texas, where Democrats were hoping to further capitalize on 2018 victories, the [*Texas Tribune reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html):

Texas Republicans managed to avoid net losses in the state and U.S. House this election cycle in part because voters in key districts showed a willingness to vote Democratic at the top of the ballot and Republican lower down.

I asked [*Yphtach Lelkes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html), a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, about the increasing centrality of the suburbs in elections. His reply signaled some of the Democrats’ future problems:

As Democrats and Republicans continue to gather strength in high- and low-density areas, respectively, the swing voters will be found in the suburbs. Democrats will have to respond to the more progressive wings of the party but fend off accusations of socialism that may turn off suburban voters. With Trump out of the White House, and with it, his bombastic rhetoric, I expect Republicans will have an easier time with suburban voters than they had over the past four years.

The ambivalence of suburban voters in 2020 — their clear hostility to Trump combined with their reluctance to support Democrats in down-ballot races — poses a dilemma for Democrats looking for sustained growth in a post-Trump era.

If the 2020 movement in relatively affluent well-educated suburbs away from Democratic voting for legislative and congressional candidates is more than a temporary phenomenon, then maintaining the House majority, as well as having a shot at winning control of the Senate, will prove to be a tough challenge. These jurisdictions are just where Democrats are seeking to strengthen their congressional majority and to win majorities in state legislatures.

Texas provides a case study in the damage suburban defection can inflict on Democrats.

[*Robert M. Stein*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html), a political scientist at Rice, supplied The Times with data on the top five Republican-held state house districts targeted by Texas Democrats in 2020. The five districts — two in Collin County north of Dallas, two in Tarrant County (Fort Worth) and one in Dallas County — Stein noted, were “predominately white suburban or exurban districts with above average education and income for Texas.”

What happened in these districts on Nov. 3? Biden carried all of them, by an average of 6.5 points, Stein wrote, but all the Democratic challengers for state legislative offices fell short.

The strategic importance to the Democratic Party of converting traditionally Republican voters in the upscale regions of the country at both the federal and state levels is evident in county-level voting data. As the chart below shows, from 2016 to 2020, Democrats continued to hemorrhage votes in low-income, low-education counties, once the base of the party, and to make up for those losses with gains in high-income, high-education counties.

These recent trends are part of a long-term shift in voting patterns. [*Neil Newhouse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html), a partner in the Republican polling firm Public Opinion Strategies, provided data to The Times showing that in 1980, Republicans won 76 of the 100 counties with the largest share of college degrees. In 2020, Democrats won 84 of these high education counties.

Similarly, in 1980, Republicans won 91 of the 100 counties with the highest median incomes, and Democrats 9. In 2020, Democrats won 57 of the top income counties and Republicans 43.

In part because of the strength of the affluent wing, there is a growing internal conflict within the Democratic Party between an ascendant and assertive left wing that has gained strength by ousting Democratic incumbents in lower income, majority-minority districts, versus those seeking to win in moderate, more upscale districts with Republican incumbents where voters are more centrist than liberal.

As has become ever more glaringly evident, these two factions hold conflicting views on both policy and strategy.

The progressive wing contends that the Democratic Party needs to take aggressive stands on issues from climate change to immigration, from police reform to massive infrastructure spending, from a minimum wage to strong antitrust regulation. These policy stands are crucial to the mobilization of the young, the poor and, often, Black and Hispanic voters, all of whom are essential to Democratic victories.

The moderate wing argues that for the Democratic Party to expand beyond its urban base, it must appeal to middle-of-the-road voters in purple America who distrust radical change, who support the police — or at least don’t want to defund them — and who prefer cautious steps to expand and improve health care, to reduce inequality and to improve conditions for the working poor. If those moderate voters are alienated, centrists contend, the Democratic Party will stagnate rather than grow.

While still a relatively small cadre, the left wing gained strength in 2020 with the election of [*Jamaal Bowman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) and [*Cori Bush*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) to the House. Both ousted seemingly entrenched Democratic incumbents in majority-minority districts, Eliot Engel in New York and William Lacy Clay in St. Louis. If progressives vote as a bloc, their numbers in both branches of Congress could prove crucial since Democrats will need every vote to pass legislation.

During the campaign, Cori Bush provoked a firestorm of controversy when she tweeted on June 4, “We need to defund the police and make sure that money goes back into the communities that need it,” and on [*Oct. 20*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html), “If you’re having a bad day, just think of all the social services we’re going to fund after we defund the Pentagon.”

Moderate Democratic candidates have [*complained bitterly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) that rhetoric like this receives wide publicity, prompting some voters to believe that the Democratic Party will follow Bush’s suggestions. Republican strategists claim that “defund the police” and socialism have been highly effective when used in negative ads directed against Democratic candidates who in fact repudiated these views.

Looking to the future, the question is how these conflicting interests and trends will affect the outcome of the 2022 off-year elections and the 2024 presidential election.

[*Marc Hetherington*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html), a political scientist at the University of North Carolina and one of the authors (along with Jonathan Weiler) of “[*Prius or Pickup?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html): How the Answers to Four Simple Questions Explain America’s Great Divide,” cites the key role of urban and suburban whites in the 2020 election in Georgia to demonstrate their crucial position in the contemporary Democratic Party.

From 2016 to 2020, Hetherington argued in an email,

there was no marked increase in the percentage of nonwhite voters. The racial composition of the Georgia electorate was about the same in both 2016 and 2020. And, the percentage of African-Americans voting for the Democratic candidate was also about the same.

Instead, Hetherington found,

what appears to have changed the most is the voting behavior of whites. When Trump won Georgia by 5.1 points in 2016, 75 percent of whites voted for him. In 2020, however, that percentage dropped to 69 percent.

The key factor in this shift among white voters, Hetherington contended, was a major change in “the mix of urban, suburban, and rural voters” who turned out in 2020. The preliminary data suggests

that the percentage of voters in Georgia who hailed from rural areas plummeted from 23 percent of the electorate to 14 percent, while the percentage of the electorate from urban areas — a highly Democratic group — increased by five percentage points and the suburban share of the vote increased by four points.

This did not happen because

rural Georgia voters stayed home. The numbers of votes cast in rural counties actually increased between 2016 and 2020. But the numbers of votes cast in more-Democratic friendly urban and suburban areas simply increased by a lot more,” according to Hetherington. “It seems plausible that the increase in Democratic support among whites is because more of those white voters lived in cities and suburbs than in rural areas.

I asked Hetherington whether the future of the Democratic Party lies in the suburbs. He replied:

It certainly seems that way. Biden was more successful than Clinton in stanching the Democrats’ bleeding in rural, white areas, especially in Pennsylvania where it mattered a lot. As an older, straight, white, male ***working-class*** guy, he might have been the only Democrat who could have pulled that off. Whoever the Democrats next candidate for president is, that person is unlikely to share many characteristics with Biden. So more highly educated people in the suburbs are going to be critical to future Democratic success.

[*Jennifer Victor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html), a political scientist at George Mason University, argued in an email that “the organizing principle around the parties is increasingly defined by social identities, rather than ideology, policy preferences, or organized interests.” Republicanism, she continued,

has come to be defined by Donald Trump and his brand of “Trumpism,” which is characterized as an America-first, masculine-bravado, defense of traditional social hierarchies. Democratic Party affiliates, on the other hand, are increasingly organized around the counternarrative to Trumpism. In this way party politics is strongly driven by negative partisanship.

In 2020, the presidential wing of the Democratic Party was sustained by what Victor calls “the counternarrative to Trumpism.” That counter- narrative was less than adequate for the congressional and state legislative wings of the party. In 2022, Trump will be neither on the ballot nor in the White House. In 2024, Democrats might luck out with Republicans nominating Trump, or even his son Don Jr., although neither outcome appears likely right now.

Instead, the Democratic Party faces the daunting task of uniting a party with competing moderate and left factions built on a fragile “upstairs-downstairs coalition” — a party that stretches ideologically from Joe Manchin to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and financially from the 18th Congressional District in California’s Silicon Valley with a median household income of [*$149,375*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) to Michigan’s 13th District in Detroit with a median household income of [*$39,005*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html).

Democrats struggled through similarly adverse circumstances during the administrations of Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, but the outcome of the subsequent elections in 2000 and 2016 suggest a tough road ahead for Biden and his party, although both came close to putting their chosen successor in office. The suddenly key suburban moderates had little tolerance for the antics of the Trump administration; they are likely to have little tolerance for a faltering — let alone failing — Democratic administration.

This places a particularly heavy burden on Biden, both as the leader of a divided country and as the head of a fragile, if not fragmented, Democratic coalition. He will shortly have the opportunity to demonstrate whether or not he is equipped to meet the challenge.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alyssa Schukar for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***The Saving of Two Pink Elephants on the Far East Side***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6060-3C01-JBG3-6102-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

An epic preservation battle over two tenement buildings facing York Avenue seems to have been ended by the U.S. Supreme Court. But is it really over?

At 55 years old, New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission has reached late middle age. And for more than half the commission's life, an epic preservation fight has been waged over two Progressive Era Upper East Side tenement buildings facing Rockefeller University.

The pair of six-story walk-ups are the easternmost of the 15 attached buildings comprising First Avenue Estate, a pioneering model tenement complex built between 1898 and 1915 by the City and Suburban Homes Company on the full block bounded by 64th and 65th streets, First Avenue and York Avenue. The entire complex, which lacks the aesthetic glamour of more familiar city landmarks, was granted landmark protection by the city in 1990.

All 15 buildings are owned by the Stahl Organization, a family business that has owned or co-owned many high-profile New York City landmarks, including TriBeCa's Western Union Building, in which the company holds a majority stake, and the Chanin Building, on East 42nd Street, which it owns outright. In most cases, Stahl has embraced the historic allure of its landmarks while updating them for modern usage. And extensive renovations have even been undertaken on many of the beige brick First Avenue Estate buildings.

But the two First Avenue Estate tenements facing York Avenue, which together contain 190 snug, mostly rent-regulated apartments, have been a battlefield. For years, Stahl has sought to demolish the pair and replace them with something taller and more lucrative overlooking the East River.

The refusal by the Supreme Court of the United States last October to hear an appeal by Stahl prompted preservationists to declare victory and announce an upcoming four-day Zoom conference and celebration of the 30th anniversary of the complex's landmark designation.

But is the Thirty Years' War really over? Brian Maddox, a Stahl spokesman, would not discuss the organization's plans for 429 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street, which the company stripped of their historic architectural detail and covered with incongruous pink stucco in 2006. In a statement, Mr. Maddox said only, ''We continue to believe that the buildings lack landmark quality, and have had in our portfolio over the decades many buildings designated as landmarks.''

In granting landmark status to all the buildings of First Avenue Estate, which are distinguished from typical period tenements by interior courtyards and abundant windows, the landmarks commission noted that the complex was the oldest surviving development of the most successful of the philanthropic companies that limited investors' dividends to provide comfortable housing to the working poor at the turn of the 20th century.

State courts have repeatedly upheld the commission's determination that the two walk-ups are indeed worthy of landmark protection, just like the rest of the complex. And federal and state courts have found that Stahl's application to raze the two disputed tenements was properly denied by the city in 2014.

''We hope for a good working relationship with the owner going forward and to see the buildings rehabilitated and fully occupied,'' said Zodet Negrón, the commission's spokeswoman. For years, Stahl has not re-rented apartments as they became vacant. A tenants' organization estimated that only about 30 percent of the units are now occupied -- with more than 125 empty.

As it happens, the two tenements were granted landmark status by the commission not just once but twice. In 1990 the full block of First Avenue Estate was designated a landmark, along with York Avenue Estate, a sister complex built by the same company 14 blocks north around the same time.

The developer Peter S. Kalikow, who owned York Avenue Estate, protested, prompting the city's powerful Board of Estimate, in one of its final acts before disbanding, to strip a pair of buildings in each complex of their landmark protection just four months after their designations.

A lawsuit by tenants and area residents regained landmark status for the two buildings in the more northern complex in 1992. But the two First Avenue Estate tenements were left vulnerable until 2006. That year, with stout backing from City Councilwoman Jessica S. Lappin, the two disputed walk-ups were redesignated as landmarks. The City Council then voted unanimously to ratify the decision.

But before the two buildings were safely under the landmark umbrella again, Stahl began to strip their facades of their stone, marble and terra-cotta trim, ultimately refacing the structures in coral-pink stucco. The alterations transformed the tenements into pink elephants with scant resemblance to the rest of the historic complex.

''We are responding to a sudden attempt by the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate'' the buildings as landmarks, Stahl told tenants in a memo in November 2006. ''About two years ago, we obtained this alteration permit, but we were hoping that we would not have to exercise it.''

Eight days later, the commission restored the tenements' landmark status anyway, basing its decision as much on historical significance as architectural.

''If you look back at the commission's history of designation, they were slow -- advocates like me would say -- to recognize social and historical landmarks,'' said Franny Eberhart, president of the Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts. ''They focused on architectural elements like those in brownstone neighborhoods.''

The First Avenue Estate designation, she added, ''was a very bold move, a leap forward in inclusiveness of different forms of our history.''

Each of the two contested walk-ups is entered on a side street through a grand stone portal flanked by imposing brackets carrying an overhanging cornice. Passing through a broad, arched passage, visitors emerge into a central light court with four corner entrances. The twin tenements also share an enclosed side court.

The president of City and Suburban, E.R.L. Gould, described his company's approach as ''a middle ground between pure philanthropy and pure business.'' The firm's investors, including Cornelius Vanderbilt, agreed to limit their return in order to provide airy, bright apartments to the ***working class***. The model tenement, then, served as a financial model as well as an architectural one.

Stahl has repeatedly challenged the two pink tenements' preservation. In 2010, the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court upheld a lower court's denial of the company's claim that the commission's landmarking of the entire block was ''arbitrary and capricious.''

The following year, Stahl applied to the commission for permission to demolish the two tenements, claiming that rent regulations and the apartments' small size made it impossible to earn a ''reasonable return'' -- defined in the city Landmarks Law as six percent of the buildings' assessed value.

Seeking a ''hardship'' exemption from landmark rules, the landlord submitted studies concluding that the apartments, which averaged 371 square feet, would rent for no more than $600 a month. Friends of the Upper East Side presented an opposing study showing that the units would fetch $1,500 a month.

In 2014, the commission voted unanimously to reject the hardship application. Stahl challenged the decision in state and federal court, including a claim that the city's rejection of its application represented an unconstitutional ''taking'' of private property.

But in 2018, the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court upheld a lower-court ruling that no such taking had occurred. Both the state Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear Stahl's appeals, ending once and for all the company's challenge to the city's denial of its hardship application.

The city's victory ''demonstrates the diligence and care'' of the commission ''in upholding the rule of law, in particular the economic hardship exemption to the preservation ordinance,'' said Will Cook, a preservation lawyer who represented the National Trust for Historic Preservation in its role as a friend of the court supporting the city.

''Beyond New York City, the case has ramifications because cities all across the country look to New York, which has one of the most robust preservation advocacy communities in the country,'' Mr. Cook added. ''As a result, case law from New York influences preservation law in other states.''

For years during the legal wrangling, conditions at the two tenements deteriorated.

To residents' dismay, the sheds erected for the facade stripping remained for almost a decade, cloaking sidewalks in shadow and providing shelter for defecating pigeons. When the decaying sheds were finally dismantled in 2016, tenants delivered six rescued fledgling pigeons, which they named after Stahl executives, to the Wild Bird Fund.

That year, after retaining Urban Justice Center attorneys with the help of State Senator Liz Krueger, 20 tenants sued Stahl in New York City Housing Court for failure to make repairs. Stahl agreed to court-ordered building inspections, at the end of which some 300 open violations were on file with the city. The landlord then made hundreds of repairs.

''Now, and ever since we sued them, they fix things,'' said Monica McLaughlin, 61, a freelance lawyer and tenant leader whose $787-a-month one-bedroom was first rented by her father, a doorman, in 1976. ''For me personally, what was really important was for them not to be able to treat us the way they were treating us.''

What happens next to the pink elephants is Stahl's move, but the city will be watching.

''The Landmarks Law requires the owner to keep the buildings in good repair, so we will be keeping an eye on the buildings to ensure that standard is maintained,'' said Ms. Negrón, the commission spokeswoman. While the city cannot mandate that the vacant units be put on the market, she added, ''we hope the landlord does what's necessary to re-rent the apartments.''

In a borough with a vacancy rate of just 2.4 percent, according to a Douglas Elliman report, the market would likely welcome additional affordable housing.

''Warehousing apartments at a time of near-record rents shows a significant disconnect with market conditions,'' said Jonathan Miller, an appraiser and the author of the report.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/realestate/all-quiet-on-the-far-east-side.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/realestate/all-quiet-on-the-far-east-side.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: First Avenue Estate, a pioneering full-block model tenement complex built for the working poor, around 1921

429 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street in 1992. Their owners have sought to demolish the two buildings for years

Monica McLaughlin, a leader of a group of tenants of two York Avenue tenements that sued the buildings' landlord in City Housing Court

the two easternmost buildings of First Avenue Estate were covered in coral-colored stucco by their owner in 2006, transforming them into pink elephants with scant resemblance to the rest of the complex. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRIENDS OF THE UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

STEFANO UKMAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***All Quiet on the Far East Side; streetscapes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:605J-7H01-DXY4-X37H-00000-00&context=1519360)

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To residents’ dismay, the sheds erected for the facade stripping remained for almost a decade, cloaking sidewalks in shadow and providing shelter for defecating pigeons. When the decaying sheds were finally dismantled in 2016, tenants delivered six rescued fledgling pigeons, which they named after Stahl executives, to the Wild Bird Fund.

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“Now, and ever since we sued them, they fix things,” said Monica McLaughlin, 61, a freelance lawyer and tenant leader whose $787-a-month one-bedroom was first rented by her father, a doorman, in 1976. “For me personally, what was really important was for them not to be able to treat us the way they were treating us.”

What happens next to the pink elephants is Stahl’s move, but the city will be watching.

“The Landmarks Law requires the owner to keep the buildings in good repair, so we will be keeping an eye on the buildings to ensure that standard is maintained,” said Ms. Negrón, the commission spokeswoman. While the city cannot mandate that the vacant units be put on the market, she added, “we hope the landlord does what’s necessary to re-rent the apartments.”

In a borough with a vacancy rate of just 2.4 percent, according to a Douglas Elliman report, the market would likely welcome additional affordable housing.

“Warehousing apartments at a time of near-record rents shows a significant disconnect with market conditions,” said Jonathan Miller, an appraiser and the author of the report.

For weekly email updates on residential real estate news, [*sign up here*](https://friends-ues.org/). Follow us on Twitter: [*@nytrealestate*](https://friends-ues.org/).

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: First Avenue Estate, a pioneering full-block model tenement complex built for the working poor, around 1921; 429 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street in 1992. Their owners have sought to demolish the two buildings for years; Monica McLaughlin, a leader of a group of tenants of two York Avenue tenements that sued the buildings’ landlord in City Housing Court; the two easternmost buildings of First Avenue Estate were covered in coral-colored stucco by their owner in 2006, transforming them into pink elephants with scant resemblance to the rest of the complex. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRIENDS OF THE UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICTS; STEFANO UKMAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***‘This Government Is Lucky’: Coronavirus Quiets Global Protest Movements***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YRB-T2S1-DXY4-X38J-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Vivian Wang, Maria Abi-Habib and Vivian Yee

**Highlight:** Millions of demonstrators have been forced or have chosen to stay at home, and organizers wonder when, if and how they will be able to resume.

**Body**

Millions of demonstrators have been forced or have chosen to stay at home, and organizers wonder when, if and how they will be able to resume.

HONG KONG — Tear gas no longer chokes Hong Kong’s skyscrapers, while protesters’ tents in downtown Beirut have been dismantled. In Delhi, the odd plastic fork and tattered blanket are all that remain of the sit-in that once throttled one of the city’s busiest highways.

Around the globe, the coronavirus pandemic has stilled the anti-establishment protests that erupted last year, bringing months of marches, rallies and riots to a sudden halt. Now, like everything else in the world, the protests face the unanswerable question of what happens next.

How long the pandemic lasts, and how governments and activists respond, will dictate whether the interruption represents a fleeting pause, a moment of metamorphosis, or an unceremonious end for some of the most widespread mass mobilizations in recent history.

The challenges are apparent. Millions of protesters are hunkered down at home, hemmed in by sweeping quarantines and fears for their own health. The daily burden of acquiring face masks or food overshadows debates about corruption and abuse of power.

Almost every government has restricted mass gatherings, ostensibly protecting public health but potentially also constraining future mobilization. Some have used the outbreak [*to consolidate power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) or arrest opponents.

But the pandemic’s economic toll, as well as the crises of trust it has inspired in many governments, could fuel fresh outrage. Already, people from Washington State to Peru to Paris have defied lockdown measures they say threaten their jobs, housing and food supplies.

Protesters have also found new ways to express their discontent. Chilean activists have [*projected images of crowds*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) onto empty streets. In Hong Kong, a union of medical workers, born out of the pro-democracy protests, [*went on strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) to criticize the government’s outbreak response. Worldwide, people have organized online workshops, banged pots and pans and organized socially distanced rallies.

“It is a rest time, but it’s definitely not the end of the movement,” said Isaac Cheng, a student leader of Demosisto, a prominent Hong Kong pro-democracy group.

The [*Hong Kong protests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) were among the first to feel the chilling effects of the virus.

The protests began in June, to oppose a bill that would have allowed extraditions from Hong Kong to mainland China. They [*soon spiraled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) into some of the largest in Hong Kong’s history, with millions marching to denounce police brutality and Beijing’s growing influence over the city.

But in January, as news spread of a mysterious virus in China, many grew leery of crowds. The freeze became official in March, when officials banned public gatherings of more than four people. Since then, police have arrested attendees of sporadic protests.

“What can we do?” said Max Chung, an activist who was [*arrested last July*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) after organizing a protest of hundreds of thousands of people. “When the time is right, of course I will organize another protest. But it is impossible right now.”

A combination of top-down mandates and grass-roots hesitation has paralyzed protests elsewhere.

In Algeria, twice-weekly street protests that roiled the country for more than a year dried up in March, as protesters agreed to focus on fighting the virus — a decision solidified by the country’s [*new ban on public demonstrations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html).

As awareness of the virus spread in Beirut, protesters at first donned masks to chant against corruption and religious sectarianism. But they dispersed in the face of a nationwide lockdown, and last month, security forces dismantled encampments where protesters had slept, held teach-ins and danced to revolutionary anthems.

Attempts to defy the restrictions have met backlash from not only the government but also allies. After [*opponents of an anti-Muslim law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) in India said they would continue protesting during lockdown, even supporters criticized them as reckless.

The restrictions on gatherings are not limited to countries that had been fending off mass movements, said Clément Voule, the United Nations special rapporteur on freedom of assembly and association.

“I haven’t heard of any countries currently where people are able to exercise fully these rights,” he said.

While caution is necessary, protesters’ natural fear of the virus could lead them to accept or even embrace restrictions with far-reaching consequences, he said.

As streets and public squares have emptied, governments have already begun reintroducing some of the very measures that set off previous protests.

Ecuador had burst into violence in October, when the president, Lenín Moreno, announced the elimination of a longstanding fuel subsidy. At least 10 people died, and Mr. Moreno backtracked. But on Monday, the country’s energy minister renewed a call to revoke it.

In Hong Kong, the police on Saturday [*abruptly arrested*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) 15 prominent pro-democracy activists — the biggest roundup of opposition leaders in recent memory. The arrests followed several weeks of [*unusually aggressive rhetoric*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) from the Chinese Communist Party asserting its control over Hong Kong, a semiautonomous territory with its own constitution.

Some Hong Kongers have been particularly concerned by renewed calls from Beijing for the city to enact antitreason and subversion laws. A previous push to do so in 2003 [*failed after mass protests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html).

“This is the government’s plan: to make people afraid, and when the time comes that the movement should be reigniting, there will be less and less people coming out,” said Mr. Cheng, the student activist.

Samia Khan, an activist in India, said she had already seen fractures in the broad coalitions that supported protests there. Hundreds of thousands of Indians, of all religions, had rallied against a law that blatantly discriminated against Muslims.

But during the outbreak, [*tensions between Muslims and Hindus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) have risen, stoked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government. Officials have blamed an outbreak at a Delhi mosque for spreading the coronavirus in the country, and some have suggested that Muslims intentionally transmitted the virus.

“This government is lucky,” said Ms. Khan, who helped organize a sit-in that blocked a main Delhi highway. “It has shut down the biggest challenge it faced since it was elected, by using the excuse of a pandemic.”

But aggressive government restrictions bring their own risks — namely, giving new life to existing grievances and creating new ones.

Already, thousands of people around the world have defied lockdown orders to protest their governments’ responses.

Violent clashes [*erupted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) in the low-income, immigrant-heavy suburbs of Paris this week, as residents denounced what they called heavy-handed, racially biased enforcement of France’s lockdown. Hundreds of low-income Peruvians [*tried to leave Lima*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) on Monday for their rural hometowns, and were tear-gassed by police.

Iraqis have returned to the streets to decry the shortage of jobs and income that has been exacerbated by stay-at-home orders. Some ***working-class*** protesters whose wages have disappeared returned to crowd the streets over the last week in one Lebanese city, while protesters demonstrated in their cars and on foot in multiple cities across the country.

Across the United States, conservative activists, encouraged by President Trump, have [*rallied against lockdown orders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html), despite pleas from public health experts and medical workers.

Others have found creative new ways to protest. In Colombia, where large strikes last year demanded higher wages and more public funding, poorer families have hung red T-shirts and rags in their windows to signal they need food and as a symbol of protest. In Hong Kong, the video game Animal Crossing, which allows players to meet up with friends, has [*become the latest protest front*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html), as homebound teenagers share virtual slogans.

Crowds in [*Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) and [*Poland*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) have denounced corruption and abortion restrictions while following social distancing guidelines by standing carefully spaced, several feet apart.

Dominga Sotomayor, a director from Santiago, Chile, has organized a group that broadcasts protest-related films and town-hall-style meetings on social media to try to sustain the momentum of the [*unrest that broke out there in October*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) over a proposed subway fare increase.

“The pandemic has been a difficult period for Chile, because there’s a real sense of the movement’s fragility. So we have had to take it online,” she said.

Even if some of the new, pandemic-inspired protests are not directly related to previous ones, they may energize those movements in the future. In particular, an extended global recession, on top of existing anger, could propel such protests.

China has offered a preview of the economic discontent the pandemic may breed after lockdowns lift: Though the central government quickly stifles any unrest, social [*media*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) [*reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) have shown workers demanding rent reductions and other relief.

“Governance failure on top of an economic crisis — my goodness,” said Thomas Carothers, a democracy expert who oversees a [*global protest tracker*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html) at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington think tank. “If you’re a power holder, tough times are coming.”

In Hong Kong, the wariness about crowds that pervaded the city has started to fade, as new infections have hovered in the single digits for more than a week.

Preparations for new protests are already underway. A group that organized many of last year’s rallies in Hong Kong said on Sunday that it was seeking police permission to hold a July 1 march.

Ventus Lau, another march organizer, said protesters were using the unexpected reprieve to recharge and strategize. Weeks of being cooped up at home, he added, had also left many eager for action.

“In Hong Kong, I feel more people are already trying to get out of their homes than before,” he said.

Vivian Wang reported from Hong Kong, Maria Abi-Habib from Los Angeles, and Vivian Yee from Beirut, Lebanon; Reporting was contributed by Hwaida Saad in Beirut; Sameer Yasir in Delhi; John Bartlett in Santiago, Chile; Julie Turkewitz in Bogotá, Colombia; José María León Cabrera in Quito, Ecuador; María Silvia Trigo in Tarija, Bolivia; Declan Walsh in Cairo, Egypt; and Alissa Rubin in Baghdad, Iraq.

PHOTOS: A 2019 protest site in Hong Kong was nearly empty last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Antigovernment protesters amid a lockdown Tuesday in Beirut. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MOHAMED AZAKIR/REUTERS); Low-income workers evaded a police blockade Saturday in Peru. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RODRIGO ABD/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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[***The Democrat Who Can Beat Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y7H-HDR1-DXY4-X3GG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 18, 2020 Tuesday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23

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**Byline:** By Adam Jentleson

**Body**

We seem to know less than we did at the beginning of the primary.

The Democratic presidential primary is starting to feel less like a political contest and more like an existential experiment. In the era of big data and after a year of micro-analyzing every little twist and turn, we seem to know less than we did at the beginning. In an era when we're supposed to know everything, we somehow seem to know nothing.

The frustration is compounded by the feeling that we're not asking all that much. Most Democratic voters aren't asking a lot of questions. They're just desperate to know the answer to a single, simple one: Who has the best chance of beating President Trump?

With more public polls than ever, more data scientists on the payrolls of major news organizations and a preponderance of poll-aggregating and analytical sites, it feels entirely reasonable to expect to know the answer by now.

Yet despite all the data and all the analysis, the universe appears dead set on defying our simple wish for an answer, and gleefully raising more questions instead. To the extent that we can put our finger on any reliable facts, many of them are slippery and two-sided.

Let's review what we (sort of) know.

A stable race is suddenly not.

For the past year, the race orbited reliably around Joe Biden. He was in a tier by himself. Candidates in the tier below him traded positions and some dropped out, but nothing about the fundamental structure of the race changed. Mr. Biden may still bounce back, but the force he exerted on the race appears to be a thing of the past.

The ''electability'' candidate is bad at running for president.

Mr. Biden seemed to have a lock on the issue voters cared most about: electability. His hold on this issue was strengthened by the preponderance of polls showing him beating Mr. Trump by the biggest margins of any of the candidates. The problem is that the reality of Mr. Biden on the ground has never matched Mr. Biden's numbers on paper. His debate performances have been generally received as lukewarm to poor, he consistently failed to fill rooms at his events and his performance on the stump has been criticized as lackluster.

The question has always been whether election results would converge with his performance on the ground or his performance in polls. Voters in Iowa and New Hampshire saw more of Mr. Biden than voters anywhere else, and entrance polls showed voters in both states prioritizing electability over all other issues. And they placed him fourth and fifth, respectively. At least in Mr. Biden's case, the election results converged with the candidate's performance in real life, not the polls.

The ''least-electable'' candidate has the best chance of winning the nomination.

Senator Bernie Sanders currently has the most viable path to winning a plurality of pledged delegates before the Democratic convention. His support is the most stable across the widest array of states, and he can claim solid performance across a diverse range of age, racial and ethnic groups. He beats Mr. Trump in most head-to-head polls.

At the same time, the Democratic establishment collectively screams that he is unelectable. These are, of course, many of the same people who assured us that Mr. Biden was the most electable candidate and that Mr. Trump would surely lose the 2016 election. On the other hand, Mr. Sanders's own theory of electability is premised on the idea that he will bring new voters into the process and inspire massive turnout. So far, that has not happened. In addition, his supporters keep picking fights with other Democrats who may not support him now, but whose support Mr. Sanders will need to secure the nomination and beat Mr. Trump. So he needs to figure out how he can expand what is a factional base of support.

Can a woman beat Mr. Trump?

Women have driven Democrats' electoral victories, but many Democratic voters are nevertheless convinced a woman can't beat Mr. Trump. Story after story documents Democratic voters -- men and women alike -- expressing the view that a woman can't win. This may explain the lackluster to poor results so far for Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. Yet by multiple measures, she is broadly liked by Democratic voters, second only to Mr. Biden in the Economist's measure of who voters are considering. Her marquee policy position, a two-percent tax on wealth over $50 million, polls at 63 percent, including 55 percent support from independents and 57 percent support from Republicans.

Women have powered the resistance to Mr. Trump: The Women's March was likely the biggest protest event in American history, and increased support from women drove a ''blue wave'' in the 2018 midterms. And in many elections, women candidates outperformed men: Among Democrats, ''female candidates in 2018 are more likely to defeat male candidates than the other way around,'' reports Ella Nilsen of Vox.

Mike Bloomberg's money can buy a lot, but probably not the nomination.

Big business loves politics because sums that amount to pocket change in major industries buy big influence in Washington. Mr. Bloomberg is investing unheard-of sums in his race -- he has more staff members than any other campaign, and his ads are everywhere. That spending has quickly elevated his poll numbers.

But there can be diminishing returns on spending: In 2016, Hillary Clinton outraised Mr. Trump three-to-one -- and lost. Mr. Bloomberg's record is dicey: He spoke at the 2004 Republican convention, praising George W. Bush and his war on terrorism. His ''stop and frisk'' regime was so brutal and discriminatory, it was struck down by a federal court as violating its victims' civil rights. His presence supercharges the message from Mr. Sanders and Ms. Warren that billionaires are buying our democracy. He could win enough delegates to be a player at a contested convention, but it's unlikely he can win a majority -- and if the Democratic Party gave the nomination to a billionaire who supported Mr. Bush, it might as well shoot a big chunk of the Democratic electorate into space and hand Mr. Trump his re-election.

Black voters are the backbone of the Democratic Party, but ...

So far, white voters have discounted their views. Former Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota are flatlining with black voters, polling at 4 percent and 0 percent, respectively, in the latest Quinnipiac poll. Their records are troubling. Mr. Buttigieg oversaw a sharp decline in the number of black police officers, pushed out both the black police chief and fire chief, and his handling of the shooting of a black man by a police officer prompted anger and outrage among black residents. For her part, a case Ms. Klobuchar cited as an example of her tough-on-crime approach during her tenure as a county prosecutor might have resulted in the wrongful conviction of a black teenager. Sunny Hostin, a former prosecutor and co-host of the ''The View,'' called the case ''one of the most flawed investigations and prosecutions that I think I have ever seen.'' But both have been propelled forward because white voters have made up nearly all of the votes cast so far.

There are other mysteries.

Turnout is down, based on Iowa -- except that it might also be up, based on New Hampshire. More moderate candidates are more electable, based on a study of congressional candidates -- except that the leftier candidate might also be more electable, judging by Barack Obama's dominant win in 2008 after beating Hillary Clinton for the nomination. Twitter is not real life, based on the composition of the Democratic electorate -- except when it is, foretelling Mr. Biden's fall and Mr. Sanders's rise. There are two lanes, progressive and moderate -- except when there aren't, as Ms. Klobuchar's surge in New Hampshire took voters away from both Ms. Warren and Mr. Biden.

One thing we do know for sure.

The last time Democrats unseated a Republican incumbent was in 1992, when we nominated the guy who had to go on ''60 Minutes'' during the primary season to deny credible allegations of infidelity and who did not win a single state until Super Tuesday. President Bill Clinton went on to win 370 electoral votes. And the last time we won the popular majority was when we nominated the black man who had admitted to using cocaine, who was caught on tape calling ***working-class*** white ''bitter'' people who ''cling to guns and religion,'' and who sat in the pews with a pastor who declared, ''God damn America.'' Mr. Obama went on to win 365 electoral votes, carrying states like Indiana.

No one can tell us who can beat Mr. Trump, because no one knows.

All we really know is that the last two Democratic presidents to win were dynamic performers on the stump who inspired people with optimism and were able to assemble a broad coalition.

As a potential member of that coalition, the single smartest act of political analysis one can perform may be to step back from the data, and ask yourself a simple question: How do the candidates make me feel?

Adam Jentleson, a progressive strategist and former deputy chief of staff to Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, is writing a book about the Senate.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Rob Dobi FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Taking (Most) Protests Off the Streets***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YRK-K1J1-JBG3-62HY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 24, 2020 Friday

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**Byline:** By Vivian Wang, Maria Abi-Habib and Vivian Yee

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But the pandemic's economic toll, as well as the crises of trust it has inspired in many governments, could fuel fresh outrage. Already, people from Washington State to Peru to Paris have defied lockdown measures they say threaten their jobs, housing and food supplies.

Protesters have also found new ways to express their discontent. Chilean activists have projected images of crowds onto empty streets. In Hong Kong, a union of medical workers, born out of the pro-democracy protests, went on strike to criticize the government's outbreak response. Worldwide, people have organized online workshops, banged pots and pans and organized socially distanced rallies.

''It is a rest time, but it's definitely not the end of the movement,'' said Isaac Cheng, a student leader of Demosisto, a prominent Hong Kong pro-democracy group.

The Hong Kong protests were among the first to feel the chilling effects of the virus.

The protests began in June, to oppose a bill that would have allowed extraditions from Hong Kong to mainland China. They soon spiraled into some of the largest in Hong Kong's history, with millions marching to denounce police brutality and Beijing's growing influence over the city.

But in January, as news spread of a mysterious virus in China, many grew leery of crowds. The freeze became official in March, when officials banned public gatherings of more than four people. Since then, police have arrested attendees of sporadic protests.

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Some Hong Kongers have been particularly concerned by renewed calls from Beijing for the city to enact antitreason and subversion laws. A previous push to do so in 2003 failed after mass protests.

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But during the outbreak, tensions between Muslims and Hindus have risen, stoked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. Officials have blamed an outbreak at a Delhi mosque for spreading the coronavirus in the country, and some have suggested that Muslims intentionally transmitted the virus.

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Crowds in Israel and Poland have denounced corruption and abortion restrictions while following social distancing guidelines by standing carefully spaced, several feet apart.

Dominga Sotomayor, a director from Santiago, Chile, has organized a group that broadcasts protest-related films and town-hall-style meetings on social media to try to sustain the momentum of the unrest that broke out there in October over a proposed subway fare increase.

''The pandemic has been a difficult period for Chile, because there's a real sense of the movement's fragility. So we have had to take it online,'' she said.

Even if some of the new, pandemic-inspired protests are not directly related to previous ones, they may energize those movements in the future. In particular, an extended global recession, on top of existing anger, could propel such protests.

China has offered a preview of the economic discontent the pandemic may breed after lockdowns lift: Though the central government quickly stifles any unrest, social media reports have shown workers demanding rent reductions and other relief.

''Governance failure on top of an economic crisis -- my goodness,'' said Thomas Carothers, a democracy expert who oversees a global protest tracker at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington think tank. ''If you're a power holder, tough times are coming.''

In Hong Kong, the wariness about crowds that pervaded the city has started to fade, as new infections have hovered in the single digits for more than a week.

Preparations for new protests are already underway. A group that organized many of last year's rallies in Hong Kong said on Sunday that it was seeking police permission to hold a July 1 march.

Ventus Lau, another march organizer, said protesters were using the unexpected reprieve to recharge and strategize. Weeks of being cooped up at home, he added, had also left many eager for action.

''In Hong Kong, I feel more people are already trying to get out of their homes than before,'' he said.

Vivian Wang reported from Hong Kong, Maria Abi-Habib from Los Angeles, and Vivian Yee from Beirut, Lebanon; Reporting was contributed by Hwaida Saad in Beirut; Sameer Yasir in Delhi; John Bartlett in Santiago, Chile; Julie Turkewitz in Bogotá, Colombia; José María León Cabrera in Quito, Ecuador; María Silvia Trigo in Tarija, Bolivia; Declan Walsh in Cairo, Egypt; and Alissa Rubin in Baghdad, Iraq.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/world/asia/coronavirus-protest-hong-kong-india-lebanon.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/world/asia/coronavirus-protest-hong-kong-india-lebanon.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A 2019 protest site in Hong Kong was nearly empty last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Antigovernment protesters amid a lockdown Tuesday in Beirut. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MOHAMED AZAKIR/REUTERS)

Low-income workers evaded a police blockade Saturday in Peru. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RODRIGO ABD/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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[***Policy Lags As Public Shifts Stance On Rights***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:605H-3571-JBG3-60YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer, Giovanni Russonello and Isabella Grullón Paz

**Body**

As more Republicans say they support at least some L.G.B.T.Q. protections, President Trump and party leaders continue to stand in opposition and particularly target transgender Americans.

When President George W. Bush needed to shore up support with social conservatives during his re-election run in 2004, he turned to a familiar political tactic: demonizing L.G.B.T.Q. rights. On the campaign trail and from the White House, the Republican leader began championing a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, praising unions between a man and woman as ''critical to the well-being of families.''

Sixteen years later, when another issue of L.G.B.T.Q. rights popped up in the midst of another presidential campaign, the Republican incumbent responded with little more than a shrug.

''They ruled and we live with their decision,'' President Trump told reporters after the Supreme Court issued a decision on Monday protecting the rights of L.G.B.T.Q. workers. ''That's what it's all about. We live with the decision of the Supreme Court.''

For decades, most Republican leaders have opposed L.G.B.T.Q. civil and marriage rights, views that remain embedded in the party's platform and its activist base. Last weekend, party activists in Virginia punished Representative Denver Riggleman, a first-term Republican, for officiating a same-sex marriage ceremony; they chose a self-described ''biblical conservative'' as their G.O.P. nominee for November. And the Trump administration continues to limit civil rights protections for transgender people and bar most of them from military service.

Yet today, widespread battles over L.G.B.T.Q. rights are less frequent among parts of the Republican Party -- not just among some corporate leaders and political donors who dislike openly bigoted fights, but also among many of the rank-and-file Republicans who say in polling that they support at least some rights and protections for L.G.B.T.Q. people.

Last year, according to Pew, roughly three in five Americans said they supported same-sex marriage -- up from half that share in 2004. Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, 44 percent supported same-sex marriage last year, up from 19 percent. Wide majorities of the country also support extending workplace protections to L.G.B.T.Q. Americans, according to surveys taken before the Supreme Court's ruling.

The consensus was so broad that last year, even among white Republican men over age 50 holding favorable views of Mr. Trump, 52 percent said that workplace protections and other nondiscrimination laws should apply to L.G.B.T.Q. people, according to a Public Religion Research Institute poll.

''On L.G.B.T. rights, everyone has moved on this issue,'' Robert Jones, the founder of PRRI, said in an interview, referring to voters across the political spectrum. ''Whether you're talking about marriage equality, nondiscrimination protection -- everybody has moved. Seniors have moved, white evangelicals have moved, base Republicans have moved.''

In interviews this week, several Republican voters in battleground states reacted to the Supreme Court ruling by expressing support broadly for civil rights for L.G.B.T.Q. people. Some were gently critical of Mr. Trump on points, while others said the most unexpected thing about the decision was that two Republican-nominated members of the court, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, joined the court's four more liberal justices on the majority opinion, which Justice Gorsuch wrote.

''As conservatives, they usually go by the rule of law, so I was surprised,'' said Wayne Bradley, 43, a Republican from Detroit. ''But I'm comfortable with the decision they made. Everyone deserves respect and with all the other things that are going on in the world, maybe that played a part in their decision. Everybody deserves protection.''

Margie Dougherty, 61, a Republican and Trump backer from Bayside in suburban Milwaukee, said she believed the president was not taking the right approach with his restrictions on transgender people serving in the military.

''If a person can perform the duties of a job or role they are hired and trained for, then they should be allowed to do the job,'' she said.

For many transgender and nonbinary Americans, however, changes in public opinion can be cold comfort given that prejudice and hate crimes remain a harsh reality in their lives. In interviews, some expressed concern that the new Supreme Court ruling could take the focus away from work that still needs to be done.

''The big picture is that employment is only one of many places where gay trans people are discriminated against,'' said Patrick Cognato, an English major at Binghamton University who is nonbinary. ''Things like health care, housing and education are really important, too, and have a serious effect on people's everyday lives. People can't wait for these to be addressed because it affects them every day.''

Last year, in a separate PRRI survey, 62 percent of Americans said that in recent years they had become more supportive of transgender rights, not less. Even a slim majority of white evangelicals -- a Republican bastion -- said they had grown more supportive.

But it was only five years ago that transgender Americans became a political target of Republicans trying to regulate the use of public bathrooms. Some political observers believe that the Republican focus on the issue backfired -- particularly when a Democrat, Roy Cooper, won the governor's race in North Carolina after the state's ''bathroom bill'' became a flash point in the campaign. That legislation required transgender people in government and public buildings to use the bathroom that corresponds with the gender on their birth certificate.

The law drew nationwide outrage, prompting companies to cancel planned expansions and move events out of the state, costing North Carolina jobs and tax revenue. Last year, the law was partially repealed by a federal judge.

Whatever the change in attitudes, however, transgender Americans remain heavily targeted for hate crimes, violence and discrimination. Black transgender people suffer disproportionate levels of police violence, and the American Medical Association said last fall that killings of transgender people, especially women of color, amounted to an epidemic.

If some Republicans have grown more accepting of L.G.B.T.Q. rights, Mr. Trump, his administration and the party leadership appear out of step with those parts of the base.

While Mr. Trump said in 2016, while running for president, that transgender people should be allowed to use whatever bathroom they feel most comfortable with, he rescinded protections for transgender students in 2017 that had allowed them to use bathrooms corresponding with their gender identity. In addition to the military ban, his administration moved last week to erase protections for transgender patients against discrimination by doctors, hospitals and health insurance companies.

''I cannot think of another administration that has gone out of its way to discriminate against transgender people specifically,'' said Gabriel Arkles, a senior staff lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union working on L.G.B.T.Q. rights. ''There are other administrations that were terrible for transgender people -- the Reagan administration's management of the H.I.V. epidemic, Clinton's welfare and prison reform -- but these weren't situations where they were specifically naming transgender people in their policies.''

On other issues, Mr. Trump called same-sex marriage ''settled law'' shortly after taking office, but he also promised to ''seriously consider'' a Supreme Court justice who would once again outlaw the constitutional right. Congressional Republicans and Mr. Trump continue to resist the Equality Act, Democratic-sponsored legislation that would extend anti-discrimination rules for L.G.B.T.Q. Americans. And the executive committee of the Republican National Committee decided this month to carry over the 2016 party platform, which calls for a constitutional amendment overturning the 2015 Supreme Court decision that struck down laws defining marriage between one man and one woman.

With the president's re-election prospects looking precarious at the moment, both Mr. Trump and some party leaders appear wary of antagonizing the loyal voters and activists in the most conservative parts of his base. Yet even some leaders on the right say that opposition to L.G.B.T.Q. protections doesn't carry the same political potency that it once did in some of the most conservative quarters of the party.

''Religious freedom and the protection of unborn lift ranks far higher in the hierarchy of the concerns from faith-based voters,'' said Ralph Reed, the chairman of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, which works to drive evangelical voters to the polls.

On the campaign trail, most Republican elected officials now generally avoid broadcasting their opposition to same-sex marriage, except in select primary campaigns in deeply conservative districts. Meanwhile, a record number of L.G.B.T.Q. candidates won seats in the 2018 midterms, with 161 openly lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people elected, according to the Victory Fund, a nonpartisan political action committee devoted to electing L.G.B.T.Q. candidates. Most were Democrats.

Ed Goeas, a Republican pollster, said that what was once a hot-button issue for voters on the right had turned into something of a nonstarter.

''There was a period of concern over where things were moving on gay marriage: that a church that refused to marry a gay couple could be sued,'' Mr. Goeas said in an interview. ''The fact of the matter is, nothing's really pushed it to that extent, everything's sort of settled down into normalcy, and I don't sense that it's a big issue today.''

Even as national attitudes have evolved on questions around gender and sexuality, analysts said that the Republican Party under Mr. Trump has hardly let go of cultural issues altogether. It has simply shifted toward talking more about immigration and race, including in his attacks on protesters, immigrants and black celebrities.

''The new culture war is not abortion or same-sex marriage, the new culture war is about preserving a white, Christian America,'' said Dr. Jones, the PRRI pollster. A 2019 poll from his organization found that, even as many Americans' views on race had moved to the left in recent years, 69 percent of Republicans said they believed that discrimination against white people was just as much of a problem as discrimination against racial minorities.

''That's what Trump's really leading with,'' Dr. Jones added. ''The 'Make America Great Again' thing -- the way that was heard by most white evangelical Protestants, white ***working-class*** folks, was saying: 'I'm going to preserve the composition of the country.'''

Lisa Lerer reported from Washington, and Giovanni Russonello and Isabella Grullón Paz from New York. David Umhoefer contributed reporting from Milwaukee, and Kathleen Gray from Detroit.Lisa Lerer reported from Washington, and Giovanni Russonello and Isabella Grullón Paz from New York. Kathleen Gray contributed reporting from Detroit, and David Umhoefer from Milwaukee.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/us/politics/lgbtq-supreme-court-trump-republicans.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/us/politics/lgbtq-supreme-court-trump-republicans.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The Supreme Court's decision on Monday protecting the rights of gay and transgender workers is part of a broader cultural shift, even among social conservatives. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Why Don’t We Know Which Democratic Candidate Can Beat Trump?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y79-B591-JBG3-63GC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 17, 2020 Monday 11:38 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1597 words

**Byline:** Adam Jentleson

**Highlight:** We seem to know less than we did at the beginning of the primary.

**Body**

We seem to know less than we did at the beginning of the primary.

The Democratic presidential primary is starting to feel less like a political contest and more like an existential experiment. In the era of big data and after a year of micro-analyzing every little twist and turn, we seem to know less than we did at the beginning. In an era when we’re supposed to know everything, we somehow seem to know nothing.

The frustration is compounded by the feeling that we’re not asking all that much. Most Democratic voters aren’t asking a lot of questions. They’re just desperate to know the answer to a single, simple one: Who has the best chance of beating President Trump?

With more public polls than ever, more data scientists on the payrolls of major news organizations and a preponderance of poll-aggregating and analytical sites, it feels entirely reasonable to expect to know the answer by now.

Yet despite all the data and all the analysis, the universe appears dead set on defying our simple wish for an answer, and gleefully raising more questions instead. To the extent that we can put our finger on any reliable facts, many of them are slippery and two-sided.

Let’s review what we (sort of) know.

A stable race is suddenly not.

For the past year, the race orbited reliably around Joe Biden. He was in a tier by himself. Candidates in the tier below him traded positions and some dropped out, but nothing about the fundamental structure of the race changed. Mr. Biden may still bounce back, but the force he exerted on the race appears to be a thing of the past.

The “electability” candidate is bad at running for president.

Mr. Biden seemed to have a lock on the issue voters cared most about: electability. His hold on this issue was strengthened by the preponderance of polls showing him beating Mr. Trump by the biggest margins of any of the candidates. The problem is that the reality of Mr. Biden on the ground has never matched Mr. Biden’s numbers on paper. His debate performances have been generally received as lukewarm to poor, he consistently failed to fill rooms at his events and his performance on the stump has been criticized as lackluster.

The question has always been whether election results would converge with his performance on the ground or his performance in polls. Voters in Iowa and New Hampshire saw more of Mr. Biden than voters anywhere else, and entrance polls showed voters in both states prioritizing electability over all other issues. And they placed him fourth and fifth, respectively. At least in Mr. Biden’s case, the election results converged with the candidate’s performance in real life, not the polls.

The “least-electable” candidate has the best chance of winning the nomination.

Senator Bernie Sanders currently has the most viable path to winning a plurality of pledged delegates before the Democratic convention. His support is the most stable across the widest array of states, and he can claim solid performance across a diverse range of age, racial and ethnic groups. He beats Mr. Trump in most head-to-head polls.

At the same time, the Democratic establishment collectively screams that he is unelectable. These are, of course, many of the same people who assured us that Mr. Biden was the most electable candidate and that Mr. Trump would surely lose the 2016 election. On the other hand, Mr. Sanders’s own theory of electability is premised on the idea that he will bring new voters into the process and inspire massive turnout. So far, that has not happened. In addition, his supporters keep picking fights with other Democrats who may not support him now, but whose support Mr. Sanders will need to secure the nomination and beat Mr. Trump. So he needs to figure out how he can expand what is a factional base of support.

Can a woman beat Mr. Trump?

Women have driven Democrats’ electoral victories, but many Democratic voters are nevertheless convinced a woman can’t beat Mr. Trump. Story after story documents Democratic voters — men and women alike — expressing the view that a woman can’t win. This may explain the lackluster to poor results so far for Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. Yet by multiple measures, she is broadly liked by Democratic voters, second only to Mr. Biden in the Economist’s [*measure*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) of who voters are considering. Her marquee policy position, a two-percent tax on wealth over $50 million,   [*polls*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) at 63 percent, including 55 percent support from independents and 57 percent support from Republicans.

Women have powered the resistance to Mr. Trump: The Women’s March was likely the biggest protest event in American history, and increased support from women drove a “blue wave” in the 2018 midterms. And in many elections, women candidates [*outperformed*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) men: Among Democrats, “female candidates in 2018 are more likely to defeat male candidates than the other way around,” reports Ella Nilsen of Vox.

Mike Bloomberg’s money can buy a lot, but probably not the nomination.

Big business loves politics because sums that amount to pocket change in major industries buy big influence in Washington. Mr. Bloomberg is investing unheard-of sums in his race — he has more staff members than any other campaign, and his ads are everywhere. That spending has quickly elevated his poll numbers.

But there can be diminishing returns on spending: In 2016, Hillary Clinton [*outraised Mr. Trump three-to-one*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) — and lost. Mr. Bloomberg’s record is dicey: He spoke at the 2004 Republican convention,   [*praising*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) George W. Bush and his war on terrorism. His “stop and frisk” regime was so brutal and discriminatory, it was   [*struck down by a federal court*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/)as violating its victims’ civil rights. His presence supercharges the message from Mr. Sanders and Ms. Warren that billionaires are buying our democracy. He could win enough delegates to be a player at a contested convention, but it’s unlikely he can win a majority — and if the Democratic Party gave the nomination to a billionaire who supported Mr. Bush, it might as well shoot a big chunk of the Democratic electorate into space and hand Mr. Trump his re-election.

Black voters are the backbone of the Democratic Party, but …

So far, white voters have discounted their views. Former Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota are flatlining with black voters, polling at 4 percent and 0 percent, respectively, in the latest [*Quinnipiac poll*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/). Their records are troubling. Mr. Buttigieg oversaw a sharp   [*decline*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) in the number of black police officers, pushed out both the black police chief and fire chief, and his handling of the shooting of a black man by a police officer prompted anger and outrage among black residents. For her part, a case Ms. Klobuchar cited as an example of her tough-on-crime approach during her tenure as a county prosecutor might have   [*resulted*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) in the wrongful conviction of a black teenager. Sunny Hostin, a former prosecutor and co-host of the “The View,” called the case “one of the most flawed investigations and prosecutions that I think I have ever seen.” But both have been propelled forward because white voters have made up nearly all of the votes cast so far.

There are other mysteries.

Turnout is down, based on Iowa — except that it might also be up, based on New Hampshire. More moderate candidates are more electable, based on a study of congressional candidates — except that the leftier candidate might also be more electable, judging by Barack Obama’s dominant win in 2008 after beating Hillary Clinton for the nomination. Twitter is not real life, based on the composition of the Democratic electorate — except when it is, foretelling Mr. Biden’s fall and Mr. Sanders’s rise. There are two lanes, progressive and moderate — except when there aren’t, as Ms. Klobuchar’s surge in New Hampshire took voters away from both Ms. Warren and Mr. Biden.

One thing we do know for sure.

The last time Democrats unseated a Republican incumbent was in 1992, when we nominated the guy who had to go on [*“60 Minutes”*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) during the primary season to deny credible allegations of infidelity and who did not win a single state until Super Tuesday. President Bill Clinton went on to win 370 electoral votes. And the last time we won the popular majority was when we nominated the black man who had admitted to using cocaine, who was caught on tape calling ***working-class*** whites “bitter” people who “cling to guns and religion,” and who sat in the pews with a pastor who declared, “God damn America.” Mr. Obama went on to win 365 electoral votes, carrying states like Indiana.

No one can tell us who can beat Mr. Trump, because no one knows.

All we really know is that the last two Democratic presidents to win were dynamic performers on the stump who inspired people with optimism and were able to assemble a broad coalition.

As a potential member of that coalition, the single smartest act of political analysis one can perform may be to step back from the data, and ask yourself a simple question: How do the candidates make me feel?

Adam Jentleson, a progressive strategist and former deputy chief of staff to Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, is writing a book about the Senate.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/).

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/),   [*Twitter (@NYTopinion)*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/) and   [*Instagram*](https://projects.economist.com/democratic-primaries-2020/).

PHOTO:   (PHOTOGRAPH BY Rob Dobi FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***On L.G.B.T.Q. Rights, a Gulf Between Trump and Many Republican Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6056-06S1-JBG3-6382-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Lisa Lerer, Giovanni Russonello and Isabella Grullón Paz

**Highlight:** As more Republicans say they support at least some L.G.B.T.Q. protections, President Trump and party leaders continue to stand in opposition and particularly target transgender Americans.

**Body**

As more Republicans say they support at least some L.G.B.T.Q. protections, President Trump and party leaders continue to stand in opposition and particularly target transgender Americans.

When President George W. Bush needed to shore up support with social conservatives during his re-election run in 2004, he turned to a familiar political tactic: demonizing L.G.B.T.Q. rights. On the campaign trail and from the White House, the Republican leader began championing a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, praising unions between a man and woman as “critical to the well-being of families.”

Sixteen years later, when another issue of [*L.G.B.T.Q. rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) popped up in the midst of another presidential campaign, the Republican incumbent responded with little more than a shrug.

“They ruled and we live with their decision,” [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) told reporters after the Supreme Court issued a decision on Monday [*protecting the rights of L.G.B.T.Q. workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html). “That’s what it’s all about. We live with the decision of the Supreme Court.”

For decades, most Republican leaders have opposed L.G.B.T.Q. civil and marriage rights, views that remain [*embedded in the party’s platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) and its activist base. Last weekend, party activists in Virginia punished Representative Denver Riggleman, a first-term Republican, for officiating a same-sex marriage ceremony; they chose a self-described “biblical conservative” as their G.O.P. nominee for November. And the Trump administration continues to limit [*civil rights protections for transgender people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) and bar [*most of them from military service*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html).

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Whatever the change in attitudes, however, transgender Americans remain heavily targeted for hate crimes, violence and discrimination. Black transgender people suffer disproportionate levels of police violence, and the American Medical Association said last fall that [*killings of transgender people, especially women of color*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html), amounted to an epidemic.

If some Republicans have grown more accepting of L.G.B.T.Q. rights, Mr. Trump, his administration and the party leadership appear out of step with those parts of the base.

While Mr. Trump said in 2016, while running for president, that transgender people should be [*allowed to use whatever bathroom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) they feel most comfortable with, he [*rescinded protections for transgender students*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) in 2017 that had allowed them to use bathrooms corresponding with their gender identity. In addition to the military ban, his administration moved last week to [*erase protections for transgender patients*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) against discrimination by doctors, hospitals and health insurance companies.

“I cannot think of another administration that has gone out of its way to discriminate against transgender people specifically,” said Gabriel Arkles, a senior staff lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union working on L.G.B.T.Q. rights. “There are other administrations that were terrible for transgender people — the Reagan administration’s management of the H.I.V. epidemic, Clinton’s welfare and prison reform — but these weren’t situations where they were specifically naming transgender people in their policies.”

On other issues, Mr. Trump called same-sex marriage “settled law” shortly after taking office, but he also promised to “seriously consider” a Supreme Court justice who would once again outlaw the constitutional right. Congressional Republicans and Mr. Trump continue to resist the Equality Act, Democratic-sponsored legislation that would extend anti-discrimination rules for L.G.B.T.Q. Americans. And the executive committee of the Republican National Committee decided this month to carry over the 2016 party platform, which calls for a constitutional amendment overturning [*the 2015 Supreme Court decision*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) that struck down laws defining marriage between one man and one woman.

With the president’s re-election prospects looking precarious at the moment, both Mr. Trump and some party leaders appear wary of antagonizing the loyal voters and activists in the most conservative parts of his base. Yet even some leaders on the right say that opposition to L.G.B.T.Q. protections doesn’t carry the same political potency that it once did in some of the most conservative quarters of the party.

“Religious freedom and the protection of unborn lift ranks far higher in the hierarchy of the concerns from faith-based voters,” said Ralph Reed, the chairman of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, which works to drive evangelical voters to the polls.

On the campaign trail, most Republican elected officials now generally avoid broadcasting their opposition to same-sex marriage, except in select primary campaigns in deeply conservative districts. Meanwhile, [*a record number of L.G.B.T.Q. candidates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) won seats in the 2018 midterms, with 161 openly lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people elected, according to the Victory Fund, a nonpartisan political action committee devoted to electing L.G.B.T.Q. candidates. Most were Democrats.

Ed Goeas, a Republican pollster, said that what was once a hot-button issue for voters on the right had turned into something of a nonstarter.

“There was a period of concern over where things were moving on gay marriage: that a church that refused to marry a gay couple could be sued,” Mr. Goeas said in an interview. “The fact of the matter is, nothing’s really pushed it to that extent, everything’s sort of settled down into normalcy, and I don’t sense that it’s a big issue today.”

Even as national attitudes have evolved on questions around gender and sexuality, analysts said that the Republican Party under Mr. Trump has hardly let go of cultural issues altogether. It has simply shifted toward talking more about immigration and race, including in his attacks on protesters, immigrants and black celebrities.

“The new culture war is not abortion or same-sex marriage, the new culture war is about preserving a white, Christian America,” said Dr. Jones, the PRRI pollster. A [*2019 poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) from his organization found that, even as many Americans’ views on race had [*moved to the left*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/biden-gay-rights-lgbt.html) in recent years, 69 percent of Republicans said they believed that discrimination against white people was just as much of a problem as discrimination against racial minorities.

“That’s what Trump’s really leading with,” Dr. Jones added. “The ‘Make America Great Again’ thing — the way that was heard by most white evangelical Protestants, white ***working-class*** folks, was saying: ‘I’m going to preserve the composition of the country.’”

Lisa Lerer reported from Washington, and Giovanni Russonello and Isabella Grullón Paz from New York. David Umhoefer contributed reporting from Milwaukee, and Kathleen Gray from Detroit.

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PHOTO: The Supreme Court’s decision on Monday protecting the rights of gay and transgender workers is part of a broader cultural shift, even among social conservatives. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 26, 2020

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[***Irish Voters Cast Off Relic of Entrenched 2-Party System***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y68-4MG1-JBG3-61WC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** In a landmark election, Sinn Fein won a seat at the table, though tortuous coalition negotiations will determine who will lead the next government.

**Body**

In a landmark election, Sinn Fein won a seat at the table, though tortuous coalition negotiations will determine who will lead the next government.

DUBLIN — In a century-old political system controlled by two seemingly indistinguishable center-right parties in Ireland, Jamie Clarke did what seemed sensible to him: He never voted in a general election.

Until Saturday.

“Fianna Fail and Fine Gael were the people that made the decisions, and someone like me could never change it — that’s the way it felt,” Mr. Clarke, a 33-year-old bartender, said on Monday, referring to the Irish political duopoly that has traded power since 1932. “I was so disaffected by how far they were from me.”

But in recent years, successive public votes in Ireland to [*legalize same-sex marriage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/24/world/europe/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum.html?searchResultPosition=5) and   [*repeal an abortion ban*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/24/world/europe/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum.html?searchResultPosition=5) have pulled many young and dissatisfied people into politics, giving voters a chance to shake up traditions that were once rigidly enforced by the Roman Catholic Church. Their next target was Ireland’s ossified political hierarchy.

On Saturday, voters cast off that relic, too, ending the two-party stasis in Irish politics [*with a breakout vote for Sinn Fein*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/24/world/europe/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum.html?searchResultPosition=5), a party long shunned by the mainstream for its ties to the Irish Republican Army, a paramilitary group that sought the reunification of Ireland. Despite what he called the party’s “shady history,” Mr. Clarke said, he voted for Sinn Fein because he felt it was the tonic that Irish politics needed.

“Before the abortion referendum, I was like, ‘Ah, everyone’s going to know we’re bigots and narrow-minded,’ and then we showed we weren’t,” he said, sitting at a central Dublin pub on a night off. “Now we’re showing again that we’re not afraid to have our voices heard.”

The vote sent a tremor through a political system that had long defied the usual left-right divisions across Europe. But for all the disruption, what emerged from the wreckage was, by European standards, a much more normal-looking system, anchored by rival parties on the left and the right.

“For the first time in 100 years, it’s possible you’ll have a party that calls itself left-wing leading a government,” said Eoin O’Malley, an associate professor of political science at Dublin City University, referring to Sinn Fein.

By the time the votes were counted this week, Sinn Fein held one fewer parliamentary seats than Ireland’s main center-right opposition party, Fianna Fail, which had been expected to romp to victory. And it captured two more seats than the current center-right governing party, Fine Gael, [*led by Prime Minister Leo Varadkar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/24/world/europe/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum.html?searchResultPosition=5), Ireland’s frontman in negotiations with London over Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union.

Tortuous coalition negotiations in the coming weeks will determine who, if anyone, can command enough support to lead the next government. But lawmakers from across the political spectrum conceded that the vote for Sinn Fein reflected the desire of a huge cohort of voters — young and old, urban and rural, ***working-class*** and middle-class — for new alternatives in a system that had long stamped them out.

“Every other politician, they say they’re going to do this and that,” said Tony Hayes, 64, who lives in central Dublin. “But at the end of the day, they’re feeding you loads of lies. So why not go to somebody you feel like you can trust them? Sinn Fein, you feel like you can trust them.”

There was one issue above all that drove Mr. Hayes’s anger at Ireland’s two old political heavyweights and endeared him, like many voters, to Sinn Fein: housing. The number of homeless people has been rising for years, eclipsing 10,000 in 2019. And average rents have increased by as much as 40 percent in some counties over the past three years.

Young people, especially, are suffering, with some leaving bigger cities like Dublin or moving out of Ireland altogether. Mr. Clarke said that many of his friends had been forced to move back in with their parents. He had lived in a central Dublin neighborhood for five years before high rents drove him out to a suburb.

“It’s not any good for your psyche,” he said, “but it’s cheaper.”

Sinn Fein’s success extended well beyond its core group of young and urban voters, though. Rural seats that had not been represented in a century by a Sinn Fein lawmaker joined inner-city Dublin districts in electing representatives from the party. And Sinn Fein became the most popular party among every age group up to 65, according to exit polls.

Ailbhe Smyth, 73, a political activist and feminist scholar who played a leading role in the campaign to repeal Ireland’s abortion ban, said that many were feeling the anguish of a crisis that had forced people to wait weeks or years for some medical appointments, despite the government’s lavish spending on health care. She said older people, too, had woken up to the pain that Ireland’s cultural and political norms had inflicted on the younger generations.

While power was passed back and forth between the two center-right parties, parts of Irish identity, such as the expectation that people could grow up to own their own homes, began to vanish. And just as Ms. Smyth said the vote for abortion rights had been driven in part by “a very deep sense of national shame at the way women had been treated historically in this country,” she said that the turnout this weekend reflected the regret of some voters for not vanquishing an outdated political system sooner.

“Older people voting for Sinn Fein are saying, ‘Well, actually, my son, my daughter, my grandchildren, they haven’t got a house,’” Ms. Smyth said. “So there is that feeling of guilt that we’re not leaving them a very good world — and we’ve wrecked the planet, too.”

Facing up to rivals like Mr. Varadkar, who focused during the campaign on Brexit achievements that few voters cared about, Sinn Fein stuck to a few clear, tangible promises. And rather than harping on the government’s failures, as it recently had during unsuccessful campaigns, the party tried to home in on what it would get done. It vowed, for instance, to spend 6.5 billion euros, about $7 billion, building 100,000 homes.

It also drew in supporters with a new leader, Mary Lou McDonald, a 50-year-old Dubliner who helped shed the party’s reputation for having predominantly male supporters and who pushed it to liberalize its position on abortion rights. In 2018, [*she succeeded Gerry Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/24/world/europe/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum.html?searchResultPosition=5), who is from Northern Ireland and who is widely reported to have once served as chief of staff to the I.R.A., though he has always denied that.

Still, Sinn Fein may find it difficult to maintain its momentum. Analysts expressed doubt that it could quickly build its way out of Ireland’s housing crisis, given the challenges facing a construction industry that is already near capacity. The country would need an influx of foreign workers to keep pace with demand, analysts have said, a development that would itself stress the housing market as new workers looked for their own places to live.

The party also has to balance the desires of a traditional base that is hungry for Irish unity with newer voters who flocked to it because of issues like housing and homelessness. That tension became evident in recent days as some candidates faced criticism for singing songs or using slogans associated with the fight for a united Ireland, reminders to some voters of the party’s ties to anti-British violence.

But some of the party’s younger activists have been trying to build a bridge between the party’s past and its future.

Fintan Warfield, 27, credits Irish music with politicizing him as a teenager. He said he came to see Sinn Fein not only as the best hope for a united Ireland, but also as a party with “empathy on other issues and compassion for other marginalized groups.”

Mr. Warfield joined the party at 16, a time when Sinn Fein was largely ignored by mainstream Irish politicians. At that time, he kept his work for the party more private, slipping out of the house to canvass for a Sinn Fein city councilor. Now, Mr. Warfield, who is gay, is a Sinn Fein senator and prominent campaigner on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

He said that Sinn Fein’s years of work on the margins of Irish politics — resolving local housing disputes, campaigning in cattle markets far from Dublin for same-sex marriage — had laid the seeds for its surge this week.

“Now that people have said, ‘OK, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have had their chance,’” he said, “all those years of work have amounted to this.”

PHOTOS: Above, Sinn Fein backers exulting in Cork as the results of Saturday’s Irish election became clear. Left, the feminist scholar Ailbhe Smyth, who campaigned for a 2018 precedent-breaking vote, to repeal the ban on abortion. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY NICHOLLS/REUTERS; MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 13, 2020

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[***'The Woman in Michigan' Is Right in the Middle of It All***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YPH-XW61-JBG3-61HF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel and Jonathan Martin

**Body**

Right-wing protesters, Republican lawmakers and President Trump are attacking the Michigan governor, a possible vice-presidential pick. ''I'm not thinking about politics,'' she says.

She is a first-term governor and rising star in the Democratic Party, a frequent critic of the Trump administration for its handling of the coronavirus health crisis and a prominent foil of the president's in the heated debate over when to reopen the nation for business.

Now the governor, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, has also become a prime target in the growing partisan storm over stay-at-home orders during the outbreak, which was highlighted on Wednesday by a raucous protest at the state capital, followed by Mr. Trump's call on Friday to his followers to ''Liberate Michigan.''

The debate over how soon to loosen restrictions on businesses and workers has moved from the hands of health experts to become an increasingly political fight over costs to the economy, which Mr. Trump sees as crucial to his re-election.

Ms. Whitmer, a potential vice-presidential pick, has stirred Republican fears that her growing popularity will help Democrats carry the battleground state of Michigan in November, whether or not she is on the ticket. ''I think it's impossible to look at this and not feel there's a lot of partisanship going on as it relates to Governor Whitmer,'' said Debbie Stabenow, a Democrat and Michigan's senior senator.

The traffic-snarling protest on Wednesday that drew a few thousand people to Lansing, Mich., including many flying Tea Party flags and Trump 2020 flags, was nominally called to oppose Ms. Whitmer's latest stay-at-home order, one of the strictest in the nation. But the gathering, like similar ones held in the electoral battleground states of Ohio, Minnesota and North Carolina, was also the clearest sign yet of a simmering ideological movement on the right resisting government mandates over the virus.

''It felt a lot more like a political rally than a statement about the stay-home order,'' Ms. Whitmer said in an interview the next day.

Mr. Trump has been insulting and condescending toward Ms. Whitmer, calling her ''Half Whitmer'' and ''the woman in Michigan.'' Asked on Thursday at the White House if the protesters in Michigan should listen to their governor, Mr. Trump replied: ''I think they listen to me. They seem to be protesters that like me and respect this opinion.''

On Friday, he kept up the pressure, tweeting ''Liberate Michigan'' along with similar tweets for Virginia and Minnesota, which also have Democratic governors. His tweets came moments after a Fox News broadcast of protesters in state capitals violating social-distancing rules.

But unlike those two other Democratic governors, Ms. Whitmer is a Republican target because, among other reasons, she is in widely seen as in contention to be Joseph R. Biden's running mate this fall.

In the interview, Ms. Whitmer said she has spoken recently with Mr. Biden about managing the pandemic.

''He's called to check in a few times just to see what's going on in Michigan, to ask thoughtful questions about what we need, but you know, we haven't had that conversation,'' she said, referring to Mr. Biden's hunt for a vice-presidential candidate.

Asked if she thought she was prepared to be vice president, Ms. Whitmer, a former Democratic leader of the State Senate, who was known for her careful political timing under Republican majorities, deflected.

''Honestly every ounce of energy I have is being put into protecting people and saving lives in Michigan,'' she said. ''I'm not thinking about politics. I'm not. I don't have energy for any of that right now.''

The protests at state capitals in recent days had the feel of early Tea Party rallies in 2009, with far-right conservatives taking a lead role and more cautious elected Republicans keeping their distance. While polling shows that overwhelming majorities of voters are chiefly concerned about the public health threat, it also indicates that the most conservative Americans are more likely to be irked by the idea that their local economy might stay closed for a long time.

In a survey released Thursday by the Pew Research Center, very conservative Americans were twice as likely as others to worry that businesses would reopen too slowly. Yet very conservative voters were also unlikely to be too concerned about the virus's economic impact. A Fox News poll out last week found that the most conservative voters tended to express less worry than others that the shutdown could send the economy into recession.

These ideas may seem hard to square, but the rhetoric of protest organizers and hard-line media personalities provides at least a partial explanation: very conservative voters are more likely to allude to a sense of outrage over having their public conduct restricted, rather than caution about the economic implications of the shutdown.

John Anzalone, Ms. Whitmer's pollster and a Michigan native, said the protests were not ''reflective of real people'' in a state where most are more worried that they or a family member will get sick than the they are about the economic impact of stay-at-home orders.

But Mr. Anzalone said the right would only grow louder the longer the restrictions are in place. ''She is reflective of the pressure other governors are going to get,'' he said.

In Michigan, the state with the third-highest number of deaths from Covid-19, Ms. Whitmer imposed some of the country's most severe restrictions on April 9, including a ban on travel to vacation homes and the sale in large stores of paint, garden supplies and furniture.

Her order was mocked on social media with posts of seed aisles cordoned off, criticisms that morphed into misinformation that was amplified by national Republican figures, including Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

Republican lawmakers in Michigan, who had backed an earlier, less restrictive executive order, blasted the governor. They moved to strip Ms. Whitmer's power to declare a state of emergency under a 1945 law.

''Here's my message today: OUR Governor IS DESTROYING OUR HEALTH BY KILLING OUR LIVELIHOODS!'' the State Senate majority leader, Mike Shirkey, tweeted this month.

On Monday, the governor accused the DeVos family, a wealthy and powerful force in Michigan Republican politics, of a role in the protest at the Capitol. Without naming Betsy DeVos, President Trump's education secretary, Ms. Whitmer said it was ''really inappropriate for a sitting member of the United States president's cabinet to be waging political attacks on any governor, but obviously me here at home.''

One of the named hosts of the protest was the Michigan Freedom Fund, a conservative group with ties to the DeVos family. Its executive director, Tony Daunt, said the group's only role was to promote the event on Facebook, at a cost of $250 to be listed as a co-host.

Mr. Daunt said Ms. Whitmer's initial, less restrictive stay-at-home orders in March had bipartisan support, but she lost credibility with her tighter restrictions, which he called ''dismissive'' of people's concerns about lost livelihoods.

Her frequent appearances on national TV, including the ''Daily Show'' with Trevor Noah and the Rachel Maddow show on MSNBC on Thursday, also set off conservatives. Mr. Daunt accused Ms. Whitmer of putting more ''focus on the Biden veepstakes, as opposed to handling the crisis here in our own backyard.''

The governor called the charge ''baloney,'' defending her television appearances as chances to educate viewers about the virus, which attract offers of help for Michigan. ''You know what, it would be wrong not to do everything I could on both those fronts,'' she said. But even some Democrats in the state have raised an eyebrow at her ubiquity on national television.

Few other states outside the northeast have been as hard hit by the virus as Michigan, which recorded 2,226 deaths as of Friday, and where the intersection of race, presidential politics and Ms. Whitmer's vice-presidential prospects have turned the perennial battleground into a political tinderbox.

With the outbreak concentrated in heavily black and Democratic Detroit, the virus was already threatening to exacerbate the widening political divide between rural and urban Michigan. For decades, Democrats enjoyed strength with ***working-class*** whites in rural Michigan. But as in much of the country, those voters have drifted to the G.O.P. over the last decade. Now, even when Democrats win statewide, as they did when Ms. Whitmer succeeded a Republican in 2018, they do so by piling up large margins in metropolitan areas and losing many of the less-populated counties where they once were strong.

And the images of nearly all-white protesters demanding the governor relax restrictions while hoisting Trump signs and Confederate battle flags, as the virus disproportionately impacts Michigan's black residents, will only further cleave the state.

Less noticed is another flash point. A number of white Michiganders -- many of them affluent but some firmly in the middle-class -- have summer homes ''up north,'' as the sprawling upper tier of the state's lower peninsula is called. Ms. Whitmer's order that people not travel between their residences -- meant to protect rural towns and rural hospitals from being overwhelmed with the virus -- has particularly inflamed those state residents eager to get to their cottages.

Of course, for the heavily black work force in and around Detroit that can't retreat to a vacation home, such an inconvenience is trifling by comparison. Many of these workers plays critical roles running the region's vitally needed grocery stores, pharmacies and busses.

''Black people's lives haven't changed in many ways because everyday was always a grind to survive,'' said Adam Hollier, a state senator from Detroit, adding that ''grocery store clerk, home health care, bus drivers, sanitation, custodial staff -- the people who are often deemed most replaceable are the ones we actually can't live without.''

Susan Beachy contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/18/us/politics/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-protests.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/18/us/politics/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-protests.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan has imposed some of the country's most severe stay-at-home restrictions, which have recently drawn conservative-led protests at the Capitol in Lansing. On Wednesday, some self-styled militia members openly carried firearms. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHIGAN GOVERNORS OFFICE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEFF KOWALSKY/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

The spread of the coronavirus is concentrated in Detroit, where much of the work force cannot work remotely. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY ROSE BENNETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Once Again, Irish Voters Cast Aside a Political Relic***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y6F-4BG1-JBG3-63HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Benjamin Mueller

**Body**

In a landmark election, Sinn Fein won a seat at the table, though tortuous coalition negotiations will determine who will lead the next government.

DUBLIN -- In a century-old political system controlled by two seemingly indistinguishable center-right parties in Ireland, Jamie Clarke did what seemed sensible to him: He never voted in a general election.

Until Saturday.

''Fianna Fail and Fine Gael were the people that made the decisions, and someone like me could never change it -- that's the way it felt,'' Mr. Clarke, a 33-year-old bartender, said on Monday, referring to the Irish political duopoly that has traded power since 1932. ''I was so disaffected by how far they were from me.''

But in recent years, successive public votes in Ireland to legalize same-sex marriage and repeal an abortion ban have pulled many young and dissatisfied people into politics, giving voters a chance to shake up traditions that were once rigidly enforced by the Roman Catholic Church. Their next target was Ireland's ossified political hierarchy.

On Saturday, voters cast off that relic, too, ending the two-party stasis in Irish politics with a breakout vote for Sinn Fein, a party long shunned by the mainstream for its ties to the Irish Republican Army, a paramilitary group that sought the reunification of Ireland. Despite what he called the party's ''shady history,'' Mr. Clarke said, he voted for Sinn Fein because he felt it was the tonic that Irish politics needed.

''Before the abortion referendum, I was like, 'Ah, everyone's going to know we're bigots and narrow-minded,' and then we showed we weren't,'' he said, sitting at a central Dublin pub on a night off. ''Now we're showing again that we're not afraid to have our voices heard.''

The vote sent a tremor through a political system that had long defied the usual left-right divisions across Europe. But for all the disruption, what emerged from the wreckage was, by European standards, a much more normal-looking system, anchored by rival parties on the left and the right.

''For the first time in 100 years, it's possible you'll have a party that calls itself left-wing leading a government,'' said Eoin O'Malley, an associate professor of political science at Dublin City University, referring to Sinn Fein.

By the time the votes were counted this week, Sinn Fein held one fewer parliamentary seats than Ireland's main center-right opposition party, Fianna Fail, which had been expected to romp to victory. And it captured two more seats than the current center-right governing party, Fine Gael, led by Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, Ireland's frontman in negotiations with London over Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.

Tortuous coalition negotiations in the coming weeks will determine who, if anyone, can command enough support to lead the next government. But lawmakers from across the political spectrum conceded that the vote for Sinn Fein reflected the desire of a huge cohort of voters -- young and old, urban and rural, ***working-class*** and middle-class -- for new alternatives in a system that had long stamped them out.

''Every other politician, they say they're going to do this and that,'' said Tony Hayes, 64, who lives in central Dublin. ''But at the end of the day, they're feeding you loads of lies. So why not go to somebody you feel like you can trust them? Sinn Fein, you feel like you can trust them.''

There was one issue above all that drove Mr. Hayes's anger at Ireland's two old political heavyweights and endeared him, like many voters, to Sinn Fein: housing. The number of homeless people has been rising for years, eclipsing 10,000 in 2019. And average rents have increased by as much as 40 percent in some counties over the past three years.

Young people, especially, are suffering, with some leaving bigger cities like Dublin or moving out of Ireland altogether. Mr. Clarke said that many of his friends had been forced to move back in with their parents. He had lived in a central Dublin neighborhood for five years before high rents drove him out to a suburb.

''It's not any good for your psyche,'' he said, ''but it's cheaper.''

Sinn Fein's success extended well beyond its core group of young and urban voters, though. Rural seats that had not been represented in a century by a Sinn Fein lawmaker joined inner-city Dublin districts in electing representatives from the party. And Sinn Fein became the most popular party among every age group up to 65, according to exit polls.

Ailbhe Smyth, 73, a political activist and feminist scholar who played a leading role in the campaign to repeal Ireland's abortion ban, said that many were feeling the anguish of a crisis that had forced people to wait weeks or years for some medical appointments, despite the government's lavish spending on health care. She said older people, too, had woken up to the pain that Ireland's cultural and political norms had inflicted on the younger generations.

While power was passed back and forth between the two center-right parties, parts of Irish identity, such as the expectation that people could grow up to own their own homes, began to vanish. And just as Ms. Smyth said the vote for abortion rights had been driven in part by ''a very deep sense of national shame at the way women had been treated historically in this country,'' she said that the turnout this weekend reflected the regret of some voters for not vanquishing an outdated political system sooner.

''Older people voting for Sinn Fein are saying, 'Well, actually, my son, my daughter, my grandchildren, they haven't got a house,''' Ms. Smyth said. ''So there is that feeling of guilt that we're not leaving them a very good world -- and we've wrecked the planet, too.''

Facing up to rivals like Mr. Varadkar, who focused during the campaign on Brexit achievements that few voters cared about, Sinn Fein stuck to a few clear, tangible promises. And rather than harping on the government's failures, as it recently had during unsuccessful campaigns, the party tried to home in on what it would get done. It vowed, for instance, to spend 6.5 billion euros, about $7 billion, building 100,000 homes.

It also drew in supporters with a new leader, Mary Lou McDonald, a 50-year-old Dubliner who helped shed the party's reputation for having predominantly male supporters and who pushed it to liberalize its position on abortion rights. In 2018, she succeeded Gerry Adams, who is from Northern Ireland and who is widely reported to have once served as chief of staff to the I.R.A., though he has always denied that.

Still, Sinn Fein may find it difficult to maintain its momentum. Analysts expressed doubt that it could quickly build its way out of Ireland's housing crisis, given the challenges facing a construction industry that is already near capacity. The country would need an influx of foreign workers to keep pace with demand, analysts have said, a development that would itself stress the housing market as new workers looked for their own places to live.

The party also has to balance the desires of a traditional base that is hungry for Irish unity with newer voters who flocked to it because of issues like housing and homelessness. That tension became evident in recent days as some candidates faced criticism for singing songs or using slogans associated with the fight for a united Ireland, reminders to some voters of the party's ties to anti-British violence.

But some of the party's younger activists have been trying to build a bridge between the party's past and its future.

Fintan Warfield, 27, credits Irish music with politicizing him as a teenager. He said he came to see Sinn Fein not only as the best hope for a united Ireland, but also as a party with ''empathy on other issues and compassion for other marginalized groups.''

Mr. Warfield joined the party at 16, a time when Sinn Fein was largely ignored by mainstream Irish politicians. At that time, he kept his work for the party more private, slipping out of the house to canvass for a Sinn Fein city councilor. Now, Mr. Warfield, who is gay, is a Sinn Fein senator and prominent campaigner on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

He said that Sinn Fein's years of work on the margins of Irish politics -- resolving local housing disputes, campaigning in cattle markets far from Dublin for same-sex marriage -- had laid the seeds for its surge this week.

''Now that people have said, 'OK, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have had their chance,''' he said, ''all those years of work have amounted to this.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/12/world/europe/ireland-election-sinn-fein.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/12/world/europe/ireland-election-sinn-fein.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, Sinn Fein backers exulting in Cork as the results of Saturday's Irish election became clear. Left, the feminist scholar Ailbhe Smyth, who campaigned for a 2018 precedent-breaking vote, to repeal the ban on abortion. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY NICHOLLS/REUTERS

MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Elizabeth Warren Is Running Her Race. The Real One May Be Passing Her By.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YV5-D401-JBG3-63Y9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1573 words

**Byline:** Matt Flegenheimer

**Highlight:** The candidate keeps talking about winning “unwinnable fights.” But the New Hampshire primary was not supposed to be in that category.

**Body**

CONCORD, N.H. — Two days before a once-mission-critical [*primary in a state she neighbors*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11), Senator   [*Elizabeth Warren*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11) — typically exceptional at holding a room — had not finished speaking when something unusual happened: Dozens of voters began filtering out of the middle school gym she had reserved.

Campaign staff strained to enlist prospective volunteers on their way to their cars. “Someone, anyone,” one organizer called out as departing guests stepped around him.

And when Ms. Warren wound toward her big finish, the go-out-and-get-’em kicker in these urgent final hours, her mind wandered accidentally to home.

“It’s up to you, Massachusetts, to decide what to do,” Ms. Warren instructed.

Supporters looked back at her, murmuring. She realized why. “And to the people of New Hampshire!” she amended.

On the eve of a contest she had hoped to win (and probably will not, according to polls) — one week removed from a caucus she had hoped to win (and certainly did not, according to Iowans) — Ms. Warren has arrived, almost imperceptibly, at a precarious stage.

In a primary adjoining her own state, it is Senator [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11), another New Englander, and   [*Pete Buttigieg*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11), the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., who are leading in polls. Hoping to turn New Hampshire into a two-person race,   [*the pair have been slinging fresh insults*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11): Mr. Buttigieg suggested on Monday that nominating Mr. Sanders would “risk alienating Americans at this critical moment.” Mr. Sanders, contrasting his online fund-raising army to Mr. Buttigieg’s cadre of high-dollar donors, said he would not “go to rich people’s homes and get advice from millionaires and billionaires.” And after a chaotic virtual tie in Iowa, both campaigns on Monday requested a recanvass of certain caucus precincts.

Former Vice President [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11), another fallen front-runner, looked past New Hampshire in a phone call on Monday to supporters in South Carolina, where his popularity with black voters is expected to make the state more hospitable to him than the first two. “Keep the faith,” he said at a field office in Salem, N.H.

Senator [*Amy Klobuchar*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11) has edged up in polls after appraising Mr. Buttigieg as a “cool newcomer” seeking a mega-promotion and insisting a “socialist” like Mr. Sanders should not lead the ticket. “We’re surging,”   [*she told reporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11), before citing a Boston Globe-affiliated survey by name.

But Ms. Warren, who has largely avoided engaging her opponents, is making perhaps the riskiest bet available: changing very little, largely declining to alter a 2020 primary approach often premised on self-branding as a “fighter” in a policy context but less often in a political one.

She can appear at times to be campaigning in a time capsule delivered from last year, running the race on her terms, largely independent of the changing circumstances. Her riff on a wealth tax for the ultrarich still lands (“Just two cents!” her crowds chant, cheering the policy’s tagline). Her supporters still hold signs aloft with purpose (“Win with Warren!”).

But what if it is not enough?

“Yeah, I don’t know,” Ms. Warren told reporters in Concord, when pressed on the early exits in her audience. “It seemed like, to me, a pretty enthusiastic crowd.”

Many Warren admirers remain almost preternaturally calm about her electoral position, deciding after a year of semi-permanent meta-punditry from voters that this is not the time to overreact to disappointing news.

They cite what they see as a double standard in her treatment as a female candidate, observing that male candidates are less often held to account over squishy policy details or minor missteps, while also choosing to believe in Ms. Warren’s gentle reminders that “women are outperforming men” in some recent competitive elections.

“She’s hanging in there,” said Lisa Nicholson, 60, from Hopkinton, N.H., waiting for Ms. Warren on Sunday afternoon.

“I thought she’d be higher up,” admitted Cathy Litchfield, 59, from Concord. “But she’ll be in the top three, and that’s all you really need right now.”

Andrea Olmstead, 71, a Bostonian who traveled to see Ms. Warren in Manchester, was one of many women to invoke the sting of Hillary Clinton’s defeat in 2016, suggesting that Ms. Warren’s campaign had been a kind of balm for hope-seeking women in the Trump age.

“Her life has been my life in a way — all women our age,” Ms. Olmstead said, wearing an “I Love Lizzie” button from Ms. Warren’s 2012 Senate race, for which she volunteered. “We’ve lived through the things she’s lived through. It’s a parallel journey.”

Ms. Olmstead was disinclined to consider the possibility of another letdown.

“Third in Iowa is not bad,” she said. “There are more states to go.”

There are. But at a most inconvenient moment, Ms. Warren finds herself a candidate in-between, neither surging nor necessarily free-falling, struggling to channel the zeal that long powered her last year but also careful not to project any outward alarm to her slice of an often skittish Democratic electorate.

Allies are imagining a win-without-winning-yet path to the nomination, arguing that placing first in any state this month is not essential in a field so unsettled that merely surviving into March could suffice for now. It is a theory floated every four years by faltering campaigns in recent presidential cycles, generally without success. But their case: There is no front-runner with an overpowering coalition and [*Michael R. Bloomberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/new-hampshire-primary-02-11), the billionaire former New York mayor, will provide a useful foil for Ms. Warren’s familiar crusade against big money once he begins competing in states next month.

Ms. Warren’s rallies can often approximate the sheen of a winner’s: the nods from voters as she speaks about her Oklahoma youth; men in flannel shirts whoot-whooting for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; a boy with a blue crayon, coloring in the bubble letters on a sheet of paper reading “Dream Big, Fight Hard,” turning to clap when the adults clapped.

There are still superfans, like Don Lansing, 32, of Lebanon, N.H., who waited for a photograph with Ms. Warren on Sunday evening in a shirt depicting no fewer than five pictures of himself with the candidate.

“She reminds me of every best teacher I ever had,” he said.

In high-stakes settings, Ms. Warren has made no major mistakes, turning in another solid if unmemorable debate performance last week while competitors claimed more attention and speaking time. In a signal of her peers’ view of her chances, Ms. Warren barely faced any criticism onstage.

Lately, Ms. Warren has taken to calling herself the unity candidate — a complicated messaging task for a senator whose political identity has registered more often for her unswerving progressive passions.

She has alluded to the “unwinnable fights” she has won in her life — transcending a ***working-class*** upbringing to excel in academia, flipping a Senate seat — as evidence of her viability as a general election option against President Trump.

“There are a lot of folks who are going to talk about what’s not winnable, what can’t be done and definitely about who can’t do it,” Ms. Warren told supporters in Manchester. “They’re going to talk about it right up until we get in that fight, we persist and we win.”

If she can attract the small-dollar fund-raising totals required to sustain a national bid, Ms. Warren’s team believes she can compete effectively in a primary of attrition. According to a memo from her campaign manager last month, Ms. Warren had more than 1,000 staff members on the ground in more than 30 states.

But after a year in which Ms. Warren so often set the pace of the primary, sending policy plans into orbit and selling puckish apparel like a “Billionaire Tears” coffee mug, some veterans of losing campaigns wonder if her best 2020 moments have passed.

“I don’t know where she can win,” said Adrienne Elrod, a Democratic strategist and former aide to Mrs. Clinton, while adding that little about this primary can be predicted with confidence. “But if she continues to amass delegates in Super Tuesday states, she can continue to stay in this race.”

Knocking on doors in Manchester on Saturday with her husband, Bruce Mann, and her golden retriever, Bailey, who sniffed a local news microphone as he walked, the senator received a mixed reception.

“You’re on my short list,” a jogger told her, stopping briefly to chat.

Ms. Warren set off on her unity case. “There’s been a lot of good people in this race,” she said, trumpeting recent staff hires. “I want you to know, I’ve put as many of them as I could into my campaign.”

Up the street, a Sanders canvasser walked by a home with signs out front for Ms. Klobuchar and Mr. Buttigieg.

Someone in a passing car recognized Ms. Warren as she stepped toward the next address. He lowered the window to announce himself:

“Go Bernieeeeeeeeeee.”

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: New Hampshire supporters of Bernie Sanders, Joseph R. Biden Jr., Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES; ELIZABETH FRANTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts at a get-out-the vote event in Rochester, N.H., on Monday, the eve of the primary.; Ms. Warren, though not favored, still has fervent backers in the state, like at a cafe in Conway. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

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[***The Wages of Housework***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6227-40V1-JBG3-61NJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

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Prospect Park in May is a commotion of beauty: meadows and dense rambles, hills and hollows, everything covered in chokeberries, spicebush, violets, flowering hawthorns, magnolias and lindens. In this splendor the birds are boisterous, as are the people. But last May, the park was quieter than usual, and the people moving through it had a subdued, worried energy. Many wore masks; many did not. Occasionally someone shouted at someone else for coming too close. There was both fear of breathing common air and a desperate craving for it. Through this scene proceeded, at an energetic pace, Silvia Federici, the 78-year-old scholar and theorist of domestic labor, one of the most influential socialist feminist thinkers of the last century.

Federici had a black scarf tied over her nose and mouth, and she was wearing a delicate blue sweater her mother made long ago. Federici walks all the way around Prospect Park at least once every day, even in the winter, with her partner of 47 years, the philosopher George Caffentzis. (Caffentzis learned he had Parkinson's disease a few years ago, she explained, and the walking helps him stay well.) But for several days in May, she agreed to do a second daily walk with me.

I had asked to meet because the pandemic and its cascade of economic, social and political breakdowns had led to a profusion of Federician thinking in places I had never encountered it before. Suddenly notions and phrases from her work were all over my social media feeds, op-ed pages and exchanges with friends, as people confronted what kinds of labor are considered essential and why. Federici is a longtime advocate of the idea that domestic work is unwaged labor and was a founder of the Wages for Housework movement in the early 1970s. It is a form of gendered economic oppression, she argues, and an exploitation upon which all of capitalism rests.

As a scholar and activist, Federici is one of a cohort of thinkers who have, for decades, critiqued the way capitalist societies fail to acknowledge or support what she calls ''reproductive labor.'' She uses this term not simply to refer to having children and raising them; it indicates all the work we do that is sustaining -- keeping ourselves and others around us well, fed, safe, clean, cared for, thriving. It's weeding your garden or making breakfast or helping your elderly grandmother bathe -- work that you have to do over and over again, work that seems to erase itself. It is essential work that our economy tends not to acknowledge or compensate. This disregard for reproductive labor, Federici writes, is unjust and unsustainable.

These ideas weren't exactly obscure before the pandemic. But mainstream feminism -- not to mention mainstream economics or politics -- has mostly ignored domestic labor. Instead, it has measured women's empowerment by their presence and influence in the workplace, which is attained by outsourcing housework and child care to less economically advantaged women for a low wage. Even so, women remain mired in housework. It's common now to hear the term ''the second shift'' (coined in 1989 by the sociologist Arlie Hochschild), which describes how the work of maintaining a home and caring for children still falls disproportionately to women, even if they have full-time jobs and pay for help. What's more, people who are paid to do domestic labor or care work (like elder care or house cleaning) are, as a group, badly compensated and denied workplace protections or benefits. These jobs are held mostly by women of color and immigrants. The arrangement is hardly a success for women at large.

Public-policy experts and economists have pointed out in the last several years, the folly of excluding domestic work from economic measures like G.D.P., given the data showing that unpaid women's work constitutes a huge slice of economic activity in every country. A year ago, Oxfam circulated research indicating that if American women made minimum wage for the work they did around the house and caring for relatives, they'd have earned $1.5 trillion in 2019. Globally, the value of that unpaid labor would have been almost $11 trillion. In a 2019 speech, Marilyn Waring, a public-policy scholar and longtime advocate of revising economic measures of ''productivity,'' noted the absurdity of defining activities like caring for elderly relatives or newborns, shopping and cooking, as having no value, or as leisure. ''You cannot make good policy if the single largest sector of your nation's economy is not visible,'' she said. ''You can't presume to know where the needs are.''

This isn't the only part of the present economic system that seems awry. The wealth gap is as wide as it has been in hundred years, with more workers than ever in unstable or low-wage employment, or subject to the whims of the ''gig economy.'' As the exhaustion and insecurity caused by these economic conditions have deepened, more and more people are coming around to the idea that the morass of America's social ills might be traceable to an incorrect relationship to work and the question of whose work is valuable.

When the lockdowns started, this growing malaise exploded into a crisis. First came the discussion of ''essential workers,'' a category that, it was quickly noted, frequently corresponded with the most critically underpaid workers. Then came the acute realization among the middle and upper classes that their lives had run smoothly because they'd been able to subcontract domestic labor -- and, critically, elder care and child care -- to other people. After nearly a year of school closures, working parents are keenly aware of the amount of child care they rely on underpaid teachers to provide for eight hours a day. Without even the ad hoc systems for managing the constant work of child care (day care; grandparents; after-school programs; summer camp; babysitters), American parents have discovered that the requirements of caring for a family match or even exceed the requirements of the full-time jobs needed to support that family.

None of this is news to, say, the single parents who were already working multiple jobs at minimum wage and unable to afford rent and food, much less babysitters -- but the reversion of the professional classes to a situation that feels to them similarly untenable has inspired a radical mood. Increasingly, even those relatively unscathed by the pandemic are voicing anticapitalist sentiment, critiquing an economy that underpays or ignores domestic labor. A group of wealthy female actors and executives (including Julianne Moore, Charlize Theron and the leaders of Birchbox, ClassPass and Rent the Runway) are calling for a ''Marshall Plan for Moms,'' including monthly government payments to mothers. ''You know this well: Moms are the bedrock of society,'' they write, ''and we're tired of working for free.'' Shonda Rhimes wrote on Twitter last March: ''Been home-schooling a 6-year-old and 8-year-old for one hour and 11 minutes. Teachers deserve to make a billion dollars a year. Or a week.''

Last March, the scholar and activist Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor wrote prophetically in The New Yorker, ''American life has been suddenly and dramatically upended, and when things are turned upside down, the bottom is brought to the surface, and exposed to the light.'' It has been a year of ugly revelations that a majority of Americans -- the millions who were laid off, or furloughed, or were fortunate enough to be deemed ''nonessential'' -- have experienced in isolation at home. Home, where dishes are piling up, where the cleaning and laundry loads have increased in the name of caution. Home, which has always been someone's workplace but is now, for more people than ever before, a collision zone for many kinds of work. Home, which up to 34 million Americans have lost or are at risk of losing entirely because of job loss and subsequent eviction.

How might this year have looked different had the work we do to care for one another, ourselves and the world around us been valued at a premium? How would the future look different if, as Federici suggests, ''we refuse to base our life and our reproduction on the suffering of others,'' if ''we refuse to see ourselves as separate from them''?

Federici's profile has risen since Occupy Wall Street, a movement that she supported and wrote about and that brought a new generation of leftist feminists into contact with her writing. In the last year, she has been cited over and over in popular publications -- from The New Yorker to The Atlantic to The Cut to Teen Vogue, in an article titled ''Socialist Feminism: What Is It and How Can It Replace Corporate 'Girl Boss' Feminism?''

When we met in May, Federici seemed less panicked, or maybe less caught off guard, than most everyone else I knew. She was focused and brisk as she walked toward me through the park, smiling behind her mask. She is slight and wiry, with lively hands and short, curly gray hair. As we walked, she spoke quickly, tallying up the fracturing systems, the interlocking forms of vulnerability that were always present but were now affecting even the people who thought they were immune.

She said she was occasionally surprised that people are calling her up now to talk about things she wrote 20 or 30 years ago. But she long suspected that the dangers of devaluing care work would eventually materialize into a crisis too big to ignore. ''The pre-existing condition is a system that makes life intolerable and unhealthy for millions of people,'' she said, her words muffled slightly by her scarf. ''It is a system that is not working -- that is the main pre-existing condition.''

Federici was born ''under the bombs.'' The second daughter of a philosophy professor in Parma, Italy, she was, her mother told her later, an unintended wartime child. ''I was born in Parma in 1942, one of the worst years in human history, I think,'' she told me. ''January was the beginning of the Final Solution.'' Her mother would go to sleep in her clothes and wake to a red sky in the middle of the night, grab newborn Federici and her 4-year-old sister, and ''run run run'' to the outskirts of Parma, into the fields, where she would squat in the dirt with the children until the dawn came. Laughing, she told me this experience made her want never to have children: the horror of cowering in the fields with babies, the bottles of milk, the terrible vulnerability of the world.

Parma, unlike many parts of Italy after World War II, was a Communist stronghold, and in her teenage years Federici was influenced by the labor and anti-fascist movements there. Theories of oppression and workers' rights were dinnertime conversation. Throughout her childhood, her parents and their friends discussed what the war ''meant,'' and what fascism had wrought.

Parma's leftist politics coexisted uneasily with its intense patriarchal culture: Federici's father, a professor of philosophy, was ''the one who knew.'' Her mother, who came from a peasant family, ''was supposed not to have knowledge.'' She did the cooking, the cleaning, the shopping and the caring for children and handmade everything they couldn't afford to buy. ''Nobody sees my work,'' Federici's mother would complain. Her father would tease, ''That is because this work is not real work.''

Well into her 30s, Federici refused to have anything to do with what she was raised to think of as ''women's work,'' everything her mother had done. (Later, as a graduate student studying phenomenology in Buffalo, she ate uncooked hot dogs right out of the package and potatoes that she -- grudgingly -- boiled.) ''I think I sensed the devaluation of her work. It was an activity that had no rewards, no pleasure in it.''

But Federici credits her mother for first exposing to the ideas that would become her life's work. ''I would, you know, hear and speak about the factory worker,'' Federici told me. ''The ***working class*** for me was the factory worker. And my mother several times said to me, You're always talking about the factory worker as if they're the only people who work!'' She banged the park bench we were sitting on with one fist. ''She said that, not my father, who was the teacher, the intellectual, the knowledgeable person. She was the one who told me the things that later became my politics. Whether in terms of housework, whether in terms of agricultural work, she was the one who basically was saying, But work is more than blue overalls!''

Federici's politics didn't fully coalesce until about 10 years later, in 1967, when she moved to the United States to study on a Fulbright scholarship. She was inspired by the vibrant antiwar and student movements in Buffalo and by the civil rights movement. But she didn't quite see feminism as central to her political views until in 1972, when a friend passed her a tract in Italian by the feminist Mariarosa Dalla Costa: ''Donne e sovversione sociale,'' or ''Women and the Subversion of the Community.'' (The most widely known version of this essay is called ''The Power of Women and the Subversion of Community'' and was written by Dalla Costa and the American activist Selma James.) The essay argued that by working without pay in the home, women were producing the labor force that capitalism exploited for profit.

The notion was epiphanic to Federici. ''Immediately everything made sense,'' she said: her mother's complaints about seeing only men in factories as authentic laborers; her own revulsion toward housework, which she hadn't yet thought of as tied to Marxism. Federici became involved with a group of feminists, including Dalla Costa and James, who called themselves the International Feminist Collective. The I.F.C. began the Wages for Housework campaign in Europe. Federici, with her collaborator, Nicole Cox, founded the first United States chapter of Wages for Housework in New York in 1974 with James's guidance.

Federici's essay ''Wages Against Housework,'' published in 1975, was an early, impassioned manifesto for the movement and remains one of its best-known texts. ''To say that we want wages for housework is to expose the fact that housework is already money for capital, that capital has made and makes money out of our cooking, smiling, [expletive],'' she wrote, referring to sex. ''At the same time, it shows that we have cooked, smiled, [expletive] throughout the years not because it was easier for us than for anybody else, but because we did not have any other choice. Our faces have become distorted from so much smiling.''

From the start, Wages for Housework was expansive in its definition of who belonged in the feminist movement. ''We want and have to say that we are all housewives, we are all prostitutes and we are all gay. ... Because as long as we think we are something better, something different than a housewife, we accept the logic of the master, which is a logic of division.'' Federici wrote. Her tone is almost pleading when she suggests that society needs to rid itself of the notion that some people are naturally servile or subordinate, that anything can be a ''labor of love.'' ''We want to call work what is work,'' she wrote, ''so that eventually we might rediscover what is love.''

The New York committee operated out of a storefront in Park Slope, Brooklyn, where they campaigned to improve living conditions for women in poverty. They supported the formation of other groups around the country and in Canada, and worked locally with the activists Margaret Prescod and Wilmette Brown, who formed Black Women for Wages for Housework. They campaigned together in support of welfare activists, as they considered welfare the first victory in the struggle to demand that the government compensate women for their work in the home.

But after four years, the international network splintered. The New York committee, among others, dissolved after a falling-out with James and Prescod, who claim that the priorities of Black Women for Wages for Housework were ignored; Federici denies this, and claims the group's issue was with James.

Until very recently all parties declined to discuss the 40-year-old internecine conflict in public, convinced that it would distract from their work. This is especially sensitive terrain because of the long history of white people's dismissing and marginalizing Black, brown, Indigenous, queer and trans people within the feminist movement. Though they have never reconciled, Federici, James and Prescod went on to long, concurrent careers in feminist activism -- James and Prescod within the International Wages for Housework campaign and the Global Women's Strike, among other initiatives, and Federici as an activist with the Anti-Death Penalty Project of the Radical Philosophy Association and the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa, and as a scholar at Hofstra University.

Federici's most influential book came almost 30 years later, with the publication of ''Caliban and the Witch'' in 2004. Many anticapitalist feminists like bell hooks, Angela Davis, Wilmette Brown and the Combahee River Collective had been arguing since the '70s that feminist struggle was necessarily anticapitalist struggle, and that anticapitalist struggle must necessarily take up gender and race because capitalism oppressed women, people of color and the ***working class***. The contribution of ''Caliban and the Witch'' to this tradition was to trace these forms of oppression to a single source, arguing that their origins were inextricable.

Federici proposes a new theory about the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe, marshaling historical evidence to argue that this also was the moment when women's work was brought under the control of male heads of household and confined to the domestic sphere. Women were the ones who could birth and raise the labor force, so their autonomy, and especially their childbearing capacity, needed to be ''enclosed.'' Then it needed to be made ''natural,'' as if domesticity was simply women's inherent condition and desire. This transition was violent, she argues, citing thousands of women killed during that period, usually women who failed to conform to their new, radically constricted reality and were accused of being witches.

''Capitalism, as a social-economic system, is necessarily committed to racism and sexism,'' Federici wrote. ''For capitalism must justify and mystify the contradictions built into its social relations ... by denigrating the 'nature' of those it exploits: women, colonial subjects, the descendants of African slaves, the immigrants displaced by globalization.''

Federici argues that it's not ''natural'' that the kinds of work that involve care and sustaining life were the province of any one gender; neither is it natural or inevitable that people be subjugated by an economic system that benefits a very few. These were merely conventions useful to the rise of an economic system that has become so all-encompassing that we no longer dare to imagine another way. It was made this way for someone's profit, Federici argues. This way of things can be reversed.

The last year -- this plague year, this election year, this horrific year -- has been a fruitful time to pay attention to who profits from our economic system, and at whose expense. In the last year, more than 70 million Americans filed for unemployment, a majority of them in the service sectors, where workers are more likely to be women of color. Low-wage workers lost their jobs at greater rates, and have stayed unemployed longer. At the same time, just over half of essential workers, who have continued working outside the home at risk to their health, are women, and disproportionately women of color. An article in Think Global Health by the scholar Catherine Powell, a law professor at Fordham, described a ''racial-justice paradox'' in which Black and brown Americans are ''more likely to be unemployed due to the impacts of the pandemic on the labor market,'' but are simultaneously ''overrepresented among essential workers who must stay in their jobs, particularly lower-skilled positions, where they are at greater risk of exposure to the virus.'' This paradox has cost thousands of people their lives.

In the last year, women in health care have fared worse than their male counterparts: A C.D.C. study reported that 72 percent of the health care workers hospitalized with Covid between March and May of last year were women. Many were nurses and certified nursing assistants, jobs that involve direct patient care -- sponge baths, feeding, administering medication -- and are more populated by women and people of color. (They're also compensated less well than male-dominated health care jobs.) Hospital housekeeping and home health aides also got sick and died in higher numbers.

In the last year, housekeepers have faced a ''full-blown humanitarian crisis.'' The National Domestic Workers Alliance reported up to 60 percent unemployment in May, adding that many of its members weren't receiving any kind of government relief because they were undocumented.

In December, 156,000 women lost jobs; men gained 16,000, according to an analysis by the National Women's Law Center. But, as is usually the case, evaluating ''women'' as a general category hides something important: A further dissection of the data revealed that it was Black, Latina and Asian-American women who suffered job losses -- white women actually gained jobs. It is expected that when the vast numbers of unemployed women re-enter the job market, they will be paid lower wages than before.

In the last year, 2.3 million American women reportedly dropped out of the work force -- often to perform child care when school and day care closed. Because they've left the work force entirely, and aren't seeking new jobs, they aren't counted in unemployment statistics anymore.

In the last year, America's billionaires have become $1.1 trillion richer. All this, amid perverse debates about whose lives are acceptable to sacrifice to save the economy. President Trump admitted in May that as we resumed economic activity, more people would die, but, he declared, ''We have to get our country back.'' Whose country? Back for whom?

It is somewhat less than surprising that there is a growing hunger for a different way, a society less stubbornly resistant to valuing human life when it stands in the way of profit for a rich, white, often male ruling class. A society ''that allows millionaires to stow their wealth in empty apartments while homeless families navigate the streets,'' Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor wrote in March, ''that threatens eviction and loan defaults while hundreds of millions are mandated to stay inside to suppress the virus, is bewildering in its incoherence and inhumanity.''

Taylor is among a generation of scholars and activists bringing renewed attention to the leftist, often Black-led wings of the feminist movement that were shut out by mainstream white feminism. Writing in 1984, hooks summed it up this way: ''Particularly as regards work, many liberal feminist reforms simply reinforced capitalist, materialist values (illustrating the flexibility of capitalism) without truly liberating women economically.'' Many writers of that era, including Hooks, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde and the members of the Combahee River Collective, insisted all along what is now widely seen as common sense: Feminism is both toothless and hypocritical if it ignores the material needs of women who are poor, Black, gay, trans, disabled, immigrants or living outside the United States. Their legacy has been taken up by contemporary social-justice activists and scholars like Taylor, adrienne maree brown, Rachel Cargle, Dean Spade and Mariame Kaba. This is where the energy of the left is now, if not a majority of the money or institutional power.

There's a pressing question at hand, still unanswered, about how the American feminist movement will re-collect itself now, and whether it will push in an ideological direction more aligned with the thinkers it marginalized. The ''liberal feminist reforms'' of the late 20th century, which turned into the corporate feminism of the 21st. This hit its logical endpoint in the branded and sloganeered feminism of the last 10 years. There was ''lean in'' feminism, which held that women's entrance into the C-suite required only the right kind of will to power and determined obliviousness to the demands of family-making. There was the swagification phase: THE FUTURE IS FEMALE T-shirts, ''Nevertheless, She Persisted'' baseball caps. There was the merch shop of the Wing (the ''women's space'' with the high price tag, baby-pink interiors and, as employees claimed, abusive and racist internal culture) selling wildly popular ''Head Witch In Charge'' pins and ''Girls Doing Whatever the [Expletive] They Want'' key chains.

As it turns out, ''girls,'' or more accurately women, did not get to do whatever they wanted this year. Though -- as people pointed out about the key chains -- generalizing to ''women'' as a blanket category is a flawed prospect. (''What do you mean when you say women?'' I asked Federici on one of our walks. ''To me it has always been mostly in terms of a political category,'' she said, defining ''women'' as all those who suffer under the material conditions that have historically been assigned to women, which includes trans and nonbinary people, intersex and agender people and queer people.) And years like 2020 do not fall evenly on all women.

The promises of liberal feminism have never sounded more hollow as the huge population of women who were left out of this vision entirely has grown. Gender parity in the work force (signified by equal representation or even equal pay) never materialized, and has been set back generations by the unsolved problem of domestic labor. These issues are gaining traction in the halls of power -- not because they are new, but because they now affect even middle- and upper-class women, particularly white women. Similarly, a broad interest in socialism hasn't come about because capitalism has only just begun to harm workers, but because the gig economy and a vanished social safety net have broadened whom they harm.

''The lesson we have learned in this process is that we cannot change our everyday life without changing its immediate institutions and the political and economic system by which they are structured,'' Federici writes in her book ''Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons.'' There are models for resisting ''a social system committed to the devaluation of our lives,'' she argues. There are ways to restore that value, relocating it where it was all along.

Federici still lives in Park Slope, as she has, on and off, since 1970. She met George Caffentzis in 1973, when they became roommates. Within the year they were together. Caffentzis did most of the cooking throughout their partnership until recently, when his Parkinson's made it harder. Federici has taken up the cooking, which she enjoys more than she did in her 20s. Caffentzis loves to cook, she told me, and his pleasure in it helped her see the task as less burdensome and more beautiful. Still, she refers to these domestic tasks as ''reproduction'' in conversation -- as in: ''I do more reproduction than in the past. Before, we had a more equal share.''

Their apartment is filled with hundreds of books -- on shelves but also stacked under the sofa and the bed, piled in corners, even stashed in the kitchen cabinets between the dishes. At 78, she is still active: She is editing a book about the death penalty (which she has campaigned against for years) and preparing a new book for publication: ''Patriarchy of the Wage: Notes on Marx, Gender, and Feminism,'' which comes out in May. Its questions are, in a way, the same questions she has been asking since the '70s: Why did Marxist critiques of capitalism so completely overlook the kinds of work that don't happen in what we generally think of as the workplace? What are the stakes of that omission?

On one of our walks, Federici told me about three years she didn't write at all. Her aging mother needed round-the-clock care, and Federici flew to Parma to join her sister in the effort. ''She couldn't move. Me, my sister, all day, and there was not enough. We were collapsed at 9 o'clock, when she finally slept.''

Federici discovered that her mother, over her 14-day hospital stay, had gotten deep bed sores. ''This a moment I can never forget, the desperation. What are we going to do?''

In the days that followed, as Federici and her sister dressed and cleaned the wounds themselves, took their mother back and forth from the couch so she wasn't bedridden, fed her, clothed her, bathed her, Federici's mind turned often to health care. ''Imagine if we had some sort of structure in the community that could help us! This is one of the things I always had in mind: I'm here in this moment in this town in this country -- there must be another thousands of women like me who are going through the same type of agony.''

She turned to me and said, with a lilt in her voice: ''It's really a question of the value of life. What is valuable? What are the priorities, eh? I think unless we touch that? Unless we touch that. ... '' After her mother died, she came home and began writing about the commons.

In the last 10 years, Federici has shifted her focus toward the need to reverse ''enclosure'' -- the process whereby the world became divided and contained for profit. Nearly everything, Federici argues, has become ''enclosed'' within capitalism: not just property and land but also our bodies, our time, our modes of education, our health, our relationships, our attention, our minds. During the pandemic, as Francisco Cantú pointed out in a January New Yorker article citing Federici, our ability to talk to the people we love has become mediated and monetized by tech companies. The remedy for enclosure, Federici proposes, is turning more and more of the world into a commons.

''The commons'' denotes resources (land, knowledge, cultural and intellectual material) commonly held outside any kind of market. Commoning is that idea in action, a practice of putting more and more of your life outside the reaches of commodification or extraction. The allure of commoning is that it's possible anywhere as long as there's a willing community: An empty lot can become a small subsistence farm, a neighborhood's health care concerns can be met with a local, neighborhood-run clinic; care work can be shared among families. ''You don't need permission'' to common, says David Bollier, longtime scholar of commoning. ''You don't need to have proxies in Washington as lobbyists and lawyers. You don't have to be an expert -- you are an expert of your own dispossession. And therefore, you can devise some of your own things that are situationally appropriate.''

The ways this could look are as various as the communities seeking to address unmet needs. Recently, a group of coders built a free online tool to help families form and schedule child care co-ops. Mutual aid networks are one iteration that has flourished during the pandemic: Using something as simple as a Google Doc, neighbors can write down what they need and what they can give, forming (or revealing) a network of symbiotic relationships. (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez co-hosted a conference call with the prison abolitionist Mariame Kaba on the basics.) These exchanges often seem mundane: Instead of your hiring a handyman, a neighbor might come to your house to help install your ceiling fan; in exchange, you might help him, or someone else, with his taxes or pet-sitting or garden work. In addition to donating to big nonprofits, you might also reply to calls on your local mutual aid network to help a neighbor make rent. While agitating for the government or other organizations to allocate desperately needed resources, your community might band together to pool and increase the resources it currently has.

Federici's models for successful commoning are drawn from an internationalist perspective, and she notes that Indigenous communities are frequently originators and keepers of commoning practices: She cites ''water defenders'' in the Amazon, the Landless People's Movement in South Africa, urban gardens in Ghana, the Chilean women who pooled their food and labor amid government-mandated austerity programs. ''It is not the most industrialized but the most cohesive communities that are able to resist and, in some cases, reverse the privatization tide,'' she writes in ''Patriarchy of the Wage.''

One of Federici's most instructive examples of commoning is the protest campaign of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe in 2016 and 2017. In the course of fighting a pipeline project, the tribe and its allies built an encampment network that kept thousands of protesters housed and fed and safe, even as winter descended; they created a school for the children, recognizing that if whole families were going to participate, the children would need both care and education. In part because they made the camps a livable, long-term community, they were able sustain and amplify the effort into a movement with international support and ongoing momentum even though the camp itself was cleared by law enforcement in February 2017.

Commoning, Federici writes, produces ''a powerful and rare experience as that of being part of something larger than our individual lives, of dwelling on 'this earth of mankind' not as a stranger or a trespasser, which is the way capitalism wishes us to relate to the spaces we occupy, but as home.''

''Too often the left doesn't see the power of communities,'' she told the filmmaker and writer Astra Taylor in an interview in 2019. Her politics, which echo the methods of Wages for Housework, emphasize the revolutionary possibilities of telling people they can struggle for change right where they are, whether that's at home, in the supermarket, in church, in the shelter, on the production line, at day care. ''Everyday life is the primary terrain of social change,'' she writes.

Federici, when imagining the possibility of a truly just world, writes about the way collective, transformative action can match the magic worked by nature, which continually regenerates. In this sense, she continues to hold Prospect Park up as an example of creativity, possibility and beauty. When I asked, on one dark day last year, what if anything was making her feel the magic of the world, she cried: ''Oh! Oh! This.'' She waved her hands around in the air, gesturing at the trees, the birds, the dirt in the nearby planter currently being examined by a pair of toddlers.

Her eyes crinkled behind her mask. ''The creativity of nature. And of people. I am very excited about people.'' When I burst out laughing in disbelief, she protested. ''There is really a lot of beauty, generosity, courage, my God. There is still joy, I see it -- there is still a lot of beauty in this world. And I hope it prevails over those who only want to control and tear it apart.''

Jordan Kisner is the author of the essay collection ''Thin Places,'' out in paperback this April, from which her last article for the magazine, about America's autopsy crisis, was adapted.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/17/magazine/waged-housework.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/17/magazine/waged-housework.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SHARIF HAMZA) (MM34-MM35)

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[***A President Forged by Setbacks as Much as by His Success***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61TK-8HH1-JBG3-6010-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

In recent months, Mr. Biden's restraint with words and his refusal to take the political bait laid by President Trump show a level of discipline as the 46th president faces a cascade of crises.

As a child, Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. wrestled with words, grappling with a boyhood stutter. Years later, as a young politician, he couldn't stop saying them, quickly developing a reputation for long-winded remarks.

It was words that undercut his first two campaigns for the White House, with charges of plagiarism ending his 1988 bid and verbal missteps that hampered his 2008 outing from nearly the first moments. And it was his self-described penchant for being a ''gaffe machine,'' as he once put it, that would cement his vice-presidential nickname of ''Uncle Joe,'' the endearing relative who prompts the occasional wince.

Through a nearly half-century-long political career marked by personal tragedy and forged in national upheaval, Mr. Biden's struggle with his own words has remained a central fact of his professional life, and of the ambition he harbored for nearly as long, the White House.

Yet over the course of the 2020 campaign, and especially in the two months since his victory, Mr. Biden, the nation's 46th president, has transformed himself into a steady hand who chooses words with extraordinary restraint.

The self-described ''scrappy kid from Scranton,'' who called President Trump a ''clown'' and told him to ''shut up'' during their first debate, refused to take the political bait laid by Mr. Trump for weeks after the election with his attempts to overturn the results. Rather than get sucked into the Trumpian chaos, Mr. Biden focused on announcing his cabinet and helping his party win two runoff races in Georgia. And with a second impeachment trial looming in the Senate, Mr. Biden, 78, has maintained his steadfast faith in the political center, positioning himself as a champion of all Americans and a deal maker between the left and the right.

''There's more of a sense of a calm resolve now,'' said Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester, Democrat of Delaware, who has known Mr. Biden for decades and served as a co-chair of his campaign. ''Even the words that he uses that are fiery are very intentional now. He is where he is supposed to be at this moment.''

The coming year will test Mr. Biden's self-discipline, as he takes office amid urgency from his own party to make a decisive break with the Trump era by pushing through an aggressive policy agenda in the face of a Republican Party that is looking to come together around a new opponent. Mr. Biden and his aides are staking much on his ability to find the right words to restore America's reputation, win bipartisan support in Congress and unite an anxious nation.

Much of Mr. Biden's inaugural address on Wednesday centered on calling the country to come together in the midst of many challenges, with some of his first words as president focused on issuing a plea to those who did not support his candidacy.

''Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart,'' he said. ''Yet hear me clearly -- disagreement must not lead to disunion.''

Mr. Biden's ability to steer and stay the course calmly through turbulence is a testament, say friends and family, to both Mr. Biden's unabashed optimism and his deep belief in the importance of American political norms and traditions. The man who came to Washington at age 30 as one of the youngest senators in history now enters the White House as the oldest president in history, with more experience in government and legislating to guide his path than any leader in decades.

''He's been around so long that now that he is going to be the leader of this country, he knows he must conduct himself with presidential composure,'' said Chuck Hagel, a longtime friend of Mr. Biden's who served as defense secretary in the administration of President Barack Obama and before that as a Republican senator from Nebraska. ''He knows the only way we'll be able to start to climb out of this hole is for the leader of the country to be seen as fair and open and not dwelling on the negative.''

That Mr. Biden finds himself in this role at all is an unlikely turn of events for a man whose political career seemed to have stalled or ended so many times, including when tragedy struck just after he won his first election to the Senate in 1972. But after 36 years in the chamber and eight years as vice president, he became a familiar figure in the country's political consciousness. When Americans sought a way back to stability after four years of tumult, Mr. Biden felt like a comfort to many voters. As Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina, one of Mr. Biden's most important supporters in the primary race, is fond of saying and repeated in an interview on Tuesday: ''We know Joe and Joe knows us.''

To Mr. Biden's friends and family, his success at winning the White House is proof that there is something fundamentally reassuring about his character -- his loyalty, his empathy and his experience -- that Americans want after four years of an unpredictable and chaotic administration. Even when he misspeaks, they argue, it underscores his authenticity, the journey of a man who moved through the darkness of the losses of his young wife, baby daughter and adult son to remain optimistic about politics, the country and his own destiny.

''He has a backbone of steel. He has a tremendous amount of empathy and he seeks the better angels in humankind,'' said Valerie Biden Owens, Mr. Biden's sister and closest political adviser. ''His word is his bond.''

Mr. Biden's remarks during his presidential bid did not always set as decisive a tone. A campaign trail refrain that ''words matter,'' a line intended to be an attack on Mr. Trump, seemed at times like a reminder to the candidate. Often rambling and spotted with verbal tics -- Bidenisms like an indignant ''c'mon man'' and a gentle ''God love 'em'' -- his comments careened between dense policy proposals, praise for long-deceased political leaders, minor flubs and the occasional factual inaccuracy.

Republicans pounced on his rhetorical style, caricaturing Mr. Biden as too mentally frail for the job. Even some in his own party pointed to comments like his praise for segregationists and overly friendly interactions with women as a sign that Mr. Biden was out of step with the times.

And yet, throughout a long campaign, a global pandemic, a racial reckoning and a riot at the Capitol, Mr. Biden's central message of moral and political restoration never wavered: Renew American decency. Return to good governance. And heal a divided nation. From snowy Iowa cornfields to socially distanced debate stages, the former vice president offered his ''word as a Biden'' that he could fulfill his campaign promises.

In the end, after a crowded primary packed with Democratic candidates pushing for structural transformation and a general election against a president determined to upend government, Americans selected a new president but rejected sweeping change.

While Mr. Biden has pivoted left with his party, he remains a centrist at his core, determined to unite a frayed body politic and persuade some Republicans to support his agenda. For much of the past half-century, Mr. Biden has found himself in the literal middle of American politics -- in the central seat on the Judiciary Committee, in the center of policy debates in the Obama administration, at center stage in the presidential debates and now at the White House. He is a man both of and apart from Washington, deeply immersed in the mores, manners and maneuvering of the Capitol even as he spent decades commuting home to Delaware on Amtrak.

''He has the most unique insight into what motivates politicians and how they think than anyone since Lyndon Johnson,'' said Senator Bob Casey, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, who first met Mr. Biden as a young man. ''He just spent so many decades engaging with politicians.''

More essentially, says Ted Kaufman, Mr. Biden's longtime chief of staff and short-term successor in the Senate, Mr. Biden is a ''healer'' determined to bridge seemingly unbridgeable divides.

The political traits that would come to define Mr. Biden were present from the start. A Catholic son of Scranton, Pa., and Wilmington, Del., he has long mythologized his childhood in stump speech tales of ''Grandpop Finnegan'' and virtuous sayings from his father, a car salesman who struggled to find work.

Even in the 1960s, Mr. Biden was something of an institutionalist in a blow-it-up generation. In penny loafers and sports coats, he rambled around the University of Delaware and Syracuse University College of Law, a middling student with little connection to the civil rights movement and the other social activism of the time. He received five student draft deferments during the Vietnam War and was kept from service after a physical exam in 1968 because he had asthma as a teenager, according to his campaign.

''I'm not big on flak jackets and tie-dye shirts,'' he told reporters in 1987, distinguishing himself from some politically minded contemporaries. ''Other people marched. I ran for office.''

After marriage, graduation and a brief stint at a Wilmington law firm, Mr. Biden won a seat on the New Castle County Council. Shortly after his election, one of his colleagues quipped that Mr. Biden ''was the only man he knew who could give an extemporaneous 15-minute speech on the underside of a blade of grass.'' The local paper called him a ''compulsive talker,'' and his underdog race for the Senate in 1972 was labeled ''Mr. Nice vs. Mr. Mouth.'' Mr. Biden was, of course, the mouth.

He entered office just weeks after the death of his wife Neilia and daughter Naomi in a crash with a tractor-trailer. Reeling from the tragedy, Mr. Biden would make only a six-month commitment to the Senate, taking the oath of office from the hospital bedside of his two young sons. Mentored by Senator Mike Mansfield, then the majority leader, he eventually found himself swept into the business of the body, with a plum seat on the Foreign Relations Committee -- an early move that would later cement his reputation as an expert in American foreign policy.

In Washington, Mr. Mouth found much to discuss. A legendary profile by the future celebrity biographer Kitty Kelley in 1974 featured Mr. Biden openly discussing dating, sex and his late wife. (Mr. Biden would later talk about that period in his life as a haze of rage and anger, saying he felt like a ''sucker'' for sharing so much.)

His personal life stabilized after his marriage to his second wife, Jill, and the birth of a fourth child, their daughter Ashley. But his political career continued along an uneven course.

Mr. Biden's greatest early failure and biggest success intertwined in 1987: the humiliation of a failed presidential bid and his victory as the new chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee in stopping Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court. Mr. Biden announced his campaign was over during a break from the hearing, where his strategy focused on persuading Republicans to block President Ronald Reagan's nominee.

Four years later, Mr. Biden would again make overtures to his Republican colleagues during Justice Clarence Thomas's confirmation hearings, allowing harsh and invasive questioning of Anita Hill, the law professor who accused the nominee of sexual harassment. Mr. Biden would later express ''regret'' for the treatment she endured but insist he did not mistreat her.

''If you go back to what I said, and didn't say, I don't think I treated her badly,'' he said in an interview shortly after beginning his presidential bid in April 2019.

As he progressed through what would ultimately be six terms in the Senate, Mr. Biden became known for his willingness to reach across the aisle to craft legislation like the Violence Against Women Act and the 1994 crime bill and as a crucial voice in American conflicts overseas. The Senate became his professional home, reinforcing his unshakable belief in the value of personal relationships -- the power of his deal-making words -- in the service of bipartisan compromise.

Another presidential bid in 2008 ended in failure, marked by impolitic comments like calling Mr. Obama, who was then one of his rivals in the primary, ''articulate and bright and clean.'' But his years on Capitol Hill and in foreign policy, and his connection with white ***working-class*** voters, later won him a place on Mr. Obama's presidential ticket.

During the Obama administration, Mr. Biden settled into the role of elder statesman and experienced voice on foreign policy. He led negotiations with Senator Mitch McConnell and congressional Republicans over the economic stimulus plan and budget deals. Still, some of his most memorable moments grew out of unsanctioned honesty -- like breaking with the administration's official position by saying in 2012 that he was ''absolutely comfortable'' with gay marriage.

In 2015, Mr. Biden mulled making a third bid for the White House, but the death of his son, Beau, from brain cancer that May was a devastating blow that Mr. Biden said left him emotionally unable to mount an effective campaign.

By the time Mr. Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a surprise ceremony at the end of his second term, praising his vice president as a ''lion of American history,'' the event seemed to mark a tearful end to Mr. Biden's political ambitions.

In the end, it was that faith in his own character and experience that persuaded Mr. Biden to make a third run at the White House. Five months before announcing his bid with a three-and-a-half-minute video casting the election as a national emergency, Mr. Biden described himself as the ''most qualified person'' for the job. When confronted by a moderator with a list of his possible political liabilities, he dismissed them all as minor issues compared with the huge problems faced by the country.

''I am a gaffe machine, but my God, what a wonderful thing compared to a guy who can't tell the truth,'' he said during a stop on his book tour in 2018. ''The question is, what kind of nation are we becoming?''

That sense of history wasn't lost on Mr. Biden on Tuesday when he made an emotional goodbye to his home state. With remarks recalling the national unrest before his Senate victory in 1972, his trip to Washington for his 2009 inauguration as vice president and memories of his deceased son, Mr. Biden teared up before even uttering a sentence.

''I'll always be a proud son of Delaware,'' he said, choking up as he drew on a phrase from James Joyce and the tears began to flow. ''Excuse the emotion, but when I die, Delaware will be written on my heart.''

Presidents rarely utter such pointed words about their own mortality. But the moment was classic Biden, sharing his pain as he sought to connect with others.

The next president wiped his eyes once more and headed to Washington.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/us/politics/president-joe-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/us/politics/president-joe-biden.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: At age 30, Joseph R. Biden Jr. took his first Senate oath in 1973 in a hospital where his sons, Beau and Hunter, were recovering from a car accident that killed Mr. Biden's wife and young daughter.

Valerie Biden Owens, Mr. Biden's sister and adviser (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

1988 CAMPAIGN: Charges of plagiarism ended Mr. Biden's hopes. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KEITH MEYERS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

2008 CAMPAIGN: Verbal missteps hampered his second bid. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA LOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

2020 CAMPAIGN: Victory, amid record voting, with Kamala Harris. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14)

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[***The Larger Costs of Closing a Local Museum During Coronavirus***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJH-CSH1-JBG3-6135-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Robin Pogrebin

**Highlight:** The Underground Museum in Los Angeles has become not only an art destination but a community lifeline.

**Body**

The Underground Museum in Los Angeles has become not only an art destination but a community lifeline.

LOS ANGELES — The low-slung building on Washington Boulevard here might seem like a nondescript storefront sandwiched between a carpet installation business and a lawn mower repair shop.

But in the eight years since it was founded, the Underground Museum has become not only one of the most important destinations for black art in the country but also a crucial gathering place for its ***working class*** Arlington Heights neighborhood — with a bookstore featuring works by black writers, poetry readings in the wooden bar and events in its back garden including free meditation, yoga and movie screenings.

As cultural institutions all over the world wrestle with how to bring art to the public during the pandemic, smaller ones like the Underground Museum are also trying to figure out how to continue serving communities that have come to rely on them in other ways.

“It’s not just pretty pictures we’re putting on the wall,” said Karon Davis, an artist who created the museum with her husband, the painter Noah Davis, who was the moving force behind the Underground and [*died*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) in 2015 of a rare cancer at age 32. “We’re actually doing a lot of work for the community.”

Most immediately, the Underground — which is not planning layoffs — is trying to minister to its public by helping deliver produce, continuing its weekly meditation program via Instagram and working to create a neighborhood support program even as residents adjust to life without the museum.

“It was my go-to spot to hang out,” said Jazzi McGilbert, the owner of [*Reparations Club*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html), a concept store that opened in the neighborhood about a year ago. “I had my mother’s funeral in their garden. It has always been a safe haven for me, so not being able to go — it’s isolating. They’re like my family.”

Christopher Hearn, who regularly attends yoga classes, said he has also come to rely on the Underground as a place “you can go to exhale and imagine at the same time.”

And Naeem Forrester, who works at the nearby [*Natraliart Jamaican Restaurant &amp; Market*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html), said the Underground Museum had “been a huge influence on the growth of our business in the past few years.”

“We miss the rush of customers from their lively events as well the usual neighborly chats,” Mr. Forrester said. “It definitely feels different not having them around.”

The museum has also become a model for more established institutions on how to connect with a community, while also presenting first-rate exhibitions.

“The best cultural institutions play important roles in their respective communities, far beyond showing art,” said Christine Y. Kim, contemporary art curator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which itself is [*trying to reach*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) underrepresented neighborhoods. “The Underground Museum has an energy that we are desperately missing during this quarantine period, especially as we were looking forward to Noah’s beautiful solo exhibition.”

Indeed, the virus crisis took hold just as the museum was about to present the highly anticipated [*exhibition*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) of work by Mr. Davis, who created the museum to bring art to what he viewed as the cultural equivalent of a food desert.

The show — which was set to open on March 21 after an [*acclaimed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) run at the David Zwirner gallery in New York — would have marked the first formal presentation of Mr. Davis’s work in his own museum and promised to raise the profile of an institution that is otherwise known mostly to art insiders and local residents.

“It was really hard to push the opening,” Ms. Davis said. “It’s been anticipated by the family, the staff and the community and now people really have to wait for it.”

The 27 canvases featured in the Zwirner exhibition were noteworthy for their painterly skill, quotidian beauty and quiet humanity. The installation also paid homage to the Underground, with a “back room” modeled on the museum’s offices; a video montage by Mr. Davis’s brother, the filmmaker [*Kahlil Joseph*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html); a sculpture by his wife; and furniture designed by his mother, Faith Childs-Davis.

The Underground Museum has always been a family affair, including not only Mr. Davis and his wife — who at first lived on a mattress in the museum with their infant son Moses — but also Mr. Joseph and his wife, Onye Anyanwu, a film producer.

Eschewing the gallery system, Mr. Davis used an inheritance from his father, Keven Joseph Davis — a sports-and-entertainment lawyer, who represented the Williams sisters — to create the studio and home that became the museum.

At first the couple put up their own shows, including one with its own versions of iconic works like Jeff Koons’s vacuum cleaner; because of the museum’s lack of climate control, other institutions would not lend work. Mr. Davis planned a “Purple Garden” in the back of the museum, inspired by European gardens, that would hold only purple flowers.

“It was a bit of a playground for friends and artists to explore ideas,” Ms. Davis said, “very casual.”

Particularly after his diagnosis, Mr. Davis drove himself hard. “He was just on a mission,” Ms. Davis said. “I really feel the museum was a healing project for him.”

Mr. Davis never got to fully realize that mission for the Underground Museum. He left a list of 18 curatorial proposals; the museum has worked its way through four of them so far. The Underground, under its current director, Megan Steinman, has also presented its own shows, featuring artists like Lorna Simpson, [*Deana Lawson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) and, most recently, Rodney McMillian.

“He knew time was short,” Ms. Davis said. “Three days before he passed, he was in the garage till 4 a.m. with a morphine bag, painting all the way up to the end.”

In 2014, the curator [*Helen Molesworth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html), then at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, discovered the Underground, where she connected with Mr. Davis. They established an official partnership through which MOCA lent work to the Underground, the first of which was a multipart video installation by the South African artist William Kentridge. “I had begun to understand the Underground Museum as an artwork in itself,” Ms. Molesworth said.

Not only did Mr. Davis learn from Ms. Molesworth — she helped upgrade the HVAC and security to make the Underground safer for art — but she learned from him, namely that she could use MOCA’s collection differently.

“I was trying to tell a different story of 20th century art,” she added, “because MOCA had been such a white male institution.”

It didn’t take long for the Underground to come to the attention of celebrities. When the film director Barry Jenkins screened his movie “Moonlight” in the garden, he “was struck by what a diverse crowd it was — tons of black folks, ­people from the neighborhood, white, Latino, Asian,” he [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) W Magazine. “I thought, this is America.”

The Underground also attracted art world luminaries like Ann Temkin, chief curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art; Thelma Golden, director of the Studio Museum in Harlem; and the artist Glenn Ligon.

“What is it — artist project, kunsthalle, community hub, pop-up museum?” Mr. Ligon said. “It has a spirit and energy unlike other art spaces I’ve ever been to and once I was there I wanted to be part of it, even though I wasn’t sure what ‘it’ was.”

[*Elizabeth Alexander, the poet and scholar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) who is president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which helps support the Underground, visits the museum every time she’s in Los Angeles — often going straight from the airport. “It’s always nourishing,” she said.

Jose Berber, who lives near the museum, said he “was very excited to attend a museum that wasn’t in Beverly Hills or in the Arts District.”

“I felt like those spaces always lacked a voice that I could directly connect with and they were not readily accessible to people outside of those geographic locations,” Mr. Berber said. “The Underground has provided me a space to feel seen, heard, appreciated, and loved.”

The success of the Noah Davis show in New York has also brought Mr. Davis, and by extension the Underground, more market attention.

David Zwirner, who now represents the Davis estate, said he has sold two pieces to major museums and has been fielding requests for acquisitions and exhibitions. Last month, Mr. Davis’s oil painting, [*“In Search of Gallerius Maximumianus,” sold at Phillips auction house for $400,000,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) five times the high estimate of $80,000. (As with most auction sales, the proceeds went only to the seller and Phillips; the museum supports itself through grants and donations.)

If he were still living, what would Mr. Davis say to all of this sudden commercial success? “He would say, ‘I told you so. What took y’all so long?’” Ms. Davis said, smiling. “He was a visionary and he knew it.”

Nevertheless, having the show of his work go on view at the Underground — whenever that does finally happen — is going to be undeniably poignant. “It’s a bit of a coming home,” Ms. Davis said. “Everyone is super excited about Noah coming home.”

PHOTOS: Top left, the family of Noah Davis, a founder of the Underground Museum, with museum staff and board members, at the opening of his exhibition at David Zwirner gallery in New York in January, including his widow, the artist Karon Davis, seated, with necklace. From top: “Single Mother With Father Out of the Picture” (2007-8); “Isis” (2009); and an installation view of the “Noah Davis” show. He died in 2015. Before the onset of the coronavirus, the Underground had planned to show the paintings in Los Angeles starting last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE ESTATE OF NOAH DAVIS; THE ESTATE OF NOAH DAVIS; THE ESTATE OF NOAH DAVIS AND DAVID ZWIRNER; KERRY MCFATE) (C2)

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Warren Stays Course in Race That Has Changed***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y61-5P91-JBG3-6530-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 11, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1494 words

**Byline:** By Matt Flegenheimer

**Body**

CONCORD, N.H. -- Two days before a once-mission-critical primary in a state she neighbors, Senator Elizabeth Warren -- typically exceptional at holding a room -- had not finished speaking when something unusual happened: Dozens of voters began filtering out of the middle school gym she had reserved.

Campaign staff strained to enlist prospective volunteers on their way to their cars. ''Someone, anyone,'' one organizer called out as departing guests stepped around him.

And when Ms. Warren wound toward her big finish, the go-out-and-get-'em kicker in these urgent final hours, her mind wandered accidentally to home.

''It's up to you, Massachusetts, to decide what to do,'' Ms. Warren instructed.

Supporters looked back at her, murmuring. She realized why. ''And to the people of New Hampshire!'' she amended.

On the eve of a contest she had hoped to win (and probably will not, according to polls) -- one week removed from a caucus she had hoped to win (and certainly did not, according to Iowans) -- Ms. Warren has arrived, almost imperceptibly, at a precarious stage.

In a primary adjoining her own state, it is Senator Bernie Sanders, another New Englander, and Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., who are leading in polls. Hoping to turn New Hampshire into a two-person race, the pair have been slinging fresh insults: Mr. Buttigieg suggested on Monday that nominating Mr. Sanders would ''risk alienating Americans at this critical moment.'' Mr. Sanders, contrasting his online fund-raising army to Mr. Buttigieg's cadre of high-dollar donors, said he would not ''go to rich people's homes and get advice from millionaires and billionaires.'' And after a chaotic virtual tie in Iowa, both campaigns on Monday requested a recanvass of certain caucus precincts.

Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., another fallen front-runner, looked past New Hampshire in a phone call on Monday to supporters in South Carolina, where his popularity with black voters is expected to make the state more hospitable to him than the first two. ''Keep the faith,'' he said at a field office in Salem, N.H.

Senator Amy Klobuchar has edged up in polls after appraising Mr. Buttigieg as a ''cool newcomer'' seeking a mega-promotion and insisting a ''socialist'' like Mr. Sanders should not lead the ticket. ''We're surging,'' she told reporters, before citing a Boston Globe-affiliated survey by name.

But Ms. Warren, who has largely avoided engaging her opponents, is making perhaps the riskiest bet available: changing very little, largely declining to alter a 2020 primary approach often premised on self-branding as a ''fighter'' in a policy context but less often in a political one.

She can appear at times to be campaigning in a time capsule delivered from last year, running the race on her terms, largely independent of the changing circumstances. Her riff on a wealth tax for the ultrarich still lands (''Just two cents!'' her crowds chant, cheering the policy's tagline). Her supporters still hold signs aloft with purpose (''Win with Warren!'').

But what if it is not enough?

''Yeah, I don't know,'' Ms. Warren told reporters in Concord, when pressed on the early exits in her audience. ''It seemed like, to me, a pretty enthusiastic crowd.''

Many Warren admirers remain almost preternaturally calm about her electoral position, deciding after a year of semi-permanent meta-punditry from voters that this is not the time to overreact to disappointing news.

They cite what they see as a double standard in her treatment as a female candidate, observing that male candidates are less often held to account over squishy policy details or minor missteps, while also choosing to believe in Ms. Warren's gentle reminders that ''women are outperforming men'' in some recent competitive elections.

''She's hanging in there,'' said Lisa Nicholson, 60, from Hopkinton, N.H., waiting for Ms. Warren on Sunday afternoon.

''I thought she'd be higher up,'' admitted Cathy Litchfield, 59, from Concord. ''But she'll be in the top three, and that's all you really need right now.''

Andrea Olmstead, 71, a Bostonian who traveled to see Ms. Warren in Manchester, was one of many women to invoke the sting of Hillary Clinton's defeat in 2016, suggesting that Ms. Warren's campaign had been a kind of balm for hope-seeking women in the Trump age.

''Her life has been my life in a way -- all women our age,'' Ms. Olmstead said, wearing an ''I Love Lizzie'' button from Ms. Warren's 2012 Senate race, for which she volunteered. ''We've lived through the things she's lived through. It's a parallel journey.''

Ms. Olmstead was disinclined to consider the possibility of another letdown.

''Third in Iowa is not bad,'' she said. ''There are more states to go.''

There are. But at a most inconvenient moment, Ms. Warren finds herself a candidate in-between, neither surging nor necessarily free-falling, struggling to channel the zeal that long powered her last year but also careful not to project any outward alarm to her slice of an often skittish Democratic electorate.

Allies are imagining a win-without-winning-yet path to the nomination, arguing that placing first in any state this month is not essential in a field so unsettled that merely surviving into March could suffice for now. It is a theory floated every four years by faltering campaigns in recent presidential cycles, generally without success. But their case: There is no front-runner with an overpowering coalition and Michael R. Bloomberg, the billionaire former New York mayor, will provide a useful foil for Ms. Warren's familiar crusade against big money once he begins competing in states next month.

Ms. Warren's rallies can often approximate the sheen of a winner's: the nods from voters as she speaks about her Oklahoma youth; men in flannel shirts whoot-whooting for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; a boy with a blue crayon, coloring in the bubble letters on a sheet of paper reading ''Dream Big, Fight Hard,'' turning to clap when the adults clapped.

There are still superfans, like Don Lansing, 32, of Lebanon, N.H., who waited for a photograph with Ms. Warren on Sunday evening in a shirt depicting no fewer than five pictures of himself with the candidate.

''She reminds me of every best teacher I ever had,'' he said.

In high-stakes settings, Ms. Warren has made no major mistakes, turning in another solid if unmemorable debate performance last week while competitors claimed more attention and speaking time. In a signal of her peers' view of her chances, Ms. Warren barely faced any criticism onstage.

Lately, Ms. Warren has taken to calling herself the unity candidate -- a complicated messaging task for a senator whose political identity has registered more often for her unswerving progressive passions.

She has alluded to the ''unwinnable fights'' she has won in her life -- transcending a ***working-class*** upbringing to excel in academia, flipping a Senate seat -- as evidence of her viability as a general election option against President Trump.

''There are a lot of folks who are going to talk about what's not winnable, what can't be done and definitely about who can't do it,'' Ms. Warren told supporters in Manchester. ''They're going to talk about it right up until we get in that fight, we persist and we win.''

If she can attract the small-dollar fund-raising totals required to sustain a national bid, Ms. Warren's team believes she can compete effectively in a primary of attrition. According to a memo from her campaign manager last month, Ms. Warren had more than 1,000 staff members on the ground in more than 30 states.

But after a year in which Ms. Warren so often set the pace of the primary, sending policy plans into orbit and selling puckish apparel like a ''Billionaire Tears'' coffee mug, some veterans of losing campaigns wonder if her best 2020 moments have passed.

''I don't know where she can win,'' said Adrienne Elrod, a Democratic strategist and former aide to Mrs. Clinton, while adding that little about this primary can be predicted with confidence. ''But if she continues to amass delegates in Super Tuesday states, she can continue to stay in this race.''

Knocking on doors in Manchester on Saturday with her husband, Bruce Mann, and her golden retriever, Bailey, who sniffed a local news microphone as he walked, the senator received a mixed reception.

''You're on my short list,'' a jogger told her, stopping briefly to chat.

Ms. Warren set off on her unity case. ''There's been a lot of good people in this race,'' she said, trumpeting recent staff hires. ''I want you to know, I've put as many of them as I could into my campaign.''

Up the street, a Sanders canvasser walked by a home with signs out front for Ms. Klobuchar and Mr. Buttigieg.

Someone in a passing car recognized Ms. Warren as she stepped toward the next address. He lowered the window to announce himself:

''Go Bernieeeeeeeeeee.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/11/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-nh-primary.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/11/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-nh-primary.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: New Hampshire supporters of Bernie Sanders, Joseph R. Biden Jr., Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ELIZABETH FRANTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts at a get-out-the vote event in Rochester, N.H., on Monday, the eve of the primary.

Ms. Warren, though not favored, still has fervent backers in the state, like at a cafe in Conway. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Has Never Spoken to Joe Biden. Here’s What She Would Say.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YN7-HX61-JBG3-637V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** In an interview, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said she intended to support the presumptive Democratic nominee, but the “process of coming together should be uncomfortable for everyone involved.”

**Body**

In an interview, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said she intended to support the presumptive Democratic nominee, but the “process of coming together should be uncomfortable for everyone involved.”

The progressive wing of the Democratic Party fell flat in this year’s presidential primary, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez knows it.

Even before Senator Bernie Sanders [*dropped out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) of the race last week, making former Vice President [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) the party’s presumptive nominee, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez was ruminating on [*the lessons the left must learn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) to be more successful moving forward.

But in the short term, Democrats are desperate to defeat President Trump in November, and Mr. Biden [*is making some policy overtures to unite the party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html). The hope is to win over supporters of Mr. Sanders as well as top surrogates like Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, a New York congresswoman who is popular among young progressives — a group Mr. Biden is struggling to win.

In a recent phone interview, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez made clear that she intended to support the Democratic nominee, but said his current overtures to progressives must go further. She made a distinction between supporting Mr. Biden in November and offering a full-throated endorsement of his campaign. Where she lands, she said, is up to him.

These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

Q. I guess my first question is simple: Has the Biden campaign reached out to you?

A. No.

OK. Well, what type of outreach are you looking for? Not just to you but to progressives broadly.

There’s this talk about [*unity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) as this kind of vague, kumbaya, kind of term. Unity and unifying isn’t a feeling, it’s a process. And what I hope does not happen in this process is that everyone just tries to shoo it along and brush real policies — that mean the difference of life and death or [*affording your insulin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) and not affording your insulin — just brush that under the rug as an aesthetic difference of style.

There’s also this idea that if we all just support the nominee that voters will come along as well. I’ve flagged, very early, two patterns that I saw [among Biden’s campaign], which is underperformance [*among Latinos and young people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html), both of which are very important demographics in November. And so, I don’t think this conversation about changes that need to be made is one about throwing the progressive wing of the party a couple of bones — I think this is about how we can win.

The whole process of coming together should be uncomfortable for everyone involved — that’s how you know it’s working. And if Biden is only doing things he’s comfortable with, then it’s not enough.

Can you give me examples of areas that you want to see him get “uncomfortable?”

They floated this olive branch to the progressive left of [*lowering the Medicare age to 60*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html). And it’s almost insulting. I think Hillary was looking at policies that [*lowered it to 50*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html). So we’re talking about a “progressive concession” that is 10 years worse than what the nominee had in 2016.

Progressives aren’t a monolith like every voting block isn’t a monolith. But I also know, from a Latino perspective, I think we need a real plan to be better than what happened during his service with the Obama administration.

In terms of deportations?

In terms of [*deportations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html), in terms of apprehensions, I mean, even in terms of rhetoric. It was just a couple months ago that he told immigrant activists to [*vote for someone else*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html). I want to see him get uncomfortable there. Putting “Dreamers” on a path to citizenship is great, but that’s a policy concession from 10 years ago.

People need to feel hope in a Democratic administration. And that’s what this is about.

If we’re not talking about paths to citizenship for undocumented people, and if we’re just talking about policy changes of 5 or 10 percent — especially when you look at something like climate change — it’s not about moving to the left. It’s about who is able to find hope in your administration. And creating plans that give people hope and possibility.

But Biden has gotten to this point by rejecting some of these things. What’s your realistic level of confidence he will get uncomfortable on these issues? He’s been in this game a long time.

I think the ideological argument is a false one, and I think that’s backed up by exit polling. While Biden is the nominee, we also know that he didn’t win because of policy — I don’t think he won because of his agenda, he won [*because of*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) [*different*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) [*factors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html). In state after state after state, Democratic voters support a progressive agenda.

I want to respect his win, he won because of his coalition building, he won because of his service, he won for a lot of different reasons — but I don’t think he won because Americans don’t want “[*Medicare for all*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html).” And in this moment, I wouldn’t be surprised if what we’re seeing with coronavirus didn’t further change people’s views in further support of a progressive agenda.

How should the relationship that progressives had in 2016 with Hillary Clinton inform the way you all go about it in 2020 with Biden? What are the lessons from how that turned out that are worth changing, or replicating, this time around?

As much as a dumpster fire as Twitter can be sometimes, I actually think the process was much less painful and nasty and fraught than it was in 2016. In 2016, things like superdelegates delegitimized the process so much that it felt a lot more scorched-earth, and I’m not even talking about between the two candidates, but just how voters felt about the party.

I think people understand that there are limits to what Biden will do and that’s understandable — he didn’t run as a progressive candidate. But, at the bare minimum, we should aspire to be better than what we have been before. And I just don’t know if [*this message*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) of “We’re going to go back to the way things were” is going to work for the people for who the way things were was really bad.

Is an Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez endorsement of Joe Biden a sure thing?

I’ve always said that I will support the Democratic nominee. But unity is a process, and figuring out what that looks like is part of this whole conversation that I think Bernie and [*Warren*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) and other folks are a part of as well.

Yes. But I guess I’m asking about you. Is there something you’re looking for? Is there a difference between voting for him or campaigning for him? What are the range of possibilities of your relationship with the Democratic nominee in the next months?

Beating Donald Trump is a matter of life or death for our communities. I think it’s a difference between making an argument for harm reduction, and making the argument for, there’s actually going to be progress made for us.

What I want to do is to be able to go out and say, “This is the plan for us.” But it’s hard to do that if there’s no plan for us.

And who’s us?

Any number of communities, whether it’s the Bronx, whether it’s Latinos, or whether it’s people of color, whether it’s women, whether it’s young people, whether it’s people with student debt, whether it’s ***working-class*** people, or people with no health care.

And you know, I’m not trying to be divisive. But when you talk about lessons from 2016, one of the most divisive things that we can do is just smother and silence legitimate points of critique — especially from people whose lives are most at risk in this administration. Because, for some people, this argument of returning to normalcy sounds like an argument of respectability politics and civility. And for other people, it sounds like, will my child be put in a cage?

Aesthetics plays a big role in politics, a huge one. But I just want to improve people’s lives. And while we’ll improve people’s lives with Donald Trump not in the White House, we need to do better than what we’ve done before.

I’m a progressive [laughter]. That’s literally what it means.

What if Biden doesn’t do it? What if he doesn’t get uncomfortable? And you know, only gives kind of aesthetic, in-name-only concessions to the left? What do you do?

I will be supporting the Democratic nominee in November. I would just hope that the nominee supports our communities too.

Is a Biden-A.O.C. unity rally ever in the cards?

It could be. I have not talked to the vice president.

Ever?

Never. Not that I know of, no.

But I know the goal ultimately is to win. And I’m not trying to needle as a way of making a point or to score points. I want to win. And I want to make sure that we win broadly.

Do you worry about causing damage to the vice president in a way that helps Donald Trump? How do you square unity with applying pressure from the left?

It’s a tightrope. I do not feel a choice in adhering to my principles and my integrity, and being accountable to the movement that brought me here. But also, I don’t want another term of Trump.

I’m not going to lie to people and say Puerto Rico’s debt is going to be forgiven or there’s going to be some audit of the debt if that’s not the plan. But at the same time, I don’t want this president throwing paper towels at my family again.

I just want to tell the truth and I want to feel good about the truth.

PHOTO: “The whole process of coming together should be uncomfortable for everyone involved,” said Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LEXEY SWALL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Joe Biden Became a Steady Hand Amid So Much Chaos***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61TD-MG21-DXY4-X4KM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** In recent months, Mr. Biden’s restraint with words and his refusal to take the political bait laid by President Trump show a level of discipline as the 46th president faces a cascade of crises.

**Body**

In recent months, Mr. Biden’s restraint with words and his refusal to take the political bait laid by President Trump show a level of discipline as the 46th president faces a cascade of crises.

As a child, Joseph Robinette [*Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/08/us/politics/kyrsten-sinema-joe-biden.html) Jr. wrestled with words, grappling with a boyhood stutter. Years later, as a young politician, he couldn’t stop saying them, quickly developing a reputation for long-winded remarks.

It was words that undercut his first two campaigns for the White House, with charges of plagiarism ending his 1988 bid and verbal missteps that hampered his 2008 outing from nearly the first moments. And it was his self-described penchant for being a “[*gaffe machine*](https://edition.cnn.com/2018/12/04/politics/joe-biden-most-qualified-person-president-2020/index.html),” as he once put it, that would cement his vice-presidential nickname of “Uncle Joe,” the endearing relative who prompts the occasional wince.

Through a nearly half-century-long political career marked by personal tragedy and forged in national upheaval, Mr. Biden’s struggle with his own words has remained a central fact of his professional life, and of the ambition he harbored for nearly as long, the White House.

Yet over the course of the 2020 campaign, and especially in the two months since his victory, [*Mr. Biden, the nation’s 46th president*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/14/us/politics/joe-biden-policy-decisions.html), has transformed himself into a steady hand who chooses words with extraordinary restraint.

The self-described “scrappy kid from Scranton,” who called President Trump a “clown” and told him to “shut up” during their [*first debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/us/politics/biden-trump-presidential-debate.html), refused to take the political bait laid by Mr. Trump for weeks after the election with his attempts to overturn the results. Rather than get sucked into the Trumpian chaos, Mr. Biden focused on announcing his cabinet and helping his party win [*two runoff races in Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/upshot/warnock-ossoff-georgia-victories.html). And with a [*second impeachment trial looming*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/14/us/politics/impeachment-senate-trial-trump.html) in the Senate, Mr. Biden, 78, has maintained his steadfast faith in the political center, positioning himself as a champion of all Americans and a deal maker between the left and the right.

“There’s more of a sense of a calm resolve now,” said Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester, Democrat of Delaware, who has known Mr. Biden for decades and served as a co-chair of his campaign. “Even the words that he uses that are fiery are very intentional now. He is where he is supposed to be at this moment.”

The coming year will test Mr. Biden’s self-discipline, as he takes office amid urgency from his own party to make a decisive break with the Trump era by pushing through an aggressive policy agenda in the face of a [*Republican Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/us/politics/trump-republicans.html) that is looking to come together around a new opponent. Mr. Biden and his aides are staking much on his ability to find the right words to restore America’s reputation, win bipartisan support in Congress and unite an anxious nation.

Much of Mr. Biden’s inaugural address on Wednesday centered on calling the country to come together in the midst of many challenges, with some of his first words as president focused on issuing a plea to those who did not support his candidacy.

“Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart,” he said. “Yet hear me clearly — disagreement must not lead to disunion.”

Mr. Biden’s ability to steer and stay the course calmly through turbulence is a testament, say friends and family, to both Mr. Biden’s unabashed optimism and his deep belief in the importance of American political norms and traditions. The man who came to Washington at age 30 as one of the youngest senators in history now enters the White House as the oldest president in history, with more experience in government and legislating to guide his path than any leader in decades.

“He’s been around so long that now that he is going to be the leader of this country, he knows he must conduct himself with presidential composure,” said Chuck Hagel, a longtime friend of Mr. Biden’s who served as defense secretary in the administration of President Barack Obama and before that as a Republican senator from Nebraska. “He knows the only way we’ll be able to start to climb out of this hole is for the leader of the country to be seen as fair and open and not dwelling on the negative.”

That Mr. Biden finds himself in this role at all is an unlikely turn of events for a man whose political career seemed to have stalled or ended so many times, including when tragedy struck just after he won his first election to the Senate in 1972. But after 36 years in the chamber and eight years as vice president, he became a familiar figure in the country’s political consciousness. When Americans sought a way back to stability after four years of tumult, Mr. Biden felt like a comfort to many voters. As Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina, one of Mr. Biden’s most important supporters in the primary race, is fond of saying and repeated in an interview on Tuesday: “We know Joe and Joe knows us.”

To Mr. Biden’s friends and family, his success at winning the White House is proof that there is something fundamentally reassuring about his character — his loyalty, his empathy and his experience — that Americans want after four years of an unpredictable and chaotic administration. Even when he misspeaks, they argue, it underscores his authenticity, the journey of a man who moved through the darkness of the losses of his young wife, baby daughter and adult son to remain optimistic about politics, the country and his own destiny.

“He has a backbone of steel. He has a tremendous amount of empathy and he seeks the better angels in humankind,” said Valerie Biden Owens, Mr. Biden’s sister and closest political adviser. “His word is his bond.”

Mr. Biden’s remarks during his presidential bid did not always set as decisive a tone. A campaign trail refrain that “words matter,” a line intended to be an attack on Mr. Trump, seemed at times like a reminder to the candidate. Often rambling and spotted with verbal tics — Bidenisms like an indignant “c’mon man” and a gentle “God love ‘em” — his comments careened between dense policy proposals, praise for long-deceased political leaders, minor flubs and the occasional factual inaccuracy.

Republicans pounced on his rhetorical style, caricaturing Mr. Biden as too mentally frail for the job. Even some in his own party pointed to comments like his [*praise for segregationists*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/19/us/politics/biden-segregationists.html) and [*overly friendly interactions with women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/12/us/politics/joe-biden-tara-reade-sexual-assault-complaint.html) as a sign that Mr. Biden was out of step with the times.

And yet, throughout a long campaign, a global pandemic, a racial reckoning and a riot at the Capitol, Mr. Biden’s central message of moral and political restoration never wavered: Renew American decency. Return to good governance. And heal a divided nation. From snowy Iowa cornfields to socially distanced debate stages, the former vice president offered his “word as a Biden” that he could fulfill his campaign promises.

In the end, after a crowded primary packed with Democratic candidates pushing for structural transformation and a general election against a president determined to upend government, Americans selected a new president but rejected sweeping change.

While Mr. Biden has pivoted left with his party, he remains a centrist at his core, determined to unite a frayed body politic and persuade some Republicans to support his agenda. For much of the past half-century, Mr. Biden has found himself in the literal middle of American politics — in the central seat on the Judiciary Committee, in the center of policy debates in the Obama administration, at center stage in the presidential debates and now at the White House. He is a man both of and apart from Washington, deeply immersed in the mores, manners and maneuvering of the Capitol even as he spent decades commuting home to Delaware on Amtrak.

“He has the most unique insight into what motivates politicians and how they think than anyone since Lyndon Johnson,” said Senator Bob Casey, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, who first met Mr. Biden as a young man. “He just spent so many decades engaging with politicians.”

More essentially, says Ted Kaufman, Mr. Biden’s longtime chief of staff and short-term successor in the Senate, Mr. Biden is a “healer” determined to bridge seemingly unbridgeable divides.

The political traits that would come to define Mr. Biden were present from the start. A Catholic son of Scranton, Pa., and Wilmington, Del., he has long mythologized his childhood in stump speech tales of “Grandpop Finnegan” and virtuous sayings from his father, a car salesman who struggled to find work.

Even in the 1960s, Mr. Biden was [*something of an institutionalist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/17/us/politics/joe-biden-college-1960s.html) in a blow-it-up generation. In penny loafers and sports coats, he rambled around the University of Delaware and Syracuse University College of Law, a middling student with little connection to the civil rights movement and the other social activism of the time. [*He received*](https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Biden-deferred-disqualified-from-Vietnam-duty-3196927.php) five student draft deferments during the Vietnam War and was kept from service after a physical exam in 1968 because he had asthma as a teenager, according to his campaign.

“I’m not big on flak jackets and tie-dye shirts,” he told reporters in 1987, distinguishing himself from some politically minded contemporaries. “Other people marched. I ran for office.”

After marriage, graduation and a brief stint at a Wilmington law firm, Mr. Biden won a seat on the New Castle County Council. Shortly after his election, one of his colleagues quipped that Mr. Biden “was the only man he knew who could give an extemporaneous 15-minute speech on the underside of a blade of grass.” The local paper called him a “compulsive talker,” and his underdog race for the Senate in 1972 was labeled “Mr. Nice vs. Mr. Mouth.” Mr. Biden was, of course, the mouth.

He entered office just weeks after the death of his wife Neilia and daughter Naomi in a crash with a tractor-trailer. Reeling from the tragedy, Mr. Biden would make only a six-month commitment to the Senate, taking the oath of office from the hospital bedside of his two young sons. Mentored by Senator Mike Mansfield, then the majority leader, he eventually found himself swept into the business of the body, with a plum seat on the Foreign Relations Committee — an early move that would later cement his reputation as an expert in American foreign policy.

In Washington, Mr. Mouth found much to discuss. A legendary profile by the future celebrity biographer Kitty Kelley in 1974 featured Mr. Biden openly discussing dating, sex and his late wife. (Mr. Biden would later talk about that period in his life as a haze of rage and anger, saying he felt like a [*“sucker”*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/11/07/joe-biden-candidate-profile-1987/) for sharing so much.)

His personal life stabilized after his marriage to his second wife, Jill, and the birth of a fourth child, their daughter Ashley. But his political career continued along an uneven course.

Mr. Biden’s greatest early failure and biggest success intertwined in 1987: the humiliation of a failed presidential bid and his victory as the new chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee in [*stopping Robert Bork’s nomination to the Supreme Court*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/07/us/politics/joe-biden-bork-supreme-court.html). Mr. Biden announced his campaign was over during a break from the hearing, where his strategy focused on persuading Republicans to block President Ronald Reagan’s nominee.

Four years later, Mr. Biden would again make overtures to his Republican colleagues during Justice Clarence Thomas’s confirmation hearings, allowing harsh and invasive questioning of Anita Hill, the law professor who accused the nominee of sexual harassment. Mr. Biden would later [*express “regret” for the treatment she endured*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/26/us/politics/anita-hill-biden-clarence-thomas.html) but insist he did not mistreat her.

“If you go back to what I said, and didn’t say, I don’t think I treated her badly,” he said in an interview shortly after beginning his presidential bid in April 2019.

As he progressed through what would ultimately be six terms in the Senate, Mr. Biden became known for his willingness to reach across the aisle to craft legislation like the Violence Against Women Act and the [*1994 crime bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/25/us/joe-biden-crime-laws.html) and as a crucial voice in American conflicts overseas. The Senate became his professional home, reinforcing his unshakable belief in the value of personal relationships — the power of his deal-making words — in the service of bipartisan compromise.

Another presidential bid in 2008 ended in failure, marked by impolitic comments like calling Mr. Obama, who was then one of his rivals in the primary, “articulate and bright and clean.” But his years on Capitol Hill and in foreign policy, and his connection with white ***working-class*** voters, later won him a place on Mr. Obama’s presidential ticket.

During the Obama administration, Mr. Biden settled into the role of elder statesman and experienced voice on foreign policy. He led negotiations with Senator Mitch McConnell and congressional Republicans over the economic stimulus plan and budget deals. Still, some of his most memorable moments grew out of unsanctioned honesty — like breaking with the administration’s official position by [*saying in 2012 that he was “absolutely comfortable” with gay marriage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/07/us/politics/biden-expresses-support-for-same-sex-marriages.html).

In 2015, Mr. Biden mulled making a third bid for the White House, but the death of his son, Beau, from brain cancer that May was a devastating blow that Mr. Biden said left him emotionally unable to mount an effective campaign.

By the time Mr. Obama [*awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/12/us/politics/joe-biden-presidential-medal-freedom.html) in a surprise ceremony at the end of his second term, praising his vice president as a “lion of American history,” the event seemed to mark a tearful end to Mr. Biden’s political ambitions.

In the end, it was that faith in his own character and experience that persuaded Mr. Biden to make a third run at the White House. Five months before announcing his bid with a [*three-and-a-half-minute video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbOU2fTg6cI) casting the election as a national emergency, Mr. Biden described himself as the “most qualified person” for the job. When confronted by a moderator with a list of his possible political liabilities, he dismissed them all as minor issues compared with the huge problems faced by the country.

“I am a gaffe machine, but my God, what a wonderful thing compared to a guy who can’t tell the truth,” he said during a stop on his book tour in 2018. “The question is, what kind of nation are we becoming?”

That sense of history wasn’t lost on Mr. Biden on Tuesday when he made an emotional goodbye to his home state. With remarks recalling the national unrest before his Senate victory in 1972, his trip to Washington for his 2009 inauguration as vice president and memories of his deceased son, Mr. Biden teared up before even uttering a sentence.

“I’ll always be a proud son of Delaware,” he said, choking up as he drew on a phrase from James Joyce and the tears began to flow. “Excuse the emotion, but when I die, Delaware will be written on my heart.”

Presidents rarely utter such pointed words about their own mortality. But the moment was classic Biden, sharing his pain as he sought to connect with others.

The next president wiped his eyes once more and headed to Washington.

PHOTOS: At age 30, Joseph R. Biden Jr. took his first Senate oath in 1973 in a hospital where his sons, Beau and Hunter, were recovering from a car accident that killed Mr. Biden’s wife and young daughter.; Valerie Biden Owens, Mr. Biden’s sister and adviser (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS); 1988 CAMPAIGN: Charges of plagiarism ended Mr. Biden’s hopes. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KEITH MEYERS/THE NEW YORK TIMES); 2008 CAMPAIGN: Verbal missteps hampered his second bid. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA LOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); 2020 CAMPAIGN: Victory, amid record voting, with Kamala Harris. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14)

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[***Gretchen Whitmer Isn’t Backing Down***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YP9-CS21-DXY4-X3NJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Right-wing protesters, Republican lawmakers and President Trump are attacking the Michigan governor, a possible vice-presidential pick. “I’m not thinking about politics,” she says.

She is a first-term governor and rising star in the Democratic Party, a frequent critic of the Trump administration for its handling of the coronavirus health crisis and a prominent foil of the president’s in the heated debate over when to reopen the nation for business.

Now the governor, [*Gretchen Whitmer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) of Michigan, has also become a prime target in the growing partisan storm over stay-at-home orders during the outbreak, which was highlighted on Wednesday by a raucous protest at the state capital, followed by Mr. Trump’s call on Friday to his followers to “Liberate Michigan.’’

The debate over how soon to loosen restrictions on businesses and workers has moved from the hands of health experts to become an increasingly political fight over costs to the economy, which Mr. Trump sees as crucial to his re-election.

Ms. Whitmer, a potential vice-presidential pick, has stirred Republican fears that her growing popularity will help Democrats carry the [*battleground state of Michigan in November*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html), whether or not she is on the ticket. “I think it’s impossible to look at this and not feel there’s a lot of partisanship going on as it relates to Governor Whitmer,’’ said Debbie Stabenow, a Democrat and Michigan’s senior senator.

The traffic-snarling protest on Wednesday that drew a few thousand people to Lansing, Mich., including many flying Tea Party flags and Trump 2020 flags, was nominally called to oppose Ms. Whitmer’s latest stay-at-home order, one of the strictest in the nation. But the gathering, like similar ones held in the electoral battleground states of [*Ohio,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) [*Minnesota*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) and [*North Carolina*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html), was also the clearest sign yet of a simmering ideological movement on the right resisting government mandates over the virus.

“It felt a lot more like a political rally than a statement about the stay-home order,’’ Ms. Whitmer said in an interview the next day.

Mr. Trump has been insulting and condescending toward Ms. Whitmer, calling her “Half Whitmer” and “the woman in Michigan.” Asked on Thursday at the White House if the protesters in Michigan should listen to their governor, Mr. Trump replied: “I think they listen to me. They seem to be protesters that like me and respect this opinion.”

On Friday, he kept up the pressure,[*tweeting “Liberate Michigan’’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) along with similar tweets for Virginia and Minnesota, which also have Democratic governors. His tweets came moments after a Fox News broadcast of protesters in state capitals violating social-distancing rules.

But unlike those two other Democratic governors, Ms. Whitmer is a Republican target because, among other reasons, she is in widely seen as in contention to be Joseph R. Biden’s running mate this fall.

In the interview, Ms. Whitmer said she has spoken recently with Mr. Biden about managing the pandemic.

“He’s called to check in a few times just to see what’s going on in Michigan, to ask thoughtful questions about what we need, but you know, we haven’t had that conversation,’’ she said, referring to Mr. Biden’s hunt for a vice-presidential candidate.

Asked if she thought she was prepared to be vice president, Ms. Whitmer, a former Democratic leader of the State Senate, who was known for her careful political timing under Republican majorities, deflected.

“Honestly every ounce of energy I have is being put into protecting people and saving lives in Michigan,’’ she said. “I’m not thinking about politics. I’m not. I don’t have energy for any of that right now.’’

The protests at state capitals in recent days had the feel of early Tea Party rallies in 2009, with far-right conservatives taking a lead role and more cautious elected Republicans keeping their distance. While polling shows that overwhelming majorities of voters are chiefly concerned about the public health threat, it also indicates that the most conservative Americans are more likely to be irked by the idea that their local economy might stay closed for a long time.

In a [*survey released Thursday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) by the Pew Research Center, very conservative Americans were twice as likely as others to worry that businesses would reopen too slowly. Yet very conservative voters were also unlikely to be too concerned about the virus’s economic impact. A [*Fox News poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) out last week found that the most conservative voters tended to express less worry than others that the shutdown could send the economy into recession.

These ideas may seem hard to square, but the rhetoric of protest organizers and hard-line media personalities provides at least a partial explanation: very conservative voters are more likely to allude to a sense of outrage over having [*their public conduct restricted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html), rather than caution about the economic implications of the shutdown.

John Anzalone, Ms. Whitmer’s pollster and a Michigan native, said the protests were not “reflective of real people” in a state where most are more worried that they or a family member will get sick than the they are about the economic impact of stay-at-home orders.

But Mr. Anzalone said the right would only grow louder the longer the restrictions are in place. “She is reflective of the pressure other governors are going to get,” he said.

In Michigan, the state with the [*third-highest number*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) of deaths from Covid-19, Ms. Whitmer imposed some of the country’s most [*severe restrictions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) on April 9, including a ban on travel to vacation homes and the sale in large stores of paint, garden supplies and furniture.

Her order was mocked on social media with posts of seed aisles cordoned off, criticisms that morphed into [*misinformation that was amplified by national Republican figures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html), including Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

Republican lawmakers in Michigan, who had backed an earlier, less restrictive executive order, blasted the governor. They moved to [*strip Ms. Whitmer’s power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) to declare a state of emergency under a 1945 law.

“Here’s my message today: OUR Governor IS DESTROYING OUR HEALTH BY KILLING OUR LIVELIHOODS!” the State Senate majority leader, Mike Shirkey, [*tweeted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) this month.

On Monday, the governor accused the DeVos family, a wealthy and powerful force in Michigan Republican politics, of a role in the protest at the Capitol. Without naming Betsy DeVos, President Trump’s education secretary, Ms. Whitmer said it was “really inappropriate for a sitting member of the United States president’s cabinet to be waging political attacks on any governor, but obviously me here at home.”

One of the named hosts of the protest was the Michigan Freedom Fund, a conservative group with ties to the DeVos family. Its executive director, Tony Daunt, said the group’s only role was to promote the event on Facebook, at a cost of $250 to be listed as a co-host.

Mr. Daunt said Ms. Whitmer’s initial, less restrictive stay-at-home orders in March had bipartisan support, but she lost credibility with her tighter restrictions, which he called “dismissive” of people’s concerns about lost livelihoods.

Her frequent appearances on national TV, including the [*“Daily Show”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html)with Trevor Noah and the Rachel Maddow show on MSNBC on Thursday, also set off conservatives. Mr. Daunt accused Ms. Whitmer of putting more “focus on the Biden veepstakes, as opposed to handling the crisis here in our own backyard.”

The governor called the charge “baloney,’’ defending her television appearances as chances to educate viewers about the virus, which attract offers of help for Michigan. “You know what, it would be wrong not to do everything I could on both those fronts,’’ she said. But even some Democrats in the state have raised an eyebrow at her ubiquity on national television.

Few other states outside the northeast have been as hard hit by the virus as Michigan, which recorded 2,226 deaths as of Friday, and where the intersection of race, presidential politics and Ms. Whitmer’s vice-presidential prospects have turned the perennial battleground into a political tinderbox.

With the outbreak concentrated in heavily black and Democratic Detroit, the virus was already threatening to exacerbate the widening political divide between rural and urban Michigan. For decades, Democrats enjoyed strength with ***working-class*** whites in rural Michigan. But as in much of the country, those voters have drifted to the G.O.P. over the last decade. Now, even when Democrats win statewide, as they did when Ms. Whitmer succeeded a Republican in 2018, they do so by piling up large margins in metropolitan areas and losing many of the less-populated counties where they once were strong.

And the images of nearly all-white protesters demanding the governor relax restrictions while hoisting Trump signs and Confederate battle flags, as the virus disproportionately impacts Michigan’s black residents, will only further cleave the state.

Less noticed is another flash point. A number of white Michiganders — many of them affluent but some firmly in the middle-class — have summer homes “up north,” as the sprawling upper tier of the state’s lower peninsula is called. Ms. Whitmer’s order that people not travel between their residences — [*meant to protect rural towns and rural hospitals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/gretchen-whitmer-michigan-militia.html) from being overwhelmed with the virus — has particularly inflamed those state residents eager to get to their cottages.

Of course, for the heavily black work force in and around Detroit that can’t retreat to a vacation home, such an inconvenience is trifling by comparison. Many of these workers plays critical roles running the region’s vitally needed grocery stores, pharmacies and busses.

“Black people’s lives haven’t changed in many ways because everyday was always a grind to survive,” said Adam Hollier, a state senator from Detroit, adding that “grocery store clerk, home health care, bus drivers, sanitation, custodial staff — the people who are often deemed most replaceable are the ones we actually can’t live without.”

Susan Beachy contributed research.

PHOTOS: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan has imposed some of the country’s most severe stay-at-home restrictions, which have recently drawn conservative-led protests at the Capitol in Lansing. On Wednesday, some self-styled militia members openly carried firearms. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHIGAN GOVERNORS OFFICE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; JEFF KOWALSKY/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES); The spread of the coronavirus is concentrated in Detroit, where much of the work force cannot work remotely. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY ROSE BENNETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2020

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Kristen Soltis Anderson; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6298-3051-DXY4-X190-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The March 26 episode of “The Ezra Klein Show.”

**Body**

The March 26 episode of “The Ezra Klein Show.”

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Kristen Soltis Anderson. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: I’m Ezra Klein, and this is “The Ezra Klein Show.” We’ve done some shows recently with Republicans who are trying to change their party, to push back towards policy, and in some cases, push it just back towards empirical reality. Check out episodes with Yuval Levin or Ramesh Ponnuru to get a sense of what I’m talking about.

But for now, the Republican Party is not what these reformers want it to become. We are governing, living with the Republican Party we have, not the Republican Party many might want. So what is that Republican Party, the real Republican Party, the Republican Party that that loves Donald Trump and wants to see him run again, what does that Republican Party believe? What do they prioritize? What do they emphasize in politics? What do they think all this is even about?

Kristen Soltis Anderson is a Republican pollster and the co-founder of the polling firm Echelon Insights. She’s the author of “The Selfie Vote.” She is the host of Sirius XM’s “The Trendline.” She’s a Fox News contributor. Got a lot of affiliations, a lot of work, but she does excellent polling and analysis on the modern Republican Party and, to be honest, some of the most unnerving survey results I’ve seen in recent years come out of her firm.

Some of the ideas about the Republican Party that make me most pessimistic, that’s out of her analysis. So I asked her on the show for conversation about what today’s Republicans believe and what that suggests about where the party is going next, not just in 2024, but beyond. As always, my email is [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com) Here’s Kristen Soltis Anderson. Welcome to the show.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Thank you so much for having me.

EZRA KLEIN: So let me begin here. Your firm conducted an interesting poll that asked people whether they believe politics is about, quote, “enacting good public policy” or is it about, quote, “ensuring the country’s survival as we know it”? Only 25 percent of Republicans said it was about the enacting good policy, and almost 50 percent said it was about survival as we know it. Why?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: In some ways, that doesn’t completely surprise me in that Republicans, I think, tend to look to government less as the solution to problems in the first place. And so, the idea of public policy as being the thing that will solve problems, you would expect that to be something Republicans believe perhaps less than Democrats.

But I also think that part of what you saw animate the rise of Donald Trump within the party is a real sense among many in the Republican coalition today that they are under siege. And whether it’s a sense of losing cultural power or losing economic power, that many people who have gravitated to the right don’t just feel like what’s happening in Washington these days is, oh, a debate over what should the top marginal tax rate be or what’s your government spending look like or those sorts of things. But rather, they feel the way of life that they have known is changing rapidly. And that makes them very anxious. And that, I think, is driving a lot of their views.

EZRA KLEIN: You do a lot of focus groups with Republicans. So what does this actually look like? What would it look like for the country’s survival to be assured? What would it look like for the perceived sense of siege to end?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I think for a lot of Republicans, it would mean some combination of feeling like they’re able to practice their religion freely. There was some great research that was done by Henry Olsen on behalf of the Ethics and Public Policy Center that showed one of the most unifying beliefs of the Trump coalition was the idea that there is religious persecution of Christians in the U.S. these days.

I think that’s a big piece of it and why you saw Donald Trump, despite his sort of personal ethical issues, still being quite beloved by evangelicals, that he sort of seemed as though he was somebody who was going to defend their right to practice their religion as they saw fit and not be told by the government that they couldn’t, or be told — and this is, I think, the crucial part — not just by government, but by other institutions — by schools that their children go to, or by the media, by their employers that they’re not allowed to hold certain beliefs.

I think that that is increasingly why you see so many on the right talking about things like cancel culture, even though, in my research, I actually find that the term cancel culture isn’t something that rises up to the very tiptop of Republican concerns. I think there is, in some ways, the more libertarian, get the government out of my life and let me live, is still a strain that is very big within Republican circles these days, even as sort of economic libertarianism may be less in fashion than it was 10 years ago.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the things I wonder about is that my sense of politics right now is, Democrats, in general, feel — my view is correctly — that they have less political power than their numbers would suggest. And Republicans feel — also actually correctly — they have less cultural power. And I’m defining culture here very broadly, like the peak of business, the peak of people who make television, the peak of advertising agencies, and so on, than their numbers would suggest.

And among Republicans, it seems to me this has created a bit of a question, if you’re a Republican politician, of how do you wield power to deal with the problems your base actually has? Because in general, there aren’t a lot of policy solutions to the people who make TV don’t think that making TV for you is the best long-term business strategy. And it seems to be driving Republicans in Congress down a bit of a weird path, where there’s just not a lot of actual policy they can offer. There’s more of a posture of fighting.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: 100 percent. So I’ve written two columns that sort of touch on this. One is to your earlier point that I think is exactly right, that Democrats feel a sense of, we ought to have more political power, considering the power we have in cultural spaces and Republicans feeling vice versa. I sort of abuse the theory of thermostatic public opinion, which is to say that typically, I think this is more applied to things like fiscal policy.

But if, for instance, government start spending a lot more money, then the thermostat kicks in, and the public starts saying, whoa, whoa, whoa, spend less money. Or if taxes go up, then the thermostat kicks in, and the public starts favoring lower taxes. And that’s how you wind up with the back and forth Republican, Democrat thing shifting from decade to decade.

But that in this case, if you have Democrats sort of reacting thermostatically to what they view as what, during the Trump era, was Republican control of the levers of power in government and sort of viewing the opposition as quite extreme, and therefore, I am more comfortable with my side being extreme as a counterbalance, in the same way that if, on a very frigid day, you open your window, the furnace is going to have to crank extra hard to counterbalance it, that you see, I think, Democrats reacting to or having reacted to the Trump era by moving much further to the left in response to what they saw was a very extreme threat.

But I think Republicans, instead, the thermostat is broken and that they’re reacting not necessarily to things the government is doing, but what they feel is an encroachment on their values coming from, whether it’s Hollywood, big tech, the media, universities — you sort of, you name it. There’s that laundry list of folks that Republicans would love to rail against. And that’s who they say, look, these are the institutions that have moved and become more extreme. And as a result, I feel more under siege. I am more willing to accept an extreme candidate because hey, quote, unquote, “at least he fights.”

EZRA KLEIN: There two threads in there that I want to pick up on, and one of them is that I see a difference in the way Democrats and Republicans seem to respond to this moment. There was a lot after 2016, and even to some degree, after 2020, concern among Democrats that they were losing Trumpist voters, right? What did Democrats need to do at a high level to regain these white ***working-class*** voters in, say, Wisconsin? And there’s a bunch of things Democrats culturally didn’t do, but at the high levels of politics, among other things, they nominated Joe Biden, who was this white, old, more moderate guy from Scranton.

I don’t see the same thing happening among Republicans. I don’t see a concern that they’re losing Democratic voters. I don’t see a concern that they haven’t won a popular vote in a presidential campaign more than once in the last seven or eight cycles. And I’m curious why you think that is. Because there’s one version of saying we are now being discriminated against and left behind, but also political coalitions have agency. They can try to win people back. And I don’t see that much of an emphasis on persuasion in the G.O.P.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: To the extent that these days, you see discussion about expanding the coalition and bringing in voters who might be more available to the G.O.P. There is not as much of an appetite these days for winning back, say, college educated suburbanites, I think in part because there is a belief that there may just be too great a divide on some of these sort of values and culture type issues.

Meanwhile, I think there is some more appetite you are seeing among Republicans for doing outreach to those in communities of color, who may not have college degrees and who you did see it, whether it’s in places like the Rio Grande Valley and Osceola County, Florida. But I also think this is one of the many sort of pernicious pieces of fallout from the whole, the election was stolen, issue.

If you were a sort of Never-Trump Republican and you get to January 6, and you think we’re hitting rock bottom here — we’ve lost the Senate, we’ve lost the presidency, we’ve lost the House. We must do something to fix things. I liken it to the scene in “Jurassic Park” when Laura Dern goes to reset the park after they’ve discovered Dennis Nedry has mangled it, that she’s trying to get things back online. And as soon as she thinks, OK, maybe this is the moment when we get Jurassic Park online, the raptor jumps out of the side of the bunker, and you get that jump scare.

And I feel like that’s kind of the — if you were a never-Trump Republican looking for the party to move on past everything of the last few years, you now instead have Marjorie Taylor Greene grabbing headlines. And you have absolutely no autopsy anywhere in sight. ,

So, in some ways, I would love for the Republican Party and think it’s important for them to take a look at why so many Americans who might be otherwise open to the G.O.P. just are completely uninterested these days. But I think as long as Republicans have a sense of, no, we’re still OK, we just have to keep fighting harder, that sort of introspection is not likely to happen in a big way.

EZRA KLEIN: You talked earlier about how the right is acting thermostatically against a sense that they’re losing power in all kinds of powerful, nonpolitical institutions in American life. And I want to talk about that a bit because one of the key things in politics is how people gain information. And the right’s informational universe has changed a lot in recent decades and narrowed a lot in recent decades.

And it’s begun to have very strange outcomes, like, say, the rise of QAnon. How would you describe the differences between where Democrats get their political information and what political information they trust, and where and how Republicans get it and what they trust?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: So I think it’s both a question of where people are getting their information and how much information they are getting. To the point you just made about sort of conspiracy theories like QAnon, there’s some really interesting data that AEI’s Survey Center on American Life put out a couple of weeks ago, where they took a look at to what extent Republicans believe various conspiracy theories — ideas that Antifa was mostly responsible for the attack on the Capitol or the QAnon conspiracy.

And they find that Republicans who do not have a college degree are significantly more likely to view those conspiracy theories as accurate. And I think you’d also just find that voters of lower education levels tend to consume less news just in general. It is not as though they are all opting for some far-right source of news so much as they are more likely not consuming as much news as, say, a college-educated voter is, which may mean that they’re just coming across things on Facebook and social media. And they’re coming across things in passing or hearing it from friends and neighbors rather than necessarily hearing it directly from some conservative source of news that they’ve tuned into.

The other thing to bear in mind is there’s a really interesting Pew study that came out a couple of weeks ago digging into people’s, sort of, news diets. And they found that the vast majority either are consuming news from a mix of places. They might be consuming news from local media sources, et cetera. Or they just simply aren’t consuming news that much. And it actually wasn’t dramatically different on the left, depending on how you were classifying different news sources. And I think Pew very smartly classified news sources for the study not on the basis of, does Pew think it’s a conservative or a progressive news source, but rather, is the audience of that news source predominantly conservative or progressive?

So the big thing that this, I think, underscored for me is, things like Twitter is not real life, that those who are hyper-engaged super consumers of news are broadly not representative of the electorate, and that for me, it’s less is the problem — news sources on one side are the other espousing views that are leading people to conspiracy theories, but rather, it’s those for whom they have simply checked out of news entirely, but who, nonetheless, are picking up this information in other ways.

EZRA KLEIN: When I looked into this, I’ve always been struck by, as you say, there’s actually a lot more similarity in the mix of news that people on the left and right consume. Where there’s a really big difference is in what they trust. So there’s another Pew study. This one was in early 2020. And they asked Republicans and Democrats to rate their trust in, like, 30 different news sources. And Democrats trusted more than they distrusted 22 of them, including some center right ones, like The Wall Street Journal. Republicans only trusted seven.

And that seems like a big part of this, that Republicans come into contact with a lot of news, but they’re primed to distrust things that they see in, say, The New York Times or in NBC News. Whereas a Democrat running into something The Wall Street Journal doesn’t automatically say, well, this isn’t true. It’s fake news. How big of an effect is that?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I think it’s undeniable that Republicans have a deeper distrust of media. There’s a study that I did on behalf of the Reporters Committee. It was a project on press freedom. Did it in partnership with a Democratic polling firm where we wanted to understand not just do Republicans and Democrats trust or not trust the media, but why. One thing that we found was pretty prominent, was we found about 72 percent of Republicans felt that media sources were too beholden to business and to money, and 70 percent that their only goal was ad revenue.

So, in some ways, yes, the partisan concern, they don’t want to see Trump succeed was right up there at the top of the list. But on essentially statistically equal footing were concerns that the media is really just looking out for themselves and their own bottom line. And you see this pop up — Pew did a study on why Republicans were bristling against the news media’s coverage of Covid-19 last April.

And one of the things they found was on questions of, do you believe that the media is getting you the information you need, are they largely accurate, Republicans were relatively split on those sorts of questions, certainly more skeptical of the media than Democrats were. But where the really big gap opens up is on the question of, was the media working for the benefit of the public? And Republicans overwhelmingly said no, they think the media was working to benefit themselves.

I think it’s the sense not just that the media is left versus right, and that’s why I can’t trust them because they don’t agree with me, but rather, that they aren’t looking out for the right things, that their interests are not aligned with mine, and that they are looking for clicks and retweets and sensationalism, and that’s why I can’t trust them.

EZRA KLEIN: How much do you buy justifications like that as the root rationale or a added on rationale, which is to say that a lot of Republican officeholders and media elites were saying that the coronavirus is being played out, that it’s being used as a weapon to undermine Donald Trump. And so when that is the overall message, then you sort of need an explanation for why is the media playing up coronavirus.

And so maybe it’s because they hate Donald Trump. Maybe it’s because of sensationalism and clicks and click bait. But to me, the hard question is always, are people developing this view because it is their view, or are they developing this view because it is the best way to square the information they’re getting from the sources they do trust and the information they see in the rest of the world?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: The reason I’m inclined to believe that it is an opinion that they genuinely hold rather than one that they’re sort of backing into to accommodate for other beliefs is because it’s not exclusive to Republicans, that this is something that I will hear Democrats bemoan as well. Everybody’s got some kind of partisan gripe with the media.

But things like beholden to business and money and the goals being sort of clicks, that’s not just a concern that is unique to Republicans or putting a nice gloss over some view that they think is otherwise that they need to be quiet about. I think that it’s an honestly held belief that they just feel like things often get kind of blown up or stretched out of proportion, and that the goal there is not getting accurate information across, it’s getting more clicks.

EZRA KLEIN: I agree with that in general. And by the way, I think people are — it’s very reasonable to think that the media is influenced by business models. I’m a part of the media. I think it is overstated. But I think it’s there, and it’d be ridiculous to ignore it. But broadly, there was a real effort among conservative elites to get their base to mistrust Covid reportage, which is I think a more specific thing. And you see it now.

So youth polling that shows around a third of Republicans say they probably won’t get a vaccine compared to 11 percent of Democrats, for all the talk about vaccine hesitancy in, say, the African-American community, it’s Republicans who are the most vaccine hesitant, even though Donald Trump himself was actually pretty pro-vaccine the whole time he pushed Operation Warp Speed. That seems like a real consequence of Republican officeholders and elites endlessly telling their supporters that they can’t trust what the media’s telling you on Covid because now they don’t trust vaccines. How do you read all of that?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: So vaccine hesitancy, it’s not a new phenomenon among Republicans. I think if you actually look at studies from pre-Covid, I don’t believe that the stereotype of sort of anti-vaccine folks being sort of very progressive preschool parents in Los Angeles doesn’t necessarily hold up in some of the data that I’ve seen. So that’s probably piece number one of it. But also, we then, in our survey, asked people, so if you say that you don’t want to get a Covid vaccine, why?

And part of it is general vaccine skepticism. This was pushed through too fast. I want to see what happens when other people get it. But there was also an element of, I don’t want to get it because I don’t think I need it because I’m not worried about getting Covid. And that, to me, is very worrisome. And it is why I think both of those things — one is a pre-existing skepticism of vaccines that public health folks have been trying to tackle and uproot for a long time.

But then specifically, around Covid, for folks that might say, yes, I would get a flu vaccine, but no, I’m not going to get a Covid vaccine because I’m not really worried about getting it, that’s why I think it’s so important that when someone like President Trump gets this vaccine, that that be shouted from the rooftops because it’s his voters that need to hear, even if you are like Donald Trump and he got Covid, that it’s important to get this vaccine, not just to protect yourself but to protect others.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the things lurking here is something that I’ve come to think of as like the polarization distrust cycle. And let me use the median Donald Trump as the example. But I think it speaks to this Covid issue, too. So Donald Trump as a politician was more extreme in his behavior, I think it is fair to say, than other past presidential candidates and presidents.

And he then pushed the media and, in other cases, companies to take stands that they otherwise would have preferred not to take. He attacked people. He would say things that were more flagrantly untrue. He would engage in conspiracy theories. He would retweet the Twitter account @whitegenocide. He really tried to make the media into his enemies. Steve Bannon talked about making the media the enemy of the people or the opposition party as an explicit strategy.

And so that pushed the media into a position that was pretty uncomfortable for a lot of these mainstream sources, which agonized endlessly over should we call things that are untrue lies or should we call that racism. But ultimately they do. And so then you have this cycle where the media seems more anti-Trump, more like what he says they are. And in reply, Trump attacks them more, which it makes it even harder for them to hold.

And it is both the behavior of the politician and then the reactive behavior among the institutions that creates an understandable impression on the part of, say, Trump supporters that the media or, say, tech companies are against them, even though, in many ways, the media never wanted any of this. Or tech companies didn’t want to be dealing with whether or not they have to ban a Republican president from Twitter. Nobody wants to make that decision in a C-suite.

And so you end up having this difficulty where I worry we’re in these cycles, where, as the Republican Party, in certain ways, gets more extreme, they force institutions to take stands they otherwise would have preferred not to take, which then creates more appetite among the base for their leaders to fight those institutions, which then creates more opposition within the institutions. And I don’t really know how you break that.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I think what you identified as part of that broken thermostat that I mentioned earlier in that it has engaged a lot of other folks in doing things they wouldn’t have normally done if Trump was not in the mix. I think this is part of why, in some ways, having a president like Joe Biden, who is quite boring, with all due respect to him, or a little bit more boring than certainly —

EZRA KLEIN: I think he would be thrilled with that description.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: — than Donald Trump was, that a combination of that with a great deal of Trump era fatigue, both from progressives who just could not fathom another four years of the level of anxiety that they felt under a Trump presidency, but also even among Republicans who are somewhat sympathetic to Trump, but who would just like the circus to end. I do think that there’s going to be some breathing room for folks that sort of got themselves more engaged in politics than they would have liked to, to take a step back.

However, I think you’re also likely to see, certainly over the next year or so, conservatives really looking for all of the sort of double standards that they can find and finding them quite easily. I mean, there was one that was making waves around conservative internet circles a little over a week ago about Joe Biden and him stumbling on the stairs of Air Force One, and conservatives sort of comparing the media coverage of that with the media coverage of things like Trump holding a glass of water awkwardly or Trump walking down a ramp at West Point uncomfortably, and the idea that when Trump walks down a ramp, it looks a little awkward doing it.

There were enormous headlines. Is Trump OK? Let’s bring in this doctor to talk about what’s wrong with him. And yet, the headlines when Biden takes a spill — which, frankly, people trip all the time. It doesn’t have to be a thing that leads nightly newscasts. But this was one that I think conservatives were able to sort of point to and go, look, there is a clear double standard here in how both sides are being treated.

And what I find when I talk to Republicans in focus groups about things like this and back during the Trump era, when I would say, well, do you want the media to be easier on Trump, to cut him a break, that it wasn’t necessarily that Republicans want the media to be non-adversarial, they just want to feel like that same pressure is being applied, no matter who is in power. And that, I think, is at the root of a lot of why Republicans say, I don’t trust the media. Because I think they’re being tougher on my side, and I think they go on vacation when the other side is in power.

EZRA KLEIN: I think there’s something to that, but I’m also very skeptical that the partisans of either side want the media to be tough on their side. I mean, that example, when I think of differences in how health was covered, the coverage of Hillary Clinton, when she was out on a hot day and got woozy, was overwhelming. I mean, it was days and days of around the clock coverage. And neither Trump nor Biden have faced scrutiny in the way that she did.

So I mean, Democrats very much have this view that Hillary Clinton, for decades and then even in 2016, was covered as this uniquely, sometimes weak, sometimes powerful, sometimes calculating, sometimes overwhelmed, sometimes scandalous, sometimes et cetera figure. And so there’s this difficult thing. The media’s really big. And you can always pick out stories that you don’t like how they were covered or outlets that covered a story poorly or hyped a story or whatever.

And so people end up having really weird, I think, views of how the media cover something. My view is, Hillary Clinton really was covered unfairly in the sense that the wrong things were emphasized. Her emails got more coverage than all of her policy proposals put together on the nightly newscasts. Donald Trump had a very weird and somewhat symbiotic relationship with the media.

And on the other hand, I think if you — on the one hand, the media was not very interested in Joe Biden for a long time. And then I think that he gets somewhat softer coverage, mostly because he doesn’t antagonize people, and the media attaches itself to conflict. And Biden tries very hard not to create conflict, which turns out to be a good press management strategy. But on the other hand, well, it’s not that he gets so much great coverage either.

It’s just that the media doesn’t quite know what to do with him because he doesn’t give them a lot to work with. So you end up talking a lot about the American Rescue Plan, which maybe isn’t the worst outcome here. But it seems to be the underlying dynamic in all of this, is that if you want to, you’re always going to be able to make a case, cherry picking different — people do not have an agreed upon umpire for who gets to decide whether or not a politician is getting covered unfairly. And as we know from endless social psychology experiments, you see coverage of your own side is much more unfair than you see coverage of the other side.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Absolutely, but I think a difference here is that for Republicans, it then rises to become an issue in and of itself that is a driver of their political behavior. So we, at Echelon Insights, we did a survey last month where we asked Republicans and Democrats to rate their level of concern around a number of different issues. And we offered a bunch of issues that we gave to both sides for them to rate how concerned they were. And then some sides, we issued things that are a little more kind of inside the family concerns.

And among Republicans, the issue of liberal bias in the mainstream media was one of their top concerns. 57 percent said they were extremely concerned about this. The only issues that were close to as high on this metric were lack of support for the police or illegal immigration. And so, when it comes to — I think you would be much less likely to see on a progressive news channel a story about media bias against Hillary Clinton than you would, I think, in conservative circles. Because this is a perennial issue, it is not a new issue, but it is one that is really upsetting and drives a lot of these voters, something they feel is very concerning. It gets even more attention and more play.

EZRA KLEIN: So this gets to something you were saying a couple of minutes ago about one of the best things that can happen to turn down the temperature on politics is boring politicians. Joe Biden is a boring politician. If Republicans want a lot easier media coverage, they could run a more boring, staid politician in 2024.

But you all have been doing a lot of polling about the 2024 field and where the party is. And my sense of that polling is it does not look like right now, Republicans are excited about running a more conventional politician, that the way they want to deal with media bias is to run somebody who will go to war with the media, triggering a lot of the same dynamics that are frustrating them.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I think that’s right. When we asked in our last month’s Echelon survey, we took a look at what folks say is absolutely necessary for them to support someone in a future Republican primary. And we find that the top traits that Republican voters say that they are looking for in someone in a future Republican primary election are someone who won’t back down in a fight with Democrats, someone who supports the Trump America First agenda, but also someone who will work in a bipartisan way to solve problems.

So I think in some sense, they want someone who will fight, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that they want someone who is going to just burn the other side down, no matter what. And actually, in Henry Olsen’s research that I mentioned earlier, he finds a similar dynamic that there’s one question where they ask, do you believe that Democrats are good people with the wrong ideas, or are they bad people? And they find a majority of Trump voters say, I think Democrats are bad people.

But then when you ask them, do you want to work with the Democrats to solve problems, a majority of them say, yes, we should work with the Democrats to solve problems. Just because Republican voters are sort of consistently saying in surveys that they view the other side as a big threat, they don’t want their side to back down in a fight against them, that doesn’t mean that the notion of working together with the other side, when possible, has completely gone away either.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: Which Republicans, in your view, are well positioned for 2024, and why, starting with Donald Trump?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Well, Donald Trump is pretty well positioned insofar as someone who initially was very far outside of the Republican establishment, he now has an iron grip over a lot of the sort of pieces of Republican apparatus. He is able to fundraise enormous amounts of money very quickly just on his name. And so, he’s enormously powerful in the party.

We tend to find about 43ish percent — that’s in our most recent survey. About 43 percent of Republicans think of themselves as Trump supporters before being Republican. About the same number, about 43 percent, say that they would definitely vote for Donald Trump if the Republican primary were held today. And in fact, we’ve been tracking this number over the last couple of months.

And actually, the percentage saying they would either definitely or probably support Donald Trump in a primary has actually inched up month to month. It hasn’t gone down. In some ways, absence has made the heart grow fonder for some Republicans. Perhaps they’re forgetting the things that had turned them off of Trump back in January. But he would be very formidable.

However, we also ask a question where we take Trump out of the equation. We say if Donald Trump didn’t run, then who would you vote for? And on that question, this month, we find essentially a tie for coming in one 17 percent, one 16 percent, between Ron DeSantis of Florida and Mike Pence. And Mike Pence had actually led on this question for quite some time with a pretty soft mid to low 20s sort of number for a while. But DeSantis really, whether it’s in the wake of CPAC or what have you, just over the last two months in particular, has shot up from single digits up to now, he’s the leader in our most recent poll.

And there’s a particularly interesting divide when you look at these results by Republicans who think of themselves as Trump supporters first and Republicans who think of themselves as Republican Party supporters first. If you think of yourself as Trump first, DeSantis is your guy right now. He is lapping the field. But if you are somebody who thinks of yourself as a Republican first rather than a Trump supporter first, actually, Mike Pence is far out in the lead on that angle.

So it’s interesting to me that Donald Trump’s former vice president is actually not the candidate of choice of Trump supporters, whether that is that he’s not viewed as someone who will fight, whether that’s the sort of echoes of what happened on January 6. Clearly, there is now a divide in the party. And Ron DeSantis, rather than Mike Pence, at the moment, seems to be the one with the greatest support among sort of the Trump loyal base.

EZRA KLEIN: I suspect that a lot of listeners of the show, like probably most Americans, don’t know very much about Governor DeSantis to the extent they know anything about him. It’s that he was pretty dismissive of coronavirus early in the game. So what is it that Republicans who are supporting him, what are the highlights of how DeSantis is understood among Republicans or among conservatives?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: So DeSantis came into office having upset Adam Putnam, who had been agriculture commissioner. He had formerly been in House Republican leadership. And he did something interesting, which is he ran as a very sort of Trumpist candidate. You may recall infamously there was an ad that he did where he was sitting down with his young child and showing them how to build the wall using blocks and was reading “Art of the Deal” to his child.

And this was sort of sold by Republicans as though this is a sort of a funny — it’s supposed to be a lighthearted ad. It was met with horror among progressives, to be sure. But that sort of made some of his national name. And he also made lots of appearances on things like Fox News, et cetera. That was, in part, a big way that he put together his primary victory.

But then as soon as he began to govern, at least before Covid-19, his agenda wound up being viewed as a bit more — moderate might not be the right word, but for instance, he got plaudits on some of the stuff he did regarding water quality in South Florida and protecting the Everglades. And as a result, I think was kind of getting some second looks from Republicans already saying, hey, he ran as a pretty Trumpy candidate, and yet he seems to be building a lot of bridges with folks in Florida on other issues.

I think nowadays the appeal of DeSantis as a sort of inheritor of the Trump legacy is, in some ways, related to exactly this issue of, is the media treating him fairly versus progressives? The fall of Andrew Cuomo, I think, has been a very big animating factor in Republicans sort of rallying around DeSantis as the anti-Cuomo, as he handled Covid very differently.

And they now point to him as a success story on keeping Florida open and yet, still, Republicans will tout what they view as somebody who resisted pressure from the national media to do things differently. That, in some ways, because DeSantis became the national media’s choice as the villain of the Covid-19 story, that, in some ways, endeared him to many Republican voters, who now see him as having bucked the trends or proved them wrong.

EZRA KLEIN: And DeSantis also strikes as one of these Republicans who understands that the party doesn’t care that much about your policy agenda.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: He literally said so at CPAC.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, I was going to read this quote from him at CPAC where he says we can sit around and have academic debates about conservative policy. We can do that, but the question is, when the klieg lights get hot, when the left comes after you, will you stay strong, or will you fold? And that almost seems to me now to be the molten core of the Republican Party. Will you fight, which goes back to what I was saying earlier that it does not seem to me the Republican Party wants to move in the direction of a candidate who is going to allow or invite any of these institutions they worry about losing to climb down from their barricades.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I’m actually not sure that I agree with that. I think to the extent that these institutions climbing down from their barricades would represent any kind of a win, I’m sure Republican candidates would love to be able to take credit to say, hey, I fought institution X, and look, they backed down. So I actually, while I do share your concern that the temperature is only going to continue going up, that even as Donald Trump, even if he fully steps aside and decides not to run, that there is still a hunger for a fight on the right. But I don’t think that it is inevitable that the trajectory we have been on for the next four years has to continue. I don’t think that it’s inevitable.

EZRA KLEIN: So there’s a question, of course, of people who are leading in polls now. But you’ve done a lot of polling about where Republican voters care about. And when you think about that polling and you think about the people who might run, who do you think is well-positioned, who folks might not be thinking of?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: It’s a good question. I mean, issues that Republicans are really caring about, issues like illegal immigration, issues like lack of support for the police, those were the two top issues in our poll regarding what things Republicans are specifically concerned about. When I think about folks on those kinds of issues, it’s hard for me, looking at the list of other potential candidates, to see any names that really jump out.

But at the moment, I think if you are looking at the Republican Party, and you are saying, what does the party look like after Trump, if we are, in fact, moving into some kind of a quasi after-Trump moment, it does not strike me that anyone has really set themselves up to be a dominant force. You’ve seen Josh Hawley kind of try, but he continues to get, really, crickets in our polling. It doesn’t seem to be having resonance nationally with Republicans, even if perhaps they may say that they like him. In our most recent poll, he comes in receiving less than 1 percent of the vote.

A lot of folks have talked about the idea of someone like Tucker Carlson. I mean, if you want to talk about those two issues, and I should disclose I’m a contributor to Fox News, but he’s somebody that we’ve added to our polls. And he comes in around 4 percent this month when we test him as a potential Republican nominee for president. But these are still — once you get out of the DeSantis and Pence lane, right now, it’s just completely wide open. You have 35 percent of Republican voters who say they are unsure.

So I would watch and see, does anybody really quarter the market on talking about issues like what’s going on down at the border right now? That seems to be an issue that Republican voters are still extremely animated about. And it’s not yet clear to me who in the Republican field wants to talk about that issue as their number one issue, absent Donald Trump.

EZRA KLEIN: How big is electability as an issue? So in 2020, you have Democrats obsessing, from the moment they lose in 2016, about electability. They had just been in the White House for two terms, and they had won the popular vote in 2016. But losing the White House, they obsess about finding an electable candidate. Is that conversation happening on the right?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I think you can’t separate out the notion of electability from the notion of someone who fights. And let’s go back to the 2012 autopsy. Back in 2012, there was a big fight among Republicans about what was the reason why Mitt Romney lost, and what would it take to be electable? Because bear in mind, in the 2016 election, there was nothing Republicans wanted more strongly than to beat Hillary Clinton. So, arguably, electability was at the top of the list.

So, how do you get an electorate that is focused on electability choosing Donald Trump as their person? That seems like a contradiction in some ways, doesn’t it? And yet, I think part of it was because on the one hand, you had sort of the Republican establishment, the folks writing things like the autopsy saying, the reason why we lost is that we were too far to the right. We weren’t moderate enough on issues like immigration, et cetera. We need to do more outreach to the political center.

And on the other hand, you had folks like Ted Cruz, your sort of Freedom Caucus types that said, no, no, no, the reason why Republicans can’t win is that we haven’t been conservative enough. And so the path to electability is finding someone who is going to be able to motivate our base enough to turn out.

And Donald Trump sort of blew up a lot of those assumptions about what constituted electability because he never tried to fashion himself as the most conservative candidate anyways. He came in and said, I will turn out the base, but here is how I will do it. I will do it by talking about immigration. I will do it by talking about things like national security.

And that, for me, I just think when we think of the word electability, too often, we conflate it with someone who is going to be nice and moderate and appealing to a broad range. And there is, I think, a very large segment of the G.O.P. that views electability as, are you going to fire up my side and go find people who might have otherwise never participated in politics, but like this very unique message that you have?

EZRA KLEIN: But isn’t this a weird reputation for Republicans to have attached to Donald Trump? So Donald Trump, he does win in 2016, obviously. But he loses the popular vote and not by a tiny margin, but by a substantial margin. By the end of his presidency and by the dawn of the 2021 kind of governmental structure, Republicans have lost the White House. They’ve lost the Senate. They’ve lost the House. I would not take —

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: You’re not wrong.

EZRA KLEIN: I would not take the attitude from this that Donald Trump had the key to building an enduring governing coalition, that Donald Trump was the key to electability. I have some theories about what made Donald Trump potent in American politics. But it does just seem weird to me that Republicans aren’t a little bit more worried about their political standing, particularly given their fear of what would happen if given their defensiveness around other institutions to begin to really, really lose their political power, too.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I completely agree with you. I think there has been absolutely inadequate levels of soul-searching. And the level of alarm is not high enough among Republicans. And I think a large piece of this, as I mentioned before, is wrapped up in the idea that many Republicans believe that Donald Trump is actually the rightful winner of the 2020 election anyways. And so actually, Republicans would have won, and Donald Trump’s actually much more popular.

Bear in mind this is a man who built his career over decades on the notion that he is a winner, and he is a successful person. And that’s why any time criticism would come after him, if somebody criticized him for not being conservative enough, it doesn’t matter. But you criticize something like his business record, that he’s not the biggest best in everything, that’s why he would always bristle and really fight back against that. Because inherent to the Trump brand is the idea that he is a winner, that he is successful. The idea that he has lost something is completely antithetical to the Trump brand. And that message has been received by many Republicans.

EZRA KLEIN: So let me give my theory of Donald Trump’s political success and see what you think of it. So, Donald Trump wins in 2016 by losing the popular vote, but having a very efficient voting coalition. And what he particularly does is he polarizes the electorate more aggressively along the lines of, in some tellings of this, education, particularly among white voters, and then there’s another version of this, which is voter trust. Education doesn’t seem to me to capture all of it. And these sort of lower education, lower trust voters are really heavily concentrated in electorally important states. David Shor, the Democratic data analyst, has made a lot of arguments around this.

And so, if I were a Republican strategist, what I would be thinking about is, how do you, on the one hand, keep polarizing the electorate around education and trust, and on the other hand, not do it in a way that drives so much opposition against you, that you create a bigger coalition even than your electoral advantage can survive against? Is that the advice you would give? How do you read that?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Well, when we’re talking about trust, are you talking about interpersonal trust, or are you talking about trust in institutions? Because, again, it’s —

EZRA KLEIN: Talking about trust in institutions. And what I’m referring to here is the way in which we keep undercounting these voters and polls. Because even as pollsters like you try to control for education, even once you do the education control, a lot of these voters are not being captured by that control, but still are not picking up the phone to talk to a pollster.

So among the institutions they don’t trust is your institution, and it is making it hard to get a correct sense of the electorate. But Donald Trump turning them out and their intense electoral efficiency was really key to him winning in 2016 and him coming anywhere close to winning, given his massive popular vote deficit in 2020.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Yeah, I think that the challenge for Republicans of relying on these low trust voters, despite them being distributed very politically efficiently, is, to what extent are they motivated by someone who’s not Donald Trump?

EZRA KLEIN: Right.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: And again, this goes back to the question of Donald Trump having been a major global presence — love him or hate him — in media for decades, to where if you are somebody that does not watch very much news at all, you still know who Donald Trump is. He was omnipresent, his name ID nearly 100 percent.

So I think there’s still a big question for Republicans. They’re stuck in this bind where they may not be able to win in a big way without Donald Trump’s name on the ballot, but they may not be able to win with him, and they may not be able to win without him. That is the bind they have been left in, in the post-Trump era, that the types of voters Trump brings out may not turn out for anyone else with an R after their name, even if Trump comes out and says, I endorse this person, I love them, they’re great.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, I wonder this a lot, whether or not Republicans have taken this idea that what Trump brought to the table is fighting. And Trump definitely did bring fighting to the table. But he also brought to the table a real entertainer sense of how to make people want to watch that fight. He brought a kind of shamelessness. He brought, as you say, 100 percent name ID.

And when I watch some of the people who are trying to be like him, like, say, Josh Hawley, and who are just like, they really have taken fighting very literally so they’re just endlessly getting into fights with people, but it’s not entertaining. It’s not fun. There’s none of Trump’s delight in it. I do wonder if fighting is not — in the same way that education was not the right way of understanding these sort of lower trust voters, I sort of think fighting is not exactly the right way of understanding Donald Trump.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Well, and I think this is where you get to this odd dynamic of, on the one hand, voters consistently saying in polls, I think the other side is bad. I think they’re a threat, and I want to fight them. On the other hand, I think we should work with them, and I want to see bipartisan solutions. That I think there’s a second step to the Trump, he fights, message, which is he fights and he knows when to walk away from the table. But he knows how to put the pressure on at the table to get a good deal. Now we set aside whether he actually achieved this as president or not. But just sort of the Trump ethos around, like, what does fighting mean in his context, I think that’s different than folks that are trying to put on a Trump costume.

And I also think — I mean, my general theory of voters, which runs contrary to what I encounter among a lot of political consultants, is I actually think voters are a lot smarter than political consultants often give them credit for. There have been times where I have come out of moderating a focus group and walked into the back room. And the other consultants and folks who are there are like, oh my gosh, I can’t believe how dumb these voters are. And I never walk away from a focus group thinking that, because people are busy and what have you.

But I think that voters also have a very good BS detector when it comes to picking up someone that is trying to be a knock-off Donald Trump versus someone who is authentically spiritually sort of trying to achieve the same things. And so to the extent that someone like DeSantis can say, I fight, but also, look, here are the results that I’ve gotten in a place like Florida, if you’re somebody like a Hawley and you’re just picking a fight after fight after fight, you eventually have to show some wins in order for it to sort of complete the Trump narrative of why fighting matters.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: If the Republican Party is coming to you to write an autopsy and they’re saying, listen, we don’t want to win by losing the popular vote and winning the Electoral College. We actually want to win the popular vote as Republicans. How should they change their strategy?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: So I think that if there’s been anything positive that the Trump influence has had on the G.O.P. that is going to set it up potentially for the long haul is by hopefully reorienting the party to focus more on sort of ***working class*** Americans. Nowadays, the sorts of issues that I think used to be very animating, at least to establishment Republicans, are sort of no longer as much at the center of what the party is all about.

I saw somebody tweet this the other day. They just said, if Republicans and swing voters are looking around and they feel like the world has gone mad, is there any way for the Republican Party to be the party of normal people? If progressive institutions are sort of captured by those who are extreme elites, who just live in an alternate reality and speak a very different language than sort of average Americans, is there a way for the G.O.P. to really position itself not in a bombastic Trumpist way, but in an authentically, we want to make sure the economy is working for people like you. We want to get a better deal for you economically.

And we don’t think it means the government just printing a ton of money and sending checks. Here’s what we think that vision looks like. Very broadly, I think there’s actually a lot of potential resonance there. I think the challenge is, can that decouple itself from the baggage of the Trump era, how quickly can it decouple itself from the baggage of the Trump era, and to what extent are Republicans interested in having, as you mentioned before, some of these policy debates around, well, are we going to do the Romney child allowance? Are we going to do expanding earned income tax credit? And then to what extent is Biden, in some ways, doing all of these things already instead? So that the old reform econ agenda is actually being implemented, in some ways, by President Biden.

EZRA KLEIN: Is there a lesson from the fact that Joe Biden is very unpopular with Republicans, but the American Rescue Plan is actually reasonably popular, certainly for a Democratic giant spending bill, among Republicans?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I am fascinated by how little resistance or messaging was really done by Republican politicians or, frankly, the conservative media writ large. It just was not a fight that conservative elites chose to make. And that fight never really traveled down to others in the party. I mean, we tested this not even bringing up the word Covid relief. We actually just asked it in terms of the dollar figure. Do you support or oppose the recent $1.9 trillion government spending package that was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden? 57 percent say yes.

And I think this also goes along with Biden’s job approval being totally fine, being better than where Trump’s was for sure, but being particularly strong on issues of Covid, that fighting fights over things like the government is spending too much, to what extent is that a Romney era Republican message? It wouldn’t surprise me if that’s part of why you’ve seen some Republican elites sort of step back from really going after the Covid relief bill.

EZRA KLEIN: But my sense is Republican leaders have no idea what to do with this. They want to become, at least theoretically, a ***working class*** party. Some of them talk about economic populism. Josh Hawley was out there for a while with Bernie Sanders pushing for bigger checks. But then when the rubber hits the road on this stuff, the coalition has a lot of internal resistance to moving on it. I mean, Donald Trump was not able to get $2,000 checks when he had the Senate. And maybe Republicans would have won Georgia if they had. I think there’s a real possibility of that.

And so it does seem to me that one difficulty for the Republican Party is that there are still enough of the old economic conservatism skepticism of government spending and printing money, that though there are people in that party who have tried to move it, whenever somebody actually gets close to pushing a policy that would do this, the party in the congressional group melts away from them.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I think part of what drives that is less about fiscal conservatism broadly and more — and this is actually a question that I’m going to add to my next month’s survey, so I don’t have a clean answer for you on this one right now, but it’s a suspicion I have, and I’m going to test it out — is that when you see Republican reluctance around things like Romney’s child allowance or what have you, is not that people are opposed to getting money. It is that in many ways, Republicans are worried about if the government puts this program into place, is it going to be money coming out of my pocket going to someone else?

And in a moment, if they’re feeling economically stressed, if they’re feeling like — if you see all kinds of data about people being worried that the next generation’s not going to be better off, I think the idea of transfers from one person to another because someone else has had children or has done X, Y, and Z, that that’s the sort of thing where you’re going to begin to see, it’s not just about the dollars and cents being spent, but about the, wait, is this coming out of my pocket, where you’ll see some of that sort of old school fiscal conservatism, individual me as a taxpayer, kind of anxiety shining through. And I think that’s still very much present in the G.O.P.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, this is still going to be a problem for the G.O.P., as Democrats have learned many times. It’s easier to propose progressive economic policy if you’re willing to tax rich people for it because most people are not rich. But if you’re not, then at some point, it’s going to come out of your pocket, or it’s going to come out of the debt.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Well, you do see high taxes still popping up as — again, it was one of those top five concerns we found among Republican voters. The intensity around that concern was a little bit lower. Only 50 percent said they were extremely concerned. But there’s a big difference between high taxes for me and high taxes for wealthy individuals. I don’t think that the Republican Party writ large is — that their voter base is craving raising taxes on the wealthy, but they’re certainly more comfortable with it than Republicans in Washington are.

EZRA KLEIN: Right, and before we end here, I want to talk about that next generation for a minute. How do Gen Z and millennial Republicans differ both in size and in ideology from boomer and Gen X Republicans?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: It’s a good question. When I take a look at, for instance, our ballot question, who’s the preferred candidate for younger versus older Republicans, it’s actually less clear that there’s some dramatic difference in who people prefer and where that younger Republicans are much more likely to say they’re unsure. There is not some clear vision for where they want the party to go that differs from where older Republicans are, so much as I think playing a little bit of wait and see.

There are a couple of issues where there are really clear divides between younger Republicans and older Republicans. And climate race and gender are some of the biggest ones. Pew put out their first big report on Gen Z not too long ago, and they found that even when you just look among Republicans, it’s Gen Z and millennial Republicans who are much more likely to say climate change is real, it’s happening, we need to do something about it. They’re much more likely to believe in systemic racism, that it’s an issue that needs to be addressed. They’re much more likely to, say, know someone who uses nontraditional gender pronouns.

There are certain differences between young and old Republicans that exist. However, I think there are some stereotypes of younger Republicans like around issues like immigration, cetera, where I actually haven’t seen very big differences between younger and older Republicans, that young and old Republicans both are immigration hawks. And so, I think the issue that you see really gaining a lot of energy around at least young conservative activists are these kind of free speech on campus issues.

This is the thing that any time I sit and do a panel discussion with young conservatives, it’s issue number one that comes up for them. I wonder to what extent that issue has resonance with those who are not on college campuses, to what extent free speech issues are animating for the very large portion of millennials and Generation Z who do not attend any college, much less a four-year institution. But that is an issue that I see really being something that young people on the right talk about a great deal.

EZRA KLEIN: And how about the size of these coalitions? So I think there’s a view, a stereotype that young people are always liberal. But it’s actually not true. Like Gen X, for instance, was pretty split and even a little bit Republican when it was younger. Republicans have been losing millennials and Gen Z-ers by shocking numbers to me in recent years. And party identity can be sticky over time. Do you see that as sort of epiphenomenal of this period, or do you see that as a real threat to the future of the Republican Party?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I think it’s a real threat to the future of the Republican Party. And I wrote a book six years ago all about it, called “The Selfie Vote,” that makes exactly that argument, that when I first began studying this topic of generational politics I was myself in my mid 20s and I would approach a lot of Republican consultants, saying, look, Republicans, we lost young voters by a 2 to 1 margin. And I would get dismissed as, oh, well, it was just Obama. It was just a temporary thing. This happens. Young people don’t vote anyways. They’re all more progressive.

And data point after data point shows that a lot of those things are untrue. Yes, Barack Obama had a very outsized influence on engaging a lot of new, young people in politics back in 2008. But the shift away from the right from young people actually predated him. You can see hints of it popping up in the 2006 midterms that made Nancy Pelosi speaker the first time. You can see a generational divide beginning to open up there.

Interestingly, if anything, the Biden era has muted some of these generation gaps. Some of the more recent polling I’ve seen on Biden’s job approval, I’ve seen one poll — I think it was Pew — that older Americans are sort of fine with him and younger Americans are sort of fine with him. And that’s very different than what we saw during the Trump years. So it’ll be interesting to me if Joe Biden is the one that sort of breaks down what has been at least a decade and a half of pretty deep generational polarization.

The problem Republicans are going to have long term is that, at least for the oldest millennials — and now some of us millennials are approaching 40 — is that we’ve now got a couple of elections under our belt of having broken very heavily one direction. And as you noted, political identification is pretty sticky. There’s a lot of research on this front that says how you behave in your first couple of elections really just echoes throughout the rest of your life. And you can see this most acutely if you look at exit polls.

And things are a little squirrely in 2020 because you have the two different exit polls. You have AP VoteCast, and you have — it’s a little hard to do apples to apples, but the voter bloc that has shifted furthest to the left in the last few elections is not actually the youngest voters. They’re coming in and kind of behaving pretty progressive.

But it’s actually if you look at 30 somethings. As millennials move into that bloc and as the Gen Xers move out, it’s becoming more progressive as well. We’re getting older. We’re doing all of those things Republicans said were going to make my generation more conservative. We’re having kids and buying homes and paying taxes, and it’s not really moving the needle further to the right.

EZRA KLEIN: Super interesting. I think it’s a good place to end. So let’s do a couple book recommendations. And let me start here with, what’s a book you would recommend for people who want to understand the modern Republican Party?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: So I recommend — this is actually an older book. It predates a lot of this, but I was just thinking about this morning — “Grand New Party” by Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam, which is not about today’s G.O.P. It’s, in some ways, kind of an alternate history. But it really diagnosis that the Republican Party is going to struggle if it doesn’t speak to the concerns of ***working class*** Americans.

And it calls this long before Donald Trump is ever on the scene. And so even though it’s a book that is dated at this point, I think it still has a lot of resonance about what the party perhaps could have become a decade ago and perhaps hints of where a post-Trump Republican Party could go if it wants to be successful today.

EZRA KLEIN: What’s your favorite book on how voters think?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I love “Resonate” by Nancy Duarte, which is not actually a book about voters so much as it is about communication and persuasion broadly. It’s told through the lens of, how do you make a PowerPoint that grabs people’s attention, which is a no simple task, I can tell you as a pollster. But I recommend that book to anyone who wants to understand how do you communicate with someone in a way that is captivating and effective.

EZRA KLEIN: What is your favorite political science paper?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: It is on the topic we were just discussing about kind of the stickiness of political attitudes and generations. It’s a paper from 1987 by Keith Billingsley and Clyde Tucker. It’s called “Generations, Status, and Party Identification, A Theory of Operant Conditioning,” which basically —

EZRA KLEIN: Ooh.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: — just means that as you are young and first beginning to engage in the political process, you remember very clearly the punishments and rewards that you sense from taking certain political positions or views. And so the way your worldview is shaped when you are young tends to stick with you as you age politically.

EZRA KLEIN: And finally, what is your favorite children’s book?

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: I really love “Dragons Love Tacos” by Adam Rubin. In some ways, it’s anti-spicy food propaganda because it suggests that giving dragons tacos makes them increasingly dangerous. But as a big fan of spicy foods, it is the book I tend to get for all my friends when they have kids.

EZRA KLEIN: I love that. All right, Kristen Soltis Anderson, it’s been a pleasure. Thank you so much.

KRISTEN SOLTIS ANDERSON: Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: That’s the show. If you enjoyed it, please leave us a review on whatever podcast app you’re using, or send the episode to a friend. “The Ezra Klein Show” is a production of New York Times Opinion. It is produced by Roge Karma and Jeff Geld, fact-checked by Michelle Harris. Original music is by Isaac Jones, and mixing this episode also by the great Isaac Jones.

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**Body**

George Wallace's speeches and interviews from his 1968 campaign feature language and appeals that sound familiar again as the ''law and order'' president sends federal forces into the streets.

WASHINGTON -- The nation's cities were in flames amid protests against racial injustice and the fiery presidential candidate vowed to use force. He would authorize the police to ''knock somebody in the head'' and ''call out 30,000 troops and equip them with two-foot-long bayonets and station them every few feet apart.''

The moment was 1968 and the ''law and order'' candidate was George C. Wallace, the former governor of Alabama running on a third-party ticket. Fifty-two years later, in another moment of social unrest, the ''law and order'' candidate is already in the Oval Office and the politics of division and race ring through the generations as President Trump tries to do what Wallace could not.

Comparisons between the two men stretch back to 2015 when Mr. Trump ran for the White House denouncing Mexicans illegally crossing the border as rapists and pledging to bar all Muslims from entering the country. But the parallels have become even more pronounced in recent weeks after the killing of George Floyd as Mr. Trump has responded to demonstrations by sending federal forces into the streets to take down ''anarchists and agitators.'' The Wallace-style tactics were on display again on Wednesday as Mr. Trump stirred racist fears about low-income housing moving into the suburbs.

''In the presidential campaign of 1968, my father, Governor George Wallace, understood the potential political power of downtrodden and disillusioned ***working class*** white voters who felt alienated from government,'' his daughter, Peggy Wallace Kennedy, said by email the other day. ''And Donald Trump is mining the same mother lode.''

Former President Barack Obama implicitly made the comparison between the two men during a eulogy on Thursday for John Lewis, the civil rights icon and longtime congressman. ''George Wallace may be gone,'' Mr. Obama said, ''but we can witness our federal government sending agents to use tear gas and batons against peaceful demonstrators.''

It may seem incongruous to see Mr. Trump, a New Yorker born to wealth with no ties to the South beyond Trump-branded property in Florida, embracing the same themes as Wallace, who was proud to call himself a ''redneck'' segregationist from hardscrabble Alabama. Yet it speaks to the enduring power of us-against-them politics in America and the boiling pot of resentment that Mr. Trump, hoping to save his presidency, is trying to tap into a half-century after Wallace did, hoping to win the presidency.

To go back and read or listen to Wallace's speeches and interviews from that seminal 1968 campaign is to be struck by language and appeals that sound familiar again, even if the context and the limits of discourse have changed.

Like Mr. Trump, Wallace denounced ''anarchists'' in the streets, condemned liberals for trying to squelch the free speech of those they disagreed with and ran against the elites of Washington and the mainstream media. He vowed to ''halt the giveaway of your American dollars and products'' to other countries.

''One of the issues confronting the people is the breakdown of law and order,'' Wallace said at his campaign kickoff in Washington in February 1968. ''The average man on the street in this country knows that it comes about because of activists, militants, revolutionaries, anarchists and communists.''

Just last week, Mr. Trump framed the current campaign in similar terms. ''So it's a choice between the law and order and patriotism and prosperity, safety offered by our movement, and the anarchy and chaos and crime and socialism,'' he told a tele-rally in North Carolina. In tweets this week, he promised ''all of the people living their Suburban Lifestyle Dream that you will no longer be bothered or financially hurt by having low income housing built in your neighborhood.''

Like the pugnacious Mr. Trump, Wallace enjoyed a fight. Indeed, he relished taking on protesters who showed up at his events. ''You know what you are?'' he called out to one. ''You're a little punk, that's all you are. You haven't got any guts.'' To another, he said, ''I may not teach you any politics if you listen, but I'll teach you some good manners.''

Recalling the time protesters blocked President Lyndon B. Johnson's motorcade, Wallace insisted that he would never let that happen to him. ''If you elect me the president and I go to California or I come to Arkansas and some of them lie down in front of my automobile,'' he said, ''it'll be the last thing they'll ever want to lie down in front of.''

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Mr. Trump has made similar chest-beating threats. ''When the looting starts, the shooting starts,'' he wrote on Twitter after protests turned violent in Minneapolis following Mr. Floyd's death under the knee of a white police officer. A few days later, the president said that protesters who tried to enter White House grounds would be greeted ''with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons'' and that Secret Service agents would ''quickly come down on them, hard.''

Among those who saw an analogy between the two men from the start was Mr. Lewis, who was beaten on the Selma bridge in Wallace's Alabama in 1965 and died this month. ''It is a reasonable comparison,'' Mr. Lewis said in an interview with The New York Times and CNBC in 2016. ''See, I don't think Wallace believed in all of the stuff he was preaching. I think Wallace said a lot of stuff just to get ahead. I don't think Trump really believes in all this stuff, but he thinks this will be his ticket to the White House.''

More recently, former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. has said that Mr. Trump is ''more George Wallace than George Washington.'' Mr. Trump's campaign fired back this week in a statement by Katrina Pierson, a senior campaign adviser to the president, who credited him with increasing funding for historically black schools and signing criminal justice reform.

''There's only one candidate in this race who bragged about receiving an award from George Wallace, and that's Joe Biden,'' Ms. Pierson said. ''Biden also said that Democrats needed a 'liberal George Wallace, someone who's not afraid to stand up and offend people.'''

Both quotes refer to articles in The Philadelphia Inquirer, one in 1975 about Mr. Biden's opposition to busing and another in 1987 mentioning a campaign stop in Alabama during his first presidential campaign. The Biden campaign countered with other clips from the 1970s in which Mr. Biden criticized Wallace and vowed to vote Republican if he won the Democratic presidential nomination in 1976.

Wallace made his name as the most prominent segregationist of his time but he neither started nor ended that way. Unlike Mr. Trump, he was a small-town boy from Clio, Ala., who grew up to jump into politics as a progressive, eager to help the disadvantaged with New Deal-style programs. As a judge and a Democratic candidate for governor in 1958, he made a point of promising equality for Black Alabamians. But when he lost that contest to a candidate who demagogued on segregation, Wallace told an aide that ''I was out-niggered and I will never be out-niggered again.''

After winning the governor's mansion with a hard-core racist appeal, he came to national attention in 1963 by promising in his inaugural address ''segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever'' and months later by standing in the schoolhouse door in a failed effort to block the integration of the University of Alabama. Wallace that same year ordered the Confederate flag flown above the State Capitol, where it remained for 30 years before being taken down for good.

In ''Settin' the Woods on Fire,'' an acclaimed 2000 documentary on his life, Wallace was quoted telling an associate who asked about his race-baiting that he wanted to talk about issues like roads and education but that he never got as much attention as when he thundered about race.

Wallace made his first faint stab at the White House in 1964, but when he ran for real in 1968 he bolted from the Democratic Party to lead the ticket of the American Independent Party. Trying to appeal to a national audience, he toned down the explicitly racist language and used code words instead, defending states' rights, slamming court-ordered busing and promising law and order.

Like Mr. Trump, he denied trafficking in racism and turned the accusation around on his opponents. ''I think the biggest racists in the world are those who call other folks racist,'' Wallace said. ''I think the biggest bigots in the world are those who call other folks bigots.''

In an interview on ''Face the Nation'' on CBS in Washington, he said his white critics called him a racist while fleeing to the suburbs so they did not have to send their children to schools with Black children. ''This is a segregated city here because of the hypocrites who moved out,'' he said. ''This is the hypocrite capital of the world.''

Mr. Trump, who has come to the defense of the Confederate flag by mocking NASCAR for banning it, likewise tries to turn the racism charge against his critics. Last year, he asserted that four congresswomen of color were ''a very Racist group of troublemakers,'' referred to a Black congressman who angered him as ''racist Elijah Cummings'' and declared that the Rev. Al Sharpton ''Hates Whites & Cops!''

After Mr. Biden last week called him ''the first'' racist president, Mr. Trump repeated his assertion that he had ''done more for Black Americans than anybody with the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln.'' (These are both ahistoric statements, of course. Many presidents were racist and early on even slave owners, while Lincoln was hardly the only president to have done more for Black Americans than Mr. Trump.)

In that 1968 race, Richard M. Nixon beat Hubert H. Humphrey, but Wallace won five states in the Deep South -- Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi -- the last time an independent or third-party candidate captured any states in the Electoral College.

Wallace ran again in 1972, this time as a Democrat, but was felled by a would-be assassin's bullets that left him paralyzed. He ran again in 1976 from a wheelchair, winning Democratic contests in three states but losing the nomination to a more moderate Southerner, Jimmy Carter.

By late in life, Wallace had a change of heart and repented his earlier racism, going so far as to call Mr. Lewis and others to personally apologize. He ran for governor one last time in 1982 by reaching out to Black voters and after winning installed many Black appointees in state government. At the 30th anniversary of Selma, he sang ''We Shall Overcome'' with Black Alabamians. When Wallace died in 1998, Mr. Lewis wrote an Op-Ed article in The Times forgiving him.

Mr. Trump, for his part, shows no signs of backing down and was the only living president to neither attend Mr. Lewis's memorial service on Thursday nor send a message to be read. Wallace's daughter said Mr. Trump understood, as her father did, that ''the two greatest motivators for disaffected voters'' are ''hate and fear.''

''Mr. Trump exudes the same willingness to fight rather than to seek rational solutions much like my father did in 1968,'' Ms. Wallace Kennedy said. ''Both promise to be a president with personality and bravado who is ready to fight first and worry about the consequences later.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/us/politics/trump-wallace.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/us/politics/trump-wallace.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: George Wallace in 1968, when he was running a third-party, ''law and order'' campaign for president. His us-against-them style is a match for President Trump's. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT ELFSTROM/VILLON FILMS, VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Mr. Trump, after clearing Lafayette Square of protesters. He has portrayed the nation's cities as hotbeds of chaos. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19)

**Load-Date:** July 31, 2020

**End of Document**



[***This Nurse is Leading the Fight for Safer Hospitals; In her words***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:603J-PB91-JBG3-6386-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 10, 2020 Wednesday 14:10 EST

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**Section:** US

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**Byline:** Rikha Sharma Rani

**Highlight:** Bonnie Castillo, head of National Nurses United, raised the alarm over shortages of personal protective equipment long before others recognized the scale of the pandemic. She’s still fighting.

**Body**

Bonnie Castillo, head of National Nurses United, raised the alarm over shortages of personal protective equipment long before others recognized the scale of the pandemic. She’s still fighting.

“As a nurse, there are just times when it’s very intuitive. You just sense that something catastrophic is going to happen.”

— Bonnie Castillo, the executive director of National Nurses United

In Her Words is available as a newsletter. [*Sign up here to get it delivered to your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words).

This article is a collaboration between The New York Times and [*The Fuller Project*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words).

In early January, before most people in the U.S. had even heard of Covid-19, Bonnie Castillo called a meeting with two trusted health care deputies at the country’s largest union of registered nurses. Castillo was alarmed by news reports about how a virus — so mysterious it didn’t yet have a name — was ravaging Wuhan, China, and asked the union’s director of health and safety and its industrial hygienist to go through some scientific reports.

As she listened, Castillo, the executive director of National Nurses United and a former intensive care nurse, grew worried. The disease, they told her, was spreading rapidly. Many carriers were asymptomatic. Particles could stay in the air for a long time. “As a nurse, there are just times when it’s very intuitive,” Castillo said. “You just sense that something catastrophic is going to happen.”

After the meeting, she immediately directed her staff to investigate how prepared U.S. hospitals were for an outbreak. The union contacted hundreds of hospitals requesting information in granular detail about stocks of personal protective equipment such as respirator masks and gowns. It also surveyed thousands of nurses nationwide, asking for their sense of their health facilities’ readiness.

Even before the pandemic, Castillo, 60, had expanded the union’s health and safety team, which focuses on issues such as on-the-job injuries and workplace violence. That emphasis on bread-and-butter concerns earned her criticism from some people who said the organization was shifting away from the more politically charged brand of labor activism for which it is known.

But it was precisely this focus that positioned Castillo to raise the alarm long before others recognized the scale of the oncoming crisis. “She was one of the earliest voices for a response,” said Liz Shuler, the secretary-treasurer of the A.F.L.-C.I.O, an umbrella organization for more than 50 labor unions.

Castillo’s attention to nurses’ day-to-day lives comes as they work longer hours and treat more patients, often without adequate access to testing and protective gear. (Instead of medical gowns and respiratory masks, some nurses have reportedly resorted to wearing [*rain ponchos*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words) and [*racquetball goggles*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words).) More than 100 have died.

On March 2, Castillo’s team sent a letter to Vice President Mike Pence and the coronavirus task force coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx, warning that “the majority of U.S. health care facilities are completely unprepared to safely contain Covid-19.”

Two days later, Castillo became one of the first to call for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue an “emergency temporary standard” for infectious diseases that would compel employers to put in place certain minimum safety standards — for example, providing more effective N95 masks to nurses working with coronavirus patients, instead of basic surgical masks. OSHA did not follow her advice, saying the standard was unnecessary.

By then, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had acknowledged that hospitals lacked sufficient personal protective equipment, among other materials — as Castillo had warned. The C.D.C. responded by loosening standards, requiring hospitals to provide their staff with only surgical masks, not N95 masks in many situations. Furious, Castillo and her team began agitating more publicly for P.P.E.

The union staged more than 350 socially distanced protests, including two vigils in front of the White House for the nurses who died from the virus.

When some hospitals later raised safety standards, the nurses’ union claimed credit. After intensive care nurses at Kaiser Permanente campuses across California picketed over a policy of using N95 masks only for certain high-risk procedures, officials began allowing the masks for all nurses working with confirmed or suspected Covid-19 patients. Sutter Health hospitals in Northern California made similar changes, though a spokeswoman for the hospitals attributed the decision to the efforts of supply chain staff to locate and acquire additional P.P.E., not the nurses’ protests.

When it comes to effecting change at the government level, the union has had more limited success. It has [*urged President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words) to fully invoke the Defense Production Act to scale up domestic production of protective equipment. The president has so far invoked certain provisions, but not others. In May, House Democrats passed a stimulus bill that included some of the nurses’ demands, including mass production of P.P.E. through the Defense Production Act and an emergency temporary standard for infectious diseases. Castillo will appear before Congress on Wednesday to testify about the bill, which she supports, but the current iteration is not expected to pass in a Senate vote expected as early as this month.

Castillo, the first woman of color to head the union, has a low-key demeanor and brings a decidedly different sensibility to this work than her predecessor, RoseAnn DeMoro. DeMoro, who helmed the union for three decades, is best remembered for her political activism, especially on the topic of single-payer health care but also on issues unrelated to health. (DeMoro, who has been [*described*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words)as “Mother Teresa with brass knuckles,” once chartered a plane to fly over the house of the then-California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger during a Super Bowl party to protest a policy decision.)

But Castillo bristles at the suggestion that her approach signals a retreat from broader social concerns and said the union continues to focus on issues like single-payer health care, climate change and racial justice. She has been tweeting in condemnation of police brutality, and in support of protesters, after the killing of George Floyd. But she feels that nurses’ issues like health and safety are important in themselves and that any suggestion that they matter less is misguided, even sexist.

Castillo is outspoken about the role gender plays in exacerbating power imbalances between nurses, mostly female, and hospital administrators, mostly male. “People like to pigeonhole nurses,” she said.

“A lot of people expect you to have that posture of being tough and being adversarial and in your face,” Shuler, of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., said. “Bonnie is not like that, but she is equally fierce and effective because people don’t see it coming.”

Castillo is warm, with an easygoing disposition, but the occasional eye roll (usually when talking about hospital administrators) reveals the hint of an edge. In interviews conducted from her home over Zoom, paintings of rural farm workers, or campesinos, could be seen on the walls behind her. Once, Castillo’s husband, a construction worker, slipped quietly through a door wearing shorts and a sweatshirt.

Raised in a ***working-class*** Sacramento family with immigrant roots — all four of her grandparents immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico — Castillo was exposed to labor activism early in life. Her mother, a clerical employee for the state department of corrections, and father, a railroad worker, were both active union members; the famed labor leader Dolores Huerta was an acquaintance of her mother’s. Castillo’s parents introduced her to Mexican-American art and Che Guevara’s book “Guerrilla Warfare” when she was young. When her father’s union went on strike, she accompanied her mother to drop him off at the picket line. “You don’t cross a strike line,” she remembered her father telling her.

Castillo married at age 17 and gave birth to her daughter, Manae, a year later. She stayed at home taking care of Manae, but when she and her husband divorced, she needed a stable livelihood to provide for her daughter, then in elementary school. (She later remarried.) She went to nursing school at night and became the first in her family to graduate from college. “I remember when she got her first job,” Manae, now 42, recalls. “She opened the letter and I feel like she screamed. She was like, We’re going to Toys ‘R’ Us, and you can buy anything you want.”

Castillo started out as an intensive care nurse at the now-shuttered American River Hospital; soon, she was promoted to a supervisory role as a charge nurse.

Less than half an hour into her first shift in that position, before the physician on duty had arrived, a patient “came in crashing and burning” from another hospital, she said. “We needed to put him on every imaginable form of life support, including the intra-aortic balloon pump” — a mechanical heart-pumping device — “which I had only operated maybe half a dozen times.” The hospital was understaffed that night, as it often was, and Castillo had to call on a mentor to come help.

Some nurses tried to raise the issue of staffing shortages with their superiors and, when that wasn’t successful, tried to unionize, but couldn’t gain enough support from nurses. It wasn’t until administrators tried to change nurses’ jobs — including, Castillo said, making them re-interview for positions with the prospect of being downgraded to roles and salaries that didn’t align with their professional training — that enough nurses changed their minds. With the help of the California Nurses Association (which would later join with two other unions to form National Nurses United), Castillo and her colleagues won the right to bargain collectively.

Eventually, Castillo quit practicing to join the California Nurses Association as a field organizer. Her colleagues joke that she has held virtually every role at the union, rising through the ranks to direct government relations, health and safety, and the union’s disaster-relief network (which she founded), before finally being named executive director of the national union as well as the California organization in 2018.

Castillo now works from the dining table in her two-bedroom Sacramento bungalow, waking up as early as 4 a.m. to talk with colleagues on the East Coast. Some days, she shows up to protests, does media interviews, or sorts through solicitations from P.P.E. suppliers. “There are a lot of scams out there,” she said.

With the pandemic still raging and concerns growing about a second wave of infections in the fall, Castillo’s emphasis on health and safety is arguably more important than ever. She has continued to call for adequate protective gear for health care workers and is among the chorus of people cautioning states against reopening too quickly. “While it’s been months since #COVID19 struck the U.S.,” she recently [*tweeted*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/in-her-words), “our employers and the government are STILL not protecting us nurses and our patients.”

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PHOTO: Bonnie Castillo at her home in Sacramento. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Max Whittaker for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***For Hotels, Cleaning Is Key. But Cleaners Say Their Jobs Are Under Assault.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60TF-4JY1-DXY4-X4VT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** TRAVEL

**Length:** 2022 words

**Byline:** Tariro Mzezewa

**Highlight:** The hotel industry says doing away with daily room cleanings keeps guests and staff safe. But housekeepers say it is a step toward cutting earnings and job security.

**Body**

The hotel industry says doing away with daily room cleanings keeps guests and staff safe. But housekeepers say it is a step toward cutting earnings and job security.

In the past four months, nearly every major hotel brand in the world has announced a cleaning program highlighting new disinfecting and sterilizing procedures. Many companies are consulting with medical organizations; some are using robots; all say they are cleaning more than ever before. Their messaging is clear: Hotels are very clean.

But many of the housekeepers who scrub, dust, vacuum and sanitize hotels in the United States say that companies are using the procedures and guidelines instituted in the wake of the coronavirus as an opportunity to give cleaners more work while cutting their hours, wages, benefits and, in some cases, jobs.

At a time when both American travel and hotel occupancy are at historic lows, the hotel industry says its priority is keeping guests and employees safe while remaining open. The [*American Hotel and Lodging Association*](https://www.ahla.com/), an industry trade group with members including hotel brands, owners and management companies, has set new cleaning guidelines in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in a program it calls Safe Stay. But housekeepers would like hotels to follow rules outlined by the World Health Organization.

A particular point of contention between housekeepers, the largest hospitality union in North America and the hotels is whether hotel rooms should be cleaned daily. Many hotels have shifted away from daily cleaning, saying they hope to prevent employees as well as guests from contracting or spreading the coronavirus. They also feel that by keeping housekeepers out of rooms during a stay, they can assure guests that there hasn’t been a stranger in their room.

“The vast majority of our customers don’t want us cleaning their room while they are staying with us,” said Robert Kline, the chief executive and co-founder of the Chartres Lodging Group, a private equity investment firm that focuses on lodging. “They want to know the room is clean when they enter, but once they occupy that room they are saying, ‘Don’t come in.’”

Housekeepers say cleaning rooms after someone checks out poses more of a risk to them and is more physically taxing than cleaning daily.

“What we believe is that daily room cleaning is our arsenal to help fight the spread of Covid,” said Nia Winston, general vice president of [*Unite Here,*](https://www.ahla.com/) the hotel and restaurant workers’ union that represents more than 300,000 hospitality workers. “Daily room cleaning is required in China and Hong Kong and other places that have successfully contained the virus.”

Ms. Winston, who is also president of Unite Here Local 24, the union’s affiliate for Michigan and Ohio, said that the W.HO.’s guidelines call for the suspension of programs that allow guests to forgo housekeeping services.

Almost half of the 16.9 million jobs in the U.S. leisure and hospitality sector were lost in March and April. More than a quarter of workers in that sector remain unemployed. Fewer housekeepers are working, and they say they have to clean rooms where several days’ worth of trash, dust and germs have accumulated in the same amount of time allotted for daily cleaning. And since the rooms aren’t cleaned as often, they are getting fewer days of work each week, resulting in lower wages.

Before being furloughed in March, Wanda White, a housekeeper at the [*Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown*](https://www.ahla.com/), said she cleaned 16 rooms per day and worked full time. Since June she has been on call, and working three to four days each week. On the days that she has worked, Ms. White said she has cleaned an average of 13 rooms, but the work is more intense, she said, because dirt has built up in rooms over time. She said she recently saw 10 guests leaving a room, suggesting to her that they had held a party there.

“Doing checkouts makes it harder because the guests have parties, we don’t know how long the guests have been in there,” she said, adding that she has cleaned multiple rooms where people threw parties since June.

Ms. White, who is 53, said she now rushes to sweep, pick up trash and vacuum the floors before cleaning surfaces, including door knobs, faucets and counters and making beds. Although the amount of time given to housekeepers to clean rooms can vary depending on where they work, it’s common to have 20 to 30 minutes per room. Consequences for not finishing in the allotted time can include being written up and being forced to work extra hours. The lack of additional time to clean dirtier rooms, Ms. White said, has caused strain on her back and knees, and made it harder to meet all the cleaning standards that hotels tout, something other housekeepers echoed.

The franchise management company currently operating Sheraton Hotels did not respond to requests for comment.

Safety, but for whom?

In June, three months after being furloughed from her job as a housekeeper at the [*Fontainebleau Hotel*](https://www.ahla.com/) in Miami Beach, Pauline Petit-Homme was called back to work. She learned that instead of cleaning rooms every day she would be cleaning them when[*guests checked out*](https://www.ahla.com/).

Ms. Petit-Homme, who has worked at the hotel for 22 years, said she is one of a few housekeepers back at work and her managers said there aren’t enough guests to bring in more. She was told the cleaning of rooms at checkout is meant to keep her and guests safe. But she believes that the hotel is busy enough that more housekeepers should be brought back.

“They are still busy,” Ms. Petit-Homme said. “They don’t have no respect for the housekeeping. We work very hard in the housekeeping and now we do more work in the same time and it’s hard.”

Josh Herman, vice president of marketing and public relations at the Fontainebleau, said the hotel’s focus is on returning to former occupancy levels, enabling it to re-employ as many of its workers as possible. He added that since reopening the hotel has been following A.H.L.A. guidance and has received positive feedback from guests.

“While the enhanced cleaning protocols are more costly to execute, both in supplies and labor, the health and safety of our guests and team members are always our highest priority,” he said. “We continue to work closely with our housekeeping team in adjusting schedules to accommodate for these new requirements.”

Ms. Petit-Homme and others said that the current fight is just the latest skirmish in a more-than-decade-long battle between hotels and employees. Companies, housekeepers say, want to save money, so they’ve created programs that discourage guests from requesting housekeeping, but have framed them as environmental initiatives and offered guests rewards points for skipping cleanings. The pandemic, as they see it, has given these companies an opportunity to trim cleaning even more — and cut their costs.

Hotel owners and investors say they simply cannot afford to have all their housekeepers back at work full time, and measures like checkout-only cleaning are meant to keep everyone safe. They say it’s also what guests want.

Frank Lavey, senior vice president of global operations at Hyatt, said in an email that guests “are returning to Hyatt hotels with new expectations around cleanliness, which includes limiting potential contact points, especially within the guest room.”

In July, San Francisco adopted the country’s strictest rules for cleaning offices and hotels that are more than 50,000 square feet. Those rules mandate that common areas be cleaned and disinfected multiple times a day and that guest rooms be cleaned daily unless guests refuse. The A.H.L.A. was one of three hotel associations that [*filed a lawsuit*](https://www.ahla.com/) to overturn the ordinance. That litigation is still pending.

The hotel owners argue that mandates like San Francisco’s would further decimate the industry. Nearly two-thirds of hotels are at or below half occupancy, according to the A.H.L.A. That is below the threshold at which most hotels can break even and pay their debt. A recent [*national report*](https://www.ahla.com/) compiled by Trepp, a leading commercial real estate data analyst, found that the hotel industry is facing an unprecedented wave of foreclosures.

Chip Rogers, president and chief executive of the A.H.L.A., said that in a pandemic-free world disputes between employees, Unite Here and hotels are reasonable and a healthy part of the process. But with hotels struggling to survive, Unite Here’s push for daily room cleaning and other staffing demands could lead hoteliers to shut down.

“It really is about survival,” Mr. Rogers said. “Right now there are no profits to split and everyone is losing money. To have these fights now is counterproductive. It’s hurting employees.”

On the matter of daily room cleanings, Mr. Rogers said that hotels should allow guests to decide.

“I’ve never heard of an instance where a guest has said, ‘I want my room cleaned,’ and the hotel said no,” he said, adding that the Safe Stay program is meant to keep guests and employees alike safe.

The fear of losing good jobs

What industry officials see as an attempt to keep employees safe, Unite Here and its members see as an attack on ***working-class*** people of color, in particular, who could be left without good quality jobs.

Although data on the demographics of housekeepers in the hotel industry is scarce, the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that nearly [*71 percent*](https://www.ahla.com/) of maids and housekeepers in the United States in 2019 were people of color. Many are first-generation immigrants, primarily from the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and China, according to Unite Here.

At many hotels, housekeeping jobs pay up to $27 per hour, with health care benefits that cover workers’ families. Many, like Nely Reinante, a housekeeper at the Hilton Hawaiian Village hotel on Waikiki Beach, live in fear of losing their jobs and not being able to replace them.

Erica Hayes was a housekeeper at the [*DoubleTree by Hilton Chicago Magnificent Mile*](https://www.ahla.com/), until she was furloughed in February. She has been living off unemployment benefits, but worries that those will end soon and she still won’t be back at work. Her husband was killed this summer and she has to support her four teenage daughters alone. The fear of not being able to do so anymore has been all consuming.

These employment anxieties are exacerbated by the fact that housekeepers say they don’t have enough personal protective equipment. All the housekeepers interviewed said they could use more masks and gloves. Lisa Brown, who was furloughed from her job at the [*Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center*](https://www.ahla.com/) in March, said new harsher chemicals splash on her face and skin, so uniforms that cover more of her arms would alsobe useful.

Ofelia Cardenas, a housekeeper at the [*Hyatt Regency Sonoma Wine Country*](https://www.ahla.com/), said that if housekeepers don’t specifically ask for new masks, they can end up wearing the same ones for a week, despite coming into contact with chemicals and the employees’ sweat. The hotel, she said, should make access to masks and gloves easier. She said she often doesn’t have enough gloves and will wear just one glove, on her right hand, which she uses to scrub things because she doesn’t want to run out.

“It’s scary because you are worried about your health,” Ms. Cardenas said in Spanish through a translator. “I see they don’t care about the worker. They care about their bottom line. If they cared, they’d have enough gloves, they’d come see how we are doing.”

Mr. Lavey, of Hyatt, said that staff members are given a mask at the beginning of their shifts and housekeepers are given their own box of gloves at the start of each shift, and when the supplies run low, a replacement box of gloves is provided.

Translation by Isvett Verde

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PHOTO: A cleaning cart at the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner Hotel, with Lysol cleaning products, part of a new cleanliness initiative by the chain. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alyssa Schukar for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 12, 2020

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[***Ocasio-Cortez Speaks Out About Steps to Party Unity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YNF-XG11-JBG3-6020-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 14, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1529 words

**Byline:** By Astead W. Herndon

**Body**

In an interview, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said she intended to support the presumptive Democratic nominee, but the ''process of coming together should be uncomfortable for everyone involved.''

The progressive wing of the Democratic Party fell flat in this year's presidential primary, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez knows it.

Even before Senator Bernie Sanders dropped out of the race last week, making former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. the party's presumptive nominee, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez was ruminating on the lessons the left must learn to be more successful moving forward.

But in the short term, Democrats are desperate to defeat President Trump in November, and Mr. Biden is making some policy overtures to unite the party. The hope is to win over supporters of Mr. Sanders as well as top surrogates like Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, a New York congresswoman who is popular among young progressives -- a group Mr. Biden is struggling to win.

In a recent phone interview, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez made clear that she intended to support the Democratic nominee, but said his current overtures to progressives must go further. She made a distinction between supporting Mr. Biden in November and offering a full-throated endorsement of his campaign. Where she lands, she said, is up to him.

These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

Q. I guess my first question is simple: Has the Biden campaign reached out to you?

A. No.

OK. Well, what type of outreach are you looking for? Not just to you but to progressives broadly.

There's this talk about unity as this kind of vague, kumbaya, kind of term. Unity and unifying isn't a feeling, it's a process. And what I hope does not happen in this process is that everyone just tries to shoo it along and brush real policies -- that mean the difference of life and death or affording your insulin and not affording your insulin -- just brush that under the rug as an aesthetic difference of style.

There's also this idea that if we all just support the nominee that voters will come along as well. I've flagged, very early, two patterns that I saw [among Biden's campaign], which is underperformance among Latinos and young people, both of which are very important demographics in November. And so, I don't think this conversation about changes that need to be made is one about throwing the progressive wing of the party a couple of bones -- I think this is about how we can win.

The whole process of coming together should be uncomfortable for everyone involved -- that's how you know it's working. And if Biden is only doing things he's comfortable with, then it's not enough.

Can you give me examples of areas that you want to see him get ''uncomfortable?''

They floated this olive branch to the progressive left of lowering the Medicare age to 60. And it's almost insulting. I think Hillary was looking at policies that lowered it to 50. So we're talking about a ''progressive concession'' that is 10 years worse than what the nominee had in 2016.

Progressives aren't a monolith like every voting block isn't a monolith. But I also know, from a Latino perspective, I think we need a real plan to be better than what happened during his service with the Obama administration.

In terms of deportations?

In terms of deportations, in terms of apprehensions, I mean, even in terms of rhetoric. It was just a couple months ago that he told immigrant activists to vote for someone else. I want to see him get uncomfortable there. Putting ''Dreamers'' on a path to citizenship is great, but that's a policy concession from 10 years ago.

People need to feel hope in a Democratic administration. And that's what this is about.

If we're not talking about paths to citizenship for undocumented people, and if we're just talking about policy changes of 5 or 10 percent -- especially when you look at something like climate change -- it's not about moving to the left. It's about who is able to find hope in your administration. And creating plans that give people hope and possibility.

But Biden has gotten to this point by rejecting some of these things. What's your realistic level of confidence he will get uncomfortable on these issues? He's been in this game a long time.

I think the ideological argument is a false one, and I think that's backed up by exit polling. While Biden is the nominee, we also know that he didn't win because of policy -- I don't think he won because of his agenda, he won because of different factors. In state after state after state, Democratic voters support a progressive agenda.

I want to respect his win, he won because of his coalition building, he won because of his service, he won for a lot of different reasons -- but I don't think he won because Americans don't want ''Medicare for all.'' And in this moment, I wouldn't be surprised if what we're seeing with coronavirus didn't further change people's views in further support of a progressive agenda.

How should the relationship that progressives had in 2016 with Hillary Clinton inform the way you all go about it in 2020 with Biden? What are the lessons from how that turned out that are worth changing, or replicating, this time around?

As much as a dumpster fire as Twitter can be sometimes, I actually think the process was much less painful and nasty and fraught than it was in 2016. In 2016, things like superdelegates delegitimized the process so much that it felt a lot more scorched-earth, and I'm not even talking about between the two candidates, but just how voters felt about the party.

I think people understand that there are limits to what Biden will do and that's understandable -- he didn't run as a progressive candidate. But, at the bare minimum, we should aspire to be better than what we have been before. And I just don't know if this message of ''We're going to go back to the way things were'' is going to work for the people for who the way things were was really bad.

Is an Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez endorsement of Joe Biden a sure thing?

I've always said that I will support the Democratic nominee. But unity is a process, and figuring out what that looks like is part of this whole conversation that I think Bernie and Warren and other folks are a part of as well.

Yes. But I guess I'm asking about you. Is there something you're looking for? Is there a difference between voting for him or campaigning for him? What are the range of possibilities of your relationship with the Democratic nominee in the next months?

Beating Donald Trump is a matter of life or death for our communities. I think it's a difference between making an argument for harm reduction, and making the argument for, there's actually going to be progress made for us.

What I want to do is to be able to go out and say, ''This is the plan for us.'' But it's hard to do that if there's no plan for us.

And who's us?

Any number of communities, whether it's the Bronx, whether it's Latinos, or whether it's people of color, whether it's women, whether it's young people, whether it's people with student debt, whether it's ***working-class*** people, or people with no health care.

And you know, I'm not trying to be divisive. But when you talk about lessons from 2016, one of the most divisive things that we can do is just smother and silence legitimate points of critique -- especially from people whose lives are most at risk in this administration. Because, for some people, this argument of returning to normalcy sounds like an argument of respectability politics and civility. And for other people, it sounds like, will my child be put in a cage?

Aesthetics plays a big role in politics, a huge one. But I just want to improve people's lives. And while we'll improve people's lives with Donald Trump not in the White House, we need to do better than what we've done before.

I'm a progressive [laughter]. That's literally what it means.

What if Biden doesn't do it? What if he doesn't get uncomfortable? And you know, only gives kind of aesthetic, in-name-only concessions to the left? What do you do?

I will be supporting the Democratic nominee in November. I would just hope that the nominee supports our communities too.

Is a Biden-A.O.C. unity rally ever in the cards?

It could be. I have not talked to the vice president.

Ever?

Never. Not that I know of, no.

But I know the goal ultimately is to win. And I'm not trying to needle as a way of making a point or to score points. I want to win. And I want to make sure that we win broadly.

Do you worry about causing damage to the vice president in a way that helps Donald Trump? How do you square unity with applying pressure from the left?

It's a tightrope. I do not feel a choice in adhering to my principles and my integrity, and being accountable to the movement that brought me here. But also, I don't want another term of Trump.

I'm not going to lie to people and say Puerto Rico's debt is going to be forgiven or there's going to be some audit of the debt if that's not the plan. But at the same time, I don't want this president throwing paper towels at my family again.

I just want to tell the truth and I want to feel good about the truth.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/us/politics/aoc-progressives-joe-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/us/politics/aoc-progressives-joe-biden.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: ''The whole process of coming together should be uncomfortable for everyone involved,'' said Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LEXEY SWALL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2020

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[***Could the Pandemic Wind Up Fixing What’s Broken About Work in America?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YMK-M8W1-JBG3-6390-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Claire Cain Miller

**Highlight:** Historically, major crises have tended to empower workers. The coronavirus is already changing things, for better and for worse.

**Body**

Historically, major crises have tended to empower workers. The coronavirus is already changing things, for better and for worse.

Crises like pandemics, economic collapses and world wars have, at times throughout history, ended up reordering societies — shrinking the gap between the rich and the poor, or empowering the ***working class***. The Black Death helped end feudalism. The Great Depression helped lead to the New Deal. Never has extreme economic inequality shrunk in a meaningful way, says the Stanford historian Walter Scheidel, without a major crisis.

The coronavirus pandemic, as of now, is not on the order of the plague, but it’s hitting the United States during a period of agitation about worsening inequality and [*waning power for workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html). Already, it has made stark how precarious life is for many American workers, causing some [*to revolt*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html). How employers and policymakers respond could improve work in the United States for the long term — or make the existing problems worse.

“Pandemics as a social shock do give workers more leverage to demand things,” said Patrick Wyman, a historian and host of the [*Tides of History*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) podcast. “Crises like these reveal what is already broken or in the process of breaking.”

“They are attacks on a particular socioeconomic way of organizing your society,” he said. “The question is whether your institutions can make collective things happen.”

The United States is distinctive among rich countries in its lack of worker protections like nationwide paid sick leave, paid family leave and universal health insurance, and in its [*minimal labor union membership*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html). For both high and low earners, many employers expect workers to be on call around the clock. Companies are typically beholden to [*shareholders first*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html), above employees, customers and communities.

But the coronavirus pandemic has shown the flaw in that logic: Worker well-being is the foundation for everything else.

Already, Congress has given some workers paid sick and family leave for the first time. Companies have started to offer paid leave, subsidized child care and flexible work schedules. Millions of Americans are working from home — which could reset workplace practices even when they return. People are recognizing the importance of many jobs that have long been undervalued, like janitors, child care providers, teachers, health aides, delivery people and grocery store workers.

There is no guarantee of a positive outcome for workers; it depends in large part on the choices made in the next months. Even if some past crises have ultimately given workers more leverage, the opposite could be true this time, given the high levels of unemployment. The American response has been less generous than that [*in other countries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html): Denmark, Britain and Germany are all paying large portions of wages while people aren’t working so that companies can keep them employed.

But if more Americans perceive that the system has fundamentally failed them, experts say it could lead to widespread demands for better protections. Millions of people have suddenly lost their jobs, along with their health insurance and other benefits. Partisan disagreement has slowed government assistance, and many workers are excluded from the assistance Congress has authorized. In many ways, the pandemic is exacerbating inequality: Staying home or seeking health care is [*easier for the rich*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) than the poor, and [*early data show*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) the virus is disproportionately [*affecting African-Americans and Latinos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html).

“You have already seen a reduction in economic inequality over the last few weeks because of the stock market, but there are potential longer-term effects for the 99 percent,” said Mr. Scheidel, who wrote “[*The Great Leveler*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html): Violence and the History of Inequality From the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century.”

“The poor will only be better off if it leads to policy change in an aggressive way,” he said.

Pandemics, Wars and Workers’ Rights

The Black Death — when the bubonic plague killed an estimated 30 percent to 60 percent of the European population in the mid-1300s — is an extreme example of [*how pandemics can rebalance societies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html).

Ultimately, it [*helped end*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) serfdom in parts of Europe. Because so many people died, labor became scarce, and workers had more sway with landowning lords. Many peasants could, for the first time, own land or move for opportunities.

“It’s embedded in a larger series of economic shifts in Western Europe, but the economic impact of the Black Death is the thing you cannot possibly overstate, because it’s a shock to both the supply of labor and the demand,” Mr. Wyman said.

“If you’re a serf before the Black Death, you are in bad shape, you have no leverage — the lords can demand a lot from you,” he said. “After the Black Death, when the lord says, ‘Come plow my field,’ you don’t have to do that anymore.”

It appears the coronavirus pandemic will be nowhere near as deadly as the plague. But, he said, “even a relatively small-scale shock like this reopens the realm of the possible.”

Six centuries later, in the United States, a growing labor movement before World War I [*culminated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html), after the war, in stronger unions, widespread strikes and [*the end*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) of the 12-hour workday. The war, in addition to the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, resulted in a shortage of working men, so many of these jobs opened to women for the first time. In turn, [*women gained more power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) to argue for things like higher wages and the right to vote.

The Great Depression led to the creation of America’s safety net with the New Deal. The only time the United States had universal public child care was during World War II, when the country needed to make it possible for women to work while men were at war.

The process hasn’t been smooth, or without disagreement and setbacks. In response to the labor demands in England brought about by the plague, the king issued [*an ordinance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) that included a maximum wage law. Many of the gains won by the labor movement in the United States in the 1920s were eventually reversed. New Deal policies faced significant political resistance from critics who said they raised the deficit too much and veered into socialism. From the start, those policies [*excluded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) many minorities and women.

A crisis on its own has not been enough to start a labor movement, but if a movement has been simmering, a crisis can make it boil over, said Nelson Lichtenstein, a labor historian at the University of California, Santa Barbara. For example, he said, the conditions weren’t right for workers to revolt during the 2008 recession, but this time they might be.

“We have had a decade and more of agitation, planning, think-tanking on the need to solve problems of inequality and capitalist dysfunction, and so these ideas are more prominently on the agenda, and not only of liberals,” he said.

‘A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity’

During this pandemic, workers in the United States have [*organized strikes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) at Whole Foods, Instacart and other companies, asking for protections like hazard pay, gloves and sick leave. Congress has passed policies, albeit temporary ones, that would have been politically unthinkable before now, including paid leave and direct payments to individuals. Democrats have introduced bills to make some of the benefits permanent.

Some companies, including Darden Restaurants, which owns Olive Garden and other chains, have permanently given workers paid sick leave. (Others, including Starbucks and Walmart, have offered paid leave but made it temporary.)

“This is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity,” said Janelle Jones, a managing director at Groundwork Collaborative, a progressive economic policy group. “Policymakers need to focus on restructuring our economy in a way that rebalances power toward workers.”

For hourly workers, the importance of paid sick leave has become clearer. Just one in three service-sector workers has it, according to data from the University of California’s [*Shift Project*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html), which runs a large and continuing survey of these workers, and 60 percent say they go to work when sick.

“What feels different, like an opportunity for change, is the public health case is just so obvious and strong,” said Kristen Harknett, one of the leaders of the Shift Project and a sociologist at the University of California, San Francisco. “We’ve never before had such evidence for how this collectivizes the problem. It’s not just the bottom line.”

For white-collar, salaried workers, coronavirus is, in a way, offering a natural experiment, by forcing companies to let people work from home, create their own schedules and spend more time with their families. It could convince companies that [*constant face time*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html) is unnecessary, said the sociologists Erin L. Kelly and Phyllis Moen, who this year published “[*Overload*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/sunday/labor-unions.html): How Good Jobs Went Bad and What We Can Do About It.”

“Part of the reason companies haven’t really changed is it’s a shift in mind-set to not focus on hours and being instantly responsive to a text at 9 p.m.,” Ms. Kelly said. “It’s a shift to working on the assumption that employees should decide when, where and how they do their work.”

An abrupt shift to working from home with schools closed is in no way a perfect experiment — people may feel less in control of their lives than ever, and most have no child care. But now, Ms. Moen said, it’s forcing companies to innovate.

“It’s no longer, do they want to,” she said. “We have to think of new ways of working, and sometimes a crisis can be an opportunity as well as a danger.”

The policy changes that have already happened in response to the virus have come very quickly. They have illuminated how relatively easy it would be for workers to have these rights — employers or policymakers would just have to say so. It may be hard for them to take back benefits, analysts said, even those they’ve said are temporary.

“Once you make it clear that these things are within your capacity to do, people’s baseline expectations change,” said Mr. Wyman, the historian. “That was true of the New Deal, the Great Society, Obamacare. We can do a lot more than we think we can. Crises are a useful reminder, useful in a tragic kind of way, of what we can do if we wanted to, if we had the will to do it.”

PHOTO: Men waiting for a free dinner at New York’s municipal lodging house during the Great Depression. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

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[***The Lockdown Showed How the Economy Exploits Women. She Already Knew.; The Future Of Work***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:621B-PJG1-JBG3-62PJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 5888 words

**Byline:** Jordan Kisner

**Highlight:** Silvia Federici has been warning for decades of what happens when we undervalue domestic labor.

**Body**

To hear more audio stories from publishers like The New York Times, [*download Audm for iPhone or Android*](https://www.audm.com/?utm_source=nytmag&amp;utm_medium=embed&amp;utm_campaign=wages_of_housework_kisner).

Prospect Park in May is a commotion of beauty: meadows and dense rambles, hills and hollows, everything covered in chokeberries, spicebush, violets, flowering hawthorns, magnolias and lindens. In this splendor the birds are boisterous, as are the people. But last May, the park was quieter than usual, and the people moving through it had a subdued, worried energy. Many wore masks; many did not. Occasionally someone shouted at someone else for coming too close. There was both fear of breathing common air and a desperate craving for it. Through this scene proceeded, at an energetic pace, Silvia Federici, the 78-year-old scholar and theorist of domestic labor, one of the most influential socialist feminist thinkers of the last century.

Federici had a black scarf tied over her nose and mouth, and she was wearing a delicate blue sweater her mother made long ago. Federici walks all the way around Prospect Park at least once every day, even in the winter, with her partner of 47 years, the philosopher George Caffentzis. (Caffentzis learned he had Parkinson’s disease a few years ago, she explained, and the walking helps him stay well.) But for several days in May, she agreed to do a second daily walk with me.

I had asked to meet because the pandemic and its cascade of economic, social and political breakdowns had led to a profusion of Federician thinking in places I had never encountered it before. Suddenly notions and phrases from her work were all over my social media feeds, op-ed pages and exchanges with friends, as people confronted what kinds of labor are considered essential and why. Federici is a longtime advocate of the idea that domestic work is unwaged labor and was a founder of the Wages for Housework movement in the early 1970s. It is a form of gendered economic oppression, she argues, and an exploitation upon which all of capitalism rests.

As a scholar and activist, Federici is one of a cohort of thinkers who have, for decades, critiqued the way capitalist societies fail to acknowledge or support what she calls “reproductive labor.” She uses this term not simply to refer to having children and raising them; it indicates all the work we do that is sustaining — keeping ourselves and others around us well, fed, safe, clean, cared for, thriving. It’s weeding your garden or making breakfast or helping your elderly grandmother bathe — work that you have to do over and over again, work that seems to erase itself. It is essential work that our economy tends not to acknowledge or compensate. This disregard for reproductive labor, Federici writes, is unjust and unsustainable.

These ideas weren’t exactly obscure before the pandemic. But mainstream feminism — not to mention mainstream economics or politics — has mostly ignored domestic labor. Instead, it has measured women’s empowerment by their presence and influence in the workplace, which is attained by outsourcing housework and child care to less economically advantaged women for a low wage. Even so, women remain mired in housework. It’s common now to hear the term “the second shift” (coined in 1989 by the sociologist Arlie Hochschild), which describes how the work of maintaining a home and caring for children still falls disproportionately to women, even if they have full-time jobs and pay for help. What’s more, people who are paid to do domestic labor or care work (like elder care or house cleaning) are, as a group, badly compensated and denied workplace protections or benefits. These jobs are held mostly by women of color and immigrants. The arrangement is hardly a success for women at large.

Public-policy experts and economists have pointed out in the last several years, the folly of excluding domestic work from economic measures like G.D.P., given the data showing that unpaid women’s work constitutes a huge slice of economic activity in every country. A year ago, Oxfam circulated research indicating that if American women made minimum wage for the work they did around the house and caring for relatives, they’d have earned $1.5 trillion in 2019. Globally, the value of that unpaid labor would have been almost $11 trillion. In a 2019 speech, Marilyn Waring, a public-policy scholar and longtime advocate of revising economic measures of “productivity,” noted the absurdity of defining activities like caring for elderly relatives or newborns, shopping and cooking, as having no value, or as leisure. “You cannot make good policy if the single largest sector of your nation’s economy is not visible,” she said. “You can’t presume to know where the needs are.”

This isn’t the only part of the present economic system that seems awry. The wealth gap is as wide as it has been in hundred years, with more workers than ever in unstable or low-wage employment, or subject to the whims of the “gig economy.” As the exhaustion and insecurity caused by these economic conditions have deepened, more and more people are coming around to the idea that the morass of America’s social ills might be traceable to an incorrect relationship to work and the question of whose work is valuable.

When the lockdowns started, this growing malaise exploded into a crisis. First came the discussion of “essential workers,” a category that, it was quickly noted, frequently corresponded with the most critically underpaid workers. Then came the acute realization among the middle and upper classes that their lives had run smoothly because they’d been able to subcontract domestic labor — and, critically, elder care and child care — to other people. After nearly a year of school closures, working parents are keenly aware of the amount of child care they rely on underpaid teachers to provide for eight hours a day. Without even the ad hoc systems for managing the constant work of child care (day care; grandparents; after-school programs; summer camp; babysitters), American parents have discovered that the requirements of caring for a family match or even exceed the requirements of the full-time jobs needed to support that family.

None of this is news to, say, the single parents who were already working multiple jobs at minimum wage and unable to afford rent and food, much less babysitters — but the reversion of the professional classes to a situation that feels to them similarly untenable has inspired a radical mood. Increasingly, even those relatively unscathed by the pandemic are voicing anticapitalist sentiment, critiquing an economy that underpays or ignores domestic labor. A group of wealthy female actors and executives (including Julianne Moore, Charlize Theron and the leaders of Birchbox, ClassPass and Rent the Runway) are calling for a “Marshall Plan for Moms,” including monthly government payments to mothers. “You know this well: Moms are the bedrock of society,” they write, “and we’re tired of working for free.” Shonda Rhimes wrote on Twitter last March: “Been home-schooling a 6-year-old and 8-year-old for one hour and 11 minutes. Teachers deserve to make a billion dollars a year. Or a week.”

Last March, the scholar and activist Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor [*wrote prophetically in The New Yorker,*](https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/reality-has-endorsed-bernie-sanders) “American life has been suddenly and dramatically upended, and when things are turned upside down, the bottom is brought to the surface, and exposed to the light.” It has been a year of ugly revelations that a majority of Americans — the millions who were laid off, or furloughed, or were fortunate enough to be deemed “nonessential” — have experienced in isolation at home. Home, where dishes are piling up, where the cleaning and laundry loads have increased in the name of caution. Home, which has always been someone’s workplace but is now, for more people than ever before, a collision zone for many kinds of work. Home, which up to 34 million Americans have lost or are at risk of losing entirely because of job loss and subsequent eviction.

How might this year have looked different had the work we do to care for one another, ourselves and the world around us been valued at a premium? How would the future look different if, as Federici suggests, “we refuse to base our life and our reproduction on the suffering of others,” if “we refuse to see ourselves as separate from them”?

Federici’s profile has risen since Occupy Wall Street, a movement that she supported and wrote about and that brought a new generation of leftist feminists into contact with her writing. In the last year, she has been cited over and over in popular publications — from The New Yorker to The Atlantic to The Cut to Teen Vogue, in an article titled [*“Socialist Feminism: What Is It and How Can It Replace Corporate ‘Girl Boss’ Feminism?”*](https://www.teenvogue.com/story/what-is-socialist-feminism)

When we met in May, Federici seemed less panicked, or maybe less caught off guard, than most everyone else I knew. She was focused and brisk as she walked toward me through the park, smiling behind her mask. She is slight and wiry, with lively hands and short, curly gray hair. As we walked, she spoke quickly, tallying up the fracturing systems, the interlocking forms of vulnerability that were always present but were now affecting even the people who thought they were immune.

She said she was occasionally surprised that people are calling her up now to talk about things she wrote 20 or 30 years ago. But she long suspected that the dangers of devaluing care work would eventually materialize into a crisis too big to ignore. “The pre-existing condition is a system that makes life intolerable and unhealthy for millions of people,” she said, her words muffled slightly by her scarf. “It is a system that is not working — that is the main pre-existing condition.”

Federici was born “under the bombs.” The second daughter of a philosophy professor in Parma, Italy, she was, her mother told her later, an unintended wartime child. “I was born in Parma in 1942, one of the worst years in human history, I think,” she told me. “January was the beginning of the Final Solution.” Her mother would go to sleep in her clothes and wake to a red sky in the middle of the night, grab newborn Federici and her 4-year-old sister, and “run run run” to the outskirts of Parma, into the fields, where she would squat in the dirt with the children until the dawn came. Laughing, she told me this experience made her want never to have children: the horror of cowering in the fields with babies, the bottles of milk, the terrible vulnerability of the world.

Parma, unlike many parts of Italy after World War II, was a Communist stronghold, and in her teenage years Federici was influenced by the labor and anti-fascist movements there. Theories of oppression and workers’ rights were dinnertime conversation. Throughout her childhood, her parents and their friends discussed what the war “meant,” and what fascism had wrought.

Parma’s leftist politics coexisted uneasily with its intense patriarchal culture: Federici’s father, a professor of philosophy, was “the one who knew.” Her mother, who came from a peasant family, “was supposed not to have knowledge.” She did the cooking, the cleaning, the shopping and the caring for children and handmade everything they couldn’t afford to buy. “Nobody sees my work,” Federici’s mother would complain. Her father would tease, “That is because this work is not real work.”

Well into her 30s, Federici refused to have anything to do with what she was raised to think of as “women’s work,” everything her mother had done. (Later, as a graduate student studying phenomenology in Buffalo, she ate uncooked hot dogs right out of the package and potatoes that she — grudgingly — boiled.) “I think I sensed the devaluation of her work. It was an activity that had no rewards, no pleasure in it.”

But Federici credits her mother for first exposing to the ideas that would become her life’s work. “I would, you know, hear and speak about the factory worker,” Federici told me. “The ***working class*** for me was the factory worker. And my mother several times said to me, You’re always talking about the factory worker as if they’re the only people who work!” She banged the park bench we were sitting on with one fist. “She said that, not my father, who was the teacher, the intellectual, the knowledgeable person. She was the one who told me the things that later became my politics. Whether in terms of housework, whether in terms of agricultural work, she was the one who basically was saying, But work is more than blue overalls!”

Federici’s politics didn’t fully coalesce until about 10 years later, in 1967, when she moved to the United States to study on a Fulbright scholarship. She was inspired by the vibrant antiwar and student movements in Buffalo and by the civil rights movement. But she didn’t quite see feminism as central to her political views until in 1972, when a friend passed her a tract in Italian by the feminist Mariarosa Dalla Costa: “Donne e sovversione sociale,” or “Women and the Subversion of the Community.” (The most widely known version of this essay is called “The Power of Women and the Subversion of Community” and was written by Dalla Costa and the American activist Selma James.) The essay argued that by working without pay in the home, women were producing the labor force that capitalism exploited for profit.

The notion was epiphanic to Federici. “Immediately everything made sense,” she said: her mother’s complaints about seeing only men in factories as authentic laborers; her own revulsion toward housework, which she hadn’t yet thought of as tied to Marxism. Federici became involved with a group of feminists, including Dalla Costa and James, who called themselves the International Feminist Collective. The I.F.C. began the Wages for Housework campaign in Europe. Federici, with her collaborator, Nicole Cox, founded the first United States chapter of Wages for Housework in New York in 1974 with James’s guidance.

Federici’s essay “Wages Against Housework,” published in 1975, was an early, impassioned manifesto for the movement and remains one of its best-known texts. “To say that we want wages for housework is to expose the fact that housework is already money for capital, that capital has made and makes money out of our cooking, smiling, [expletive],” she wrote, referring to sex. “At the same time, it shows that we have cooked, smiled, [expletive] throughout the years not because it was easier for us than for anybody else, but because we did not have any other choice. Our faces have become distorted from so much smiling.”

From the start, Wages for Housework was expansive in its definition of who belonged in the feminist movement. “We want and have to say that we are all housewives, we are all prostitutes and we are all gay. ... Because as long as we think we are something better, something different than a housewife, we accept the logic of the master, which is a logic of division.” Federici wrote. Her tone is almost pleading when she suggests that society needs to rid itself of the notion that some people are naturally servile or subordinate, that anything can be a “labor of love.” “We want to call work what is work,” she wrote, “so that eventually we might rediscover what is love.”

The New York committee operated out of a storefront in Park Slope, Brooklyn, where they campaigned to improve living conditions for women in poverty. They supported the formation of other groups around the country and in Canada, and worked locally with the activists Margaret Prescod and Wilmette Brown, who formed Black Women for Wages for Housework. They campaigned together in support of welfare activists, as they considered welfare the first victory in the struggle to demand that the government compensate women for their work in the home.

But after four years, the international network splintered. The New York committee, among others, dissolved after a falling-out with James and Prescod, who claim that the priorities of Black Women for Wages for Housework were ignored; Federici denies this, and claims the group’s issue was with James.

Until very recently all parties declined to discuss the 40-year-old internecine conflict in public, convinced that it would distract from their work. This is especially sensitive terrain because of the long history of white people’s dismissing and marginalizing Black, brown, Indigenous, queer and trans people within the feminist movement. Though they have never reconciled, Federici, James and Prescod went on to long, concurrent careers in feminist activism — James and Prescod within the International Wages for Housework campaign and the Global Women’s Strike, among other initiatives, and Federici as an activist with the Anti-Death Penalty Project of the Radical Philosophy Association and the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa, and as a scholar at Hofstra University.

Federici’s most influential book came almost 30 years later, with the publication of “Caliban and the Witch” in 2004. Many anticapitalist feminists like bell hooks, Angela Davis, Wilmette Brown and the Combahee River Collective had been arguing since the ’70s that feminist struggle was necessarily anticapitalist struggle, and that anticapitalist struggle must necessarily take up gender and race because capitalism oppressed women, people of color and the ***working class***. The contribution of “Caliban and the Witch” to this tradition was to trace these forms of oppression to a single source, arguing that their origins were inextricable.

Federici proposes a new theory about the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe, marshaling historical evidence to argue that this also was the moment when women’s work was brought under the control of male heads of household and confined to the domestic sphere. Women were the ones who could birth and raise the labor force, so their autonomy, and especially their childbearing capacity, needed to be “enclosed.” Then it needed to be made “natural,” as if domesticity was simply women’s inherent condition and desire. This transition was violent, she argues, citing thousands of women killed during that period, usually women who failed to conform to their new, radically constricted reality and were accused of being witches.

“Capitalism, as a social-economic system, is necessarily committed to racism and sexism,” Federici wrote. “For capitalism must justify and mystify the contradictions built into its social relations ... by denigrating the ‘nature’ of those it exploits: women, colonial subjects, the descendants of African slaves, the immigrants displaced by globalization.”

Federici argues that it’s not “natural” that the kinds of work that involve care and sustaining life were the province of any one gender; neither is it natural or inevitable that people be subjugated by an economic system that benefits a very few. These were merely conventions useful to the rise of an economic system that has become so all-encompassing that we no longer dare to imagine another way. It was made this way for someone’s profit, Federici argues. This way of things can be reversed.

The last year — this plague year, this election year, this horrific year — has been a fruitful time to pay attention to who profits from our economic system, and at whose expense. In the last year, more than 70 million Americans filed for unemployment, a majority of them in the service sectors, where workers are more likely to be women of color. Low-wage workers lost their jobs at greater rates, and have stayed unemployed longer. At the same time, just over half of essential workers, who have continued working outside the home at risk to their health, are women, and disproportionately women of color. [*An article in Think Global Health by the scholar Catherine Powell,*](https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/color-and-gender-covid-essential-workers-not-disposable-people) a law professor at Fordham, described a “racial-justice paradox” in which Black and brown Americans are “more likely to be unemployed due to the impacts of the pandemic on the labor market,” but are simultaneously “overrepresented among essential workers who must stay in their jobs, particularly lower-skilled positions, where they are at greater risk of exposure to the virus.” This paradox has cost thousands of people their lives.

In the last year, women in health care have fared worse than their male counterparts: [*A C.D.C. study*](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6915e6.htm) reported that 72 percent of the health care workers hospitalized with Covid between March and May of last year were women. Many were nurses and certified nursing assistants, jobs that involve direct patient care — sponge baths, feeding, administering medication — and are more populated by women and people of color. (They’re also compensated less well than male-dominated health care jobs.) Hospital housekeeping and home health aides also got sick and died in higher numbers.

In the last year, housekeepers have faced a “full-blown humanitarian crisis.” [*The National Domestic Workers Alliance reported up to 60 percent unemployment in May*](https://domesticworkers.org/sites/default/files/6_Months_Crisis_Impact_COVID_19_Domestic_Workers_NDWA_Labs.pdf), adding that many of its members weren’t receiving any kind of government relief because they were undocumented.

In December, 156,000 women lost jobs; men gained 16,000, [*according to an analysis by the National Women’s Law Center.*](https://nwlc.org/resources/all-of-the-jobs-lost-in-december-were-womens-jobs/) But, as is usually the case, evaluating “women” as a general category hides something important: A further dissection of the data revealed that it was Black, Latina and Asian-American women who suffered job losses — white women actually gained jobs. It is expected that when the vast numbers of unemployed women re-enter the job market, they will be paid lower wages than before.

In the last year, 2.3 million American women reportedly dropped out of the work force — often to perform child care when school and day care closed. Because they’ve left the work force entirely, and aren’t seeking new jobs, they aren’t counted in unemployment statistics anymore.

In the last year, [*America’s billionaires have become $1.1 trillion richer*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1LGeUxuE-Z2OyNKu54JQIffS1v588iUvV6yd6D2vH6Vc/edit). All this, amid perverse debates about whose lives are acceptable to sacrifice to save the economy. President Trump admitted in May that as we resumed economic activity, more people would die, but, he declared, “We have to get our country back.” Whose country? Back for whom?

It is somewhat less than surprising that there is a growing hunger for a different way, a society less stubbornly resistant to valuing human life when it stands in the way of profit for a rich, white, often male ruling class. A society “that allows millionaires to stow their wealth in empty apartments while homeless families navigate the streets,” Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor wrote in March, “that threatens eviction and loan defaults while hundreds of millions are mandated to stay inside to suppress the virus, is bewildering in its incoherence and inhumanity.”

Taylor is among a generation of scholars and activists bringing renewed attention to the leftist, often Black-led wings of the feminist movement that were shut out by mainstream white feminism. Writing in 1984, hooks summed it up this way: “Particularly as regards work, many liberal feminist reforms simply reinforced capitalist, materialist values (illustrating the flexibility of capitalism) without truly liberating women economically.” Many writers of that era, including Hooks, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde and the members of the Combahee River Collective, insisted all along what is now widely seen as common sense: Feminism is both toothless and hypocritical if it ignores the material needs of women who are poor, Black, gay, trans, disabled, immigrants or living outside the United States. Their legacy has been taken up by contemporary social-justice activists and scholars like Taylor, adrienne maree brown, Rachel Cargle, Dean Spade and Mariame Kaba. This is where the energy of the left is now, if not a majority of the money or institutional power.

There’s a pressing question at hand, still unanswered, about how the American feminist movement will re-collect itself now, and whether it will push in an ideological direction more aligned with the thinkers it marginalized. The “liberal feminist reforms” of the late 20th century, which turned into the corporate feminism of the 21st. This hit its logical endpoint in the branded and sloganeered feminism of the last 10 years. There was “lean in” feminism, which held that women’s entrance into the C-suite required only the right kind of will to power and determined obliviousness to the demands of family-making. There was the swagification phase: THE FUTURE IS FEMALE T-shirts, “Nevertheless, She Persisted” baseball caps. There was the merch shop of the Wing (the “women’s space” with the high price tag, baby-pink interiors and, as employees claimed, abusive and racist internal culture) selling wildly popular “Head Witch In Charge” pins and “Girls Doing Whatever the [Expletive] They Want” key chains.

As it turns out, “girls,” or more accurately women, did not get to do whatever they wanted this year. Though — as people pointed out about the key chains — generalizing to “women” as a blanket category is a flawed prospect. (“What do you mean when you say women?” I asked Federici on one of our walks. “To me it has always been mostly in terms of a political category,” she said, defining “women” as all those who suffer under the material conditions that have historically been assigned to women, which includes trans and nonbinary people, intersex and agender people and queer people.) And years like 2020 do not fall evenly on all women.

The promises of liberal feminism have never sounded more hollow as the huge population of women who were left out of this vision entirely has grown. Gender parity in the work force (signified by equal representation or even equal pay) never materialized, and has been set back generations by the unsolved problem of domestic labor. These issues are gaining traction in the halls of power — not because they are new, but because they now affect even middle- and upper-class women, particularly white women. Similarly, a broad interest in socialism hasn’t come about because capitalism has only just begun to harm workers, but because the gig economy and a vanished social safety net have broadened whom they harm.

“The lesson we have learned in this process is that we cannot change our everyday life without changing its immediate institutions and the political and economic system by which they are structured,” Federici writes in her book “Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons.” There are models for resisting “a social system committed to the devaluation of our lives,” she argues. There are ways to restore that value, relocating it where it was all along.

Federici still lives in Park Slope, as she has, on and off, since 1970. She met George Caffentzis in 1973, when they became roommates. Within the year they were together. Caffentzis did most of the cooking throughout their partnership until recently, when his Parkinson’s made it harder. Federici has taken up the cooking, which she enjoys more than she did in her 20s. Caffentzis loves to cook, she told me, and his pleasure in it helped her see the task as less burdensome and more beautiful. Still, she refers to these domestic tasks as “reproduction” in conversation — as in: “I do more reproduction than in the past. Before, we had a more equal share.”

Their apartment is filled with hundreds of books — on shelves but also stacked under the sofa and the bed, piled in corners, even stashed in the kitchen cabinets between the dishes. At 78, she is still active: She is editing a book about the death penalty (which she has campaigned against for years) and preparing a new book for publication: “Patriarchy of the Wage: Notes on Marx, Gender, and Feminism,” which comes out in May. Its questions are, in a way, the same questions she has been asking since the ’70s: Why did Marxist critiques of capitalism so completely overlook the kinds of work that don’t happen in what we generally think of as the workplace? What are the stakes of that omission?

On one of our walks, Federici told me about three years she didn’t write at all. Her aging mother needed round-the-clock care, and Federici flew to Parma to join her sister in the effort. “She couldn’t move. Me, my sister, all day, and there was not enough. We were collapsed at 9 o’clock, when she finally slept.”

Federici discovered that her mother, over her 14-day hospital stay, had gotten deep bed sores. “This a moment I can never forget, the desperation. What are we going to do?”

In the days that followed, as Federici and her sister dressed and cleaned the wounds themselves, took their mother back and forth from the couch so she wasn’t bedridden, fed her, clothed her, bathed her, Federici’s mind turned often to health care. “Imagine if we had some sort of structure in the community that could help us! This is one of the things I always had in mind: I’m here in this moment in this town in this country — there must be another thousands of women like me who are going through the same type of agony.”

She turned to me and said, with a lilt in her voice: “It’s really a question of the value of life. What is valuable? What are the priorities, eh? I think unless we touch that? Unless we touch that. ... ” After her mother died, she came home and began writing about the commons.

In the last 10 years, Federici has shifted her focus toward the need to reverse “enclosure” — the process whereby the world became divided and contained for profit. Nearly everything, Federici argues, has become “enclosed” within capitalism: not just property and land but also our bodies, our time, our modes of education, our health, our relationships, our attention, our minds. During the pandemic, as Francisco Cantú pointed out in a January New Yorker article citing Federici, our ability to talk to the people we love has become mediated and monetized by tech companies. The remedy for enclosure, Federici proposes, is turning more and more of the world into a commons.

“The commons” denotes resources (land, knowledge, cultural and intellectual material) commonly held outside any kind of market. Commoning is that idea in action, a practice of putting more and more of your life outside the reaches of commodification or extraction. The allure of commoning is that it’s possible anywhere as long as there’s a willing community: An empty lot can become a small subsistence farm, a neighborhood’s health care concerns can be met with a local, neighborhood-run clinic; care work can be shared among families. “You don’t need permission” to common, says David Bollier, longtime scholar of commoning. “You don’t need to have proxies in Washington as lobbyists and lawyers. You don’t have to be an expert — you are an expert of your own dispossession. And therefore, you can devise some of your own things that are situationally appropriate.”

The ways this could look are as various as the communities seeking to address unmet needs. Recently, a group of coders built a free online tool to help families form and schedule child care co-ops. Mutual aid networks are one iteration that has flourished during the pandemic: Using something as simple as a Google Doc, neighbors can write down what they need and what they can give, forming (or revealing) a network of symbiotic relationships. (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez co-hosted a conference call with the prison abolitionist Mariame Kaba on the basics.) These exchanges often seem mundane: Instead of your hiring a handyman, a neighbor might come to your house to help install your ceiling fan; in exchange, you might help him, or someone else, with his taxes or pet-sitting or garden work. In addition to donating to big nonprofits, you might also reply to calls on your local mutual aid network to help a neighbor make rent. While agitating for the government or other organizations to allocate desperately needed resources, your community might band together to pool and increase the resources it currently has.

Federici’s models for successful commoning are drawn from an internationalist perspective, and she notes that Indigenous communities are frequently originators and keepers of commoning practices: She cites “water defenders” in the Amazon, the Landless People’s Movement in South Africa, urban gardens in Ghana, the Chilean women who pooled their food and labor amid government-mandated austerity programs. “It is not the most industrialized but the most cohesive communities that are able to resist and, in some cases, reverse the privatization tide,” she writes in “Patriarchy of the Wage.”

One of Federici’s most instructive examples of commoning is the protest campaign of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe in 2016 and 2017. In the course of fighting a pipeline project, the tribe and its allies built an encampment network that kept thousands of protesters housed and fed and safe, even as winter descended; they created a school for the children, recognizing that if whole families were going to participate, the children would need both care and education. In part because they made the camps a livable, long-term community, they were able sustain and amplify the effort into a movement with international support and ongoing momentum even though the camp itself was cleared by law enforcement in February 2017.

Commoning, Federici writes, produces “a powerful and rare experience as that of being part of something larger than our individual lives, of dwelling on ‘this earth of mankind’ not as a stranger or a trespasser, which is the way capitalism wishes us to relate to the spaces we occupy, but as home.”

“Too often the left doesn’t see the power of communities,” she told the filmmaker and writer Astra Taylor in an interview in 2019. Her politics, which echo the methods of Wages for Housework, emphasize the revolutionary possibilities of telling people they can struggle for change right where they are, whether that’s at home, in the supermarket, in church, in the shelter, on the production line, at day care. “Everyday life is the primary terrain of social change,” she writes.

Federici, when imagining the possibility of a truly just world, writes about the way collective, transformative action can match the magic worked by nature, which continually regenerates. In this sense, she continues to hold Prospect Park up as an example of creativity, possibility and beauty. When I asked, on one dark day last year, what if anything was making her feel the magic of the world, she cried: “Oh! Oh! This.” She waved her hands around in the air, gesturing at the trees, the birds, the dirt in the nearby planter currently being examined by a pair of toddlers.

Her eyes crinkled behind her mask. “The creativity of nature. And of people. I am very excited about people.” When I burst out laughing in disbelief, she protested. “There is really a lot of beauty, generosity, courage, my God. There is still joy, I see it — there is still a lot of beauty in this world. And I hope it prevails over those who only want to control and tear it apart.”

Jordan Kisner is the author of the essay collection “Thin Places,” out in paperback this April, from which [*her last article for the magazine, about America’s autopsy crisis,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/magazine/piled-bodies-overflowing-morgues-inside-americas-autopsy-crisis.html) was adapted.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SHARIF HAMZA) (MM34-MM35); PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE ESTATE OF BETTYE LANE/SCHLESINGER LIBRARY, RADCLIFFE INSTITUE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY) (MM36)

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[***Could the Current Crisis Fix What's Broken About Work in America?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YN7-7KG1-DXY4-X2YM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Historically, major crises have tended to empower workers. The coronavirus is already changing things, for better and for worse.

Crises like pandemics, economic collapses and world wars have, at times throughout history, ended up reordering societies -- shrinking the gap between the rich and the poor, or empowering the ***working class***. The Black Death helped end feudalism. The Great Depression helped lead to the New Deal. Never has extreme economic inequality shrunk in a meaningful way, says the Stanford historian Walter Scheidel, without a major crisis.

The coronavirus pandemic, as of now, is not on the order of the plague, but it's hitting the United States during a period of agitation about worsening inequality and waning power for workers. Already, it has made stark how precarious life is for many American workers, causing some to revolt. How employers and policymakers respond could improve work in the United States for the long term -- or make the existing problems worse.

''Pandemics as a social shock do give workers more leverage to demand things,'' said Patrick Wyman, a historian and host of the Tides of History podcast. ''Crises like these reveal what is already broken or in the process of breaking.''

''They are attacks on a particular socioeconomic way of organizing your society,'' he said. ''The question is whether your institutions can make collective things happen.''

The United States is distinctive among rich countries in its lack of worker protections like nationwide paid sick leave, paid family leave and universal health insurance, and in its minimal labor union membership. For both high and low earners, many employers expect workers to be on call around the clock. Companies are typically beholden to shareholders first, above employees, customers and communities.

But the coronavirus pandemic has shown the flaw in that logic: Worker well-being is the foundation for everything else.

Already, Congress has given some workers paid sick and family leave for the first time. Companies have started to offer paid leave, subsidized child care and flexible work schedules. Millions of Americans are working from home -- which could reset workplace practices even when they return. People are recognizing the importance of many jobs that have long been undervalued, like janitors, child care providers, teachers, health aides, delivery people and grocery store workers.

There is no guarantee of a positive outcome for workers; it depends in large part on the choices made in the next months. Even if some past crises have ultimately given workers more leverage, the opposite could be true this time, given the high levels of unemployment. The American response has been less generous than that in other countries: Denmark, Britain and Germany are all paying large portions of wages while people aren't working so that companies can keep them employed.

But if more Americans perceive that the system has fundamentally failed them, experts say it could lead to widespread demands for better protections. Millions of people have suddenly lost their jobs, along with their health insurance and other benefits. Partisan disagreement has slowed government assistance, and many workers are excluded from the assistance Congress has authorized. In many ways, the pandemic is exacerbating inequality: Staying home or seeking health care is easier for the rich than the poor, and early data show the virus is disproportionately affecting African-Americans and Latinos.

''You have already seen a reduction in economic inequality over the last few weeks because of the stock market, but there are potential longer-term effects for the 99 percent,'' said Mr. Scheidel, who wrote ''The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality From the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century.''

''The poor will only be better off if it leads to policy change in an aggressive way,'' he said.

Pandemics, Wars and Workers' Rights

The Black Death -- when the bubonic plague killed an estimated 30 percent to 60 percent of the European population in the mid-1300s -- is an extreme example of how pandemics can rebalance societies.

Ultimately, it helped end serfdom in parts of Europe. Because so many people died, labor became scarce, and workers had more sway with landowning lords. Many peasants could, for the first time, own land or move for opportunities.

''It's embedded in a larger series of economic shifts in Western Europe, but the economic impact of the Black Death is the thing you cannot possibly overstate, because it's a shock to both the supply of labor and the demand,'' Mr. Wyman said.

''If you're a serf before the Black Death, you are in bad shape, you have no leverage -- the lords can demand a lot from you,'' he said. ''After the Black Death, when the lord says, 'Come plow my field,' you don't have to do that anymore.''

It appears the coronavirus pandemic will be nowhere near as deadly as the plague. But, he said, ''even a relatively small-scale shock like this reopens the realm of the possible.''

Six centuries later, in the United States, a growing labor movement before World War I culminated, after the war, in stronger unions, widespread strikes and the end of the 12-hour workday. The war, in addition to the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, resulted in a shortage of working men, so many of these jobs opened to women for the first time. In turn, women gained more power to argue for things like higher wages and the right to vote.

The Great Depression led to the creation of America's safety net with the New Deal. The only time the United States had universal public child care was during World War II, when the country needed to make it possible for women to work while men were at war.

The process hasn't been smooth, or without disagreement and setbacks. In response to the labor demands in England brought about by the plague, the king issued an ordinance that included a maximum wage law. Many of the gains won by the labor movement in the United States in the 1920s were eventually reversed. New Deal policies faced significant political resistance from critics who said they raised the deficit too much and veered into socialism. From the start, those policies excluded many minorities and women.

A crisis on its own has not been enough to start a labor movement, but if a movement has been simmering, a crisis can make it boil over, said Nelson Lichtenstein, a labor historian at the University of California, Santa Barbara. For example, he said, the conditions weren't right for workers to revolt during the 2008 recession, but this time they might be.

''We have had a decade and more of agitation, planning, think-tanking on the need to solve problems of inequality and capitalist dysfunction, and so these ideas are more prominently on the agenda, and not only of liberals,'' he said.

'A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity'

During this pandemic, workers in the United States have organized strikes at Whole Foods, Instacart and other companies, asking for protections like hazard pay, gloves and sick leave. Congress has passed policies, albeit temporary ones, that would have been politically unthinkable before now, including paid leave and direct payments to individuals. Democrats have introduced bills to make some of the benefits permanent.

Some companies, including Darden Restaurants, which owns Olive Garden and other chains, have permanently given workers paid sick leave. (Others, including Starbucks and Walmart, have offered paid leave but made it temporary.)

''This is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity,'' said Janelle Jones, a managing director at Groundwork Collaborative, a progressive economic policy group. ''Policymakers need to focus on restructuring our economy in a way that rebalances power toward workers.''

For hourly workers, the importance of paid sick leave has become clearer. Just one in three service-sector workers has it, according to data from the University of California's Shift Project, which runs a large and continuing survey of these workers, and 60 percent say they go to work when sick.

''What feels different, like an opportunity for change, is the public health case is just so obvious and strong,'' said Kristen Harknett, one of the leaders of the Shift Project and a sociologist at the University of California, San Francisco. ''We've never before had such evidence for how this collectivizes the problem. It's not just the bottom line.''

For white-collar, salaried workers, coronavirus is, in a way, offering a natural experiment, by forcing companies to let people work from home, create their own schedules and spend more time with their families. It could convince companies that constant face time is unnecessary, said the sociologists Erin L. Kelly and Phyllis Moen, who this year published ''Overload: How Good Jobs Went Bad and What We Can Do About It.''

''Part of the reason companies haven't really changed is it's a shift in mind-set to not focus on hours and being instantly responsive to a text at 9 p.m.,'' Ms. Kelly said. ''It's a shift to working on the assumption that employees should decide when, where and how they do their work.''

An abrupt shift to working from home with schools closed is in no way a perfect experiment -- people may feel less in control of their lives than ever, and most have no child care. But now, Ms. Moen said, it's forcing companies to innovate.

''It's no longer, do they want to,'' she said. ''We have to think of new ways of working, and sometimes a crisis can be an opportunity as well as a danger.''

The policy changes that have already happened in response to the virus have come very quickly. They have illuminated how relatively easy it would be for workers to have these rights -- employers or policymakers would just have to say so. It may be hard for them to take back benefits, analysts said, even those they've said are temporary.

''Once you make it clear that these things are within your capacity to do, people's baseline expectations change,'' said Mr. Wyman, the historian. ''That was true of the New Deal, the Great Society, Obamacare. We can do a lot more than we think we can. Crises are a useful reminder, useful in a tragic kind of way, of what we can do if we wanted to, if we had the will to do it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/10/upshot/coronavirus-future-work-america.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/10/upshot/coronavirus-future-work-america.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Men waiting for a free dinner at New York's municipal lodging house during the Great Depression. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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[***Why Montana Is a Test Case for Democrats’ Winning the Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60FM-G5B1-DXY4-X1BH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jonathan Martin

**Highlight:** The race between Steve Daines, the Republican incumbent, and Steve Bullock could prove crucial in a year when Democrats need to win in conservative-leaning states where President Trump may still prevail.

**Body**

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BOZEMAN, Mont. — In the deeply polarized election of 2016, every state that supported [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden) backed Republican senators — and each state that Hillary Clinton carried voted for a Democratic Senate candidate.

But four years later, Democratic hopes for gaining a clear Senate majority depend in part on winning in conservative-leaning states where Mr. Trump may also prevail, even as he sags in the polls. In states like Alaska, Iowa, Georgia and here in Montana, Democrats are hoping their Senate candidates can outperform [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden), their presumptive nominee.

That’s the dynamic Gov. Steve Bullock is counting on in Montana, where ticket-splitting is as much a way of life as fly-fishing.

Montanans have supported Republican presidential candidates, with one exception, for over a half-century. In that same period, though, they have elected a series of Democratic governors and senators. Senator Steve Daines, whom Mr. Bullock is challenging, was the first Republican elected to the Senate seat that he holds in over a century.

Yet as he faces off against Mr. Bullock, whose popularity has risen as he leads the state’s coronavirus response, Mr. Daines is counting on Montanans to act a little more like voters everywhere else and stick with one party as they make their way down the ballot.

The race here will measure the political impact of the pandemic — many governors have grown in stature for their handling of the virus, and Mr. Bullock is the only sitting governor running for the Senate. It will also test Montana’s iconoclastic identity in a time of encroaching red-and-blue homogeneity.

But for Democrats, going on the offensive in a red-leaning state in an age of polarization is no easy task. By nominating the more moderate Mr. Biden, they hope they can at least lose more closely, if not win outright, in states where Mrs. Clinton was thrashed and her party’s Senate candidates went down with her.

“The reason he was so strong in ’16 is because you could go up and down here — Democrats and Republicans would both tell you they hate Hillary,” Jon Tester, a Democrat who is Montana’s senior senator, said of Mr. Trump over an afternoon beer in Great Falls.

Even as Mrs. Clinton lost Montana overwhelmingly, though, Mr. Bullock still managed to get re-elected as governor.

A Helena-reared lawyer who [*made a foray for president last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden), Mr. Bullock has won statewide office three times, first as attorney general before he became governor.

“Montanans know me,” he said in an interview, explaining how he’d overcome Republican claims that he’d abet liberal voices in Washington. “I’ve worked with Republicans to get things done.”

Winning a federal race, in which the issues are more national in scope, is difficult enough for a Democrat in a red state. But Mr. Bullock made that task harder by leaving Montana for half of 2019 to run for president, drifting to the left on some issues and repeatedly insisting he would not fall back to seek the Senate seat.

Without prompting last week, though, he noted that he had stood up to President Barack Obama’s administration on environmental policies he thought were harmful to Montana’s agriculture and energy sectors.

Such talk was notably absent from his White House bid, when he sought the Democratic nomination by edging to the left on gun control and deeming Mr. Trump a “lying con man from New York with orange hair and a golden toilet.”

Asked if his ridicule of Mr. Trump was over the line, he suggested some regret.

“By Washington standards, not at all,” Mr. Bullock explained. “By my typical standards, stronger than things that I would typically say.”

Navigating Mr. Trump is a delicate issue for Montana Democrats, who must energize their liberal base without alienating the state’s ticket-splitters. Mr. Tester aired ads in his 2018 re-election campaign trumpeting his work with the president, which helped blunt the impact of Mr. Trump’s four trips to the state that year.

Few G.O.P. senators have so happily linked themselves to Mr. Trump as Mr. Daines, a chemical engineer by training who represented Montana as its lone congressman before winning his Senate seat in 2014.

In an interview in his Bozeman campaign office, he said he was eager for the president to return to the state and revealed that Mr. Trump had “asked to come, too.”

However, just as Mr. Bullock’s ill-fated bid for president has complicated his attempt to run again in Montana, the coronavirus has created headwinds for Mr. Daines.

Mr. Trump’s standing here has fallen, as it has elsewhere, because of [*his ineffective response to the outbreak*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/08/28/us/trump-vs-biden). Some Republican polling this summer suggests he is leading Mr. Biden only by single digits in Montana.

Asked to assess the president’s performance on the pandemic, Mr. Daines largely sidestepped the question, stating that he supported letting states and localities “have primacy.”

Further muddling matters for Mr. Daines: Any effort by him to embrace the national Republican strategy of pinning the blame on China for the virus’s spread in America is complicated by his years of work for Procter &amp; Gamble in China. Democrats are already airing commercials highlighting the senator’s work in the country.

More than anything, though, the health crisis has created challenges for Mr. Daines by delaying the parry-and-thrust of the campaign, allowing Mr. Bullock to enjoy what his opponent called a “rally around the flag” bounce.

Mr. Daines acknowledged that his role was more of constituent service specialist than candidate — and that the virus was foremost on the minds of voters.

“These are third-generation business owners that are crying on the phone to me, saying: ‘Steve, I’m losing everything,’” he recalled. “And so in that moment you’re not thinking so much about, ‘Well, Steve Bullock got an F on guns and I got an A+.’ It’s not the discussion.”

That was easy enough to see as the two officials made their way across this sprawling state, where the metric for a candidate’s sweat equity is in tires changed, not shoes replaced.

In the Flathead region, near Glacier National Park, Mr. Bullock visited a food bank. As he toured a nearby timber facility, the governor was joined by an employee, a Trump voter now dejected by the country’s state of affairs, whose stepmother had contracted the virus.

Closer to Great Falls, Mr. Daines was similarly confronted with fallout from the pandemic.

He visited a small agricultural equipment dealer who thanked him for the paycheck protection loan that he had received through Congress. “It was a big help,” said the dealer, Steven Raska, explaining that he had been able to pay a few employees for over two months with the money.

Demonstrating his clout with the Trump administration, Mr. Daines also convened a round-table event for ranchers and farmers that featured Bill Northey, a top administrator at the Department of Agriculture. The growers gave both men an earful about how the virus had upended their livelihoods.

“Covid could not have hit the sheep industry at a worse time,” said Leah Johnson, who runs the Montana Wool Growers Association.

With the virus spiking in the state, Mr. Bullock finally issued a mask mandate on July 15 for any county with four or more active cases.

Former Senator Max Baucus, a Democrat who represented the state in Congress for nearly 40 years, said the pandemic had initially lifted Mr. Bullock.

“But the trouble with Covid is you can’t get out and shake hands, and that would help him compare himself to Daines,” said Mr. Baucus, explaining that he had overcome Montana’s national Republican leaning by cultivating individual voters. “My main approach to the state was: people, people, people.”

The uncertainty surrounding the virus, and Montana’s heterodox political nature, were on display Thursday in Bozeman. A few dozen protesters in Trump gear hoisted signs and marched down the city’s commercial center in opposition to the mask order.

They passed a number of storefronts that even before the mandate had asked customers to wear masks — a reflection of the changing nature of Bozeman. There’s now a Lululemon, sitting across the street from a coffee shop plastered with anti-racism signs that could have been pulled from the most liberal college campus (“De-Prioritize White Comfort”).

Few places have as strong a sense of place as Montana, where politicians routinely invoke how many generations their families go back in the state. This focus on rootedness and the state’s sparse population have helped perpetuate its independent streak as races remain more about the individual.

“We have six people per square mile and three times as many cows as people, so that makes for a lot of reliance,” said Marc Racicot, a former Republican governor. “The social connection is a little richer and not so contaminated with only electronic communications.”

Yet even as it treasures its status as “The Last, Best Place,” one of its slogans, Montana, which has about one million people, is being reshaped by transplants. And nowhere more so than Bozeman, a community cherished for its proximity to Yellowstone Park that locals now call “Bozeangeles.”

Traditionally, Democrats won statewide by winning or breaking even in the county surrounding Billings, the population center of Montana’s Republican-dominated east. That’s changing, though, because of the rising population in Gallatin County, which includes Bozeman and is the fastest-growing jurisdiction in the state.

Mr. Tester’s trajectory in Gallatin County tells the story of Montana’s transformation: Over three elections, Mr. Tester has gone from winning 49 percent to 51.5 percent to 59.4 percent there.

Once rooted in labor, the Democratic coalition here increasingly reflects the national party, with its twin pillars of upscale whites and ***working-class*** minorities (Native Americans in the case of Montana).

“These urban spaces are growing dramatically, and these spaces are becoming the heart of the Democratic base here,” said David Parker, a Montana State University professor who wrote a book on the 2012 Senate race.

At the same time, though, Republicans are winning their heavily rural base by even larger margins today: Even Mr. Tester, a descendant of homesteaders who is the only working farmer in the Senate, has seen his support sag in sparsely populated counties since he first ran in 2006.

It adds up to a shrinking pool of persuadable voters.

“It’s not quite like what it was,” Mr. Racicot acknowledged, before hinting at why so many people want to move to Montana. “But it’s a lot closer to that ideal than the rest of the nation.”

PHOTOS: From top, Gov. Steve Bullock, a Democrat running for Senate in Montana, meeting with volunteers at a food bank in Columbia Falls this month. President Trump, who handily won Montana in 2016, visited the state four times in 2018 in an unsuccessful effort to help unseat Senator Jon Tester, a Dem- ocrat. Senator Steve Daines, the incumbent Republican and Mr. Bullock’s opponent, has linked his fortunes to the president. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK COTE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES; ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***FKA Twigs***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:614V-DG41-JBG3-623S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

idn't I do it for you?'' the Black British artist FKA Twigs sings at the start of ''Cellophane,'' her voice bowing low over a spare piano interval. ''Why don't I do it for you?'' Another piano sounds as if from underwater, and soft beat-boxing keeps the tempo like brushes on a drum. ''Why won't you do it for me, when all I do is for you?'

' The song, the lead single from Twigs's 2019 album, ''Magdalene,'' is a quiet, searching response to rejection colored by disbelief: What begins as a relationship autopsy (''Didn't I?'') turns subtly from past tense to present (''Why not?''). Twigs was crying when she recorded the song, which she did in the wake of her heavily publicized breakup with the British actor Robert Pattinson. (''All wrapped in cellophane, the feelings that we had,'' she sings, an ostensible nod to the way the couple's experience was packaged for tabloid consumption.) Still, the recording was so abject, and in that way so different from her typical high-concept art-pop, that she had to laugh at herself. Envisioning the video, her first thought, she tells me, was: ''I should just be a sad stripper.''

In her Grammy-nominated video for ''Cellophane,'' which came out in April 2019, she steps onto a dim stage wearing a mint, rose and gold bikini. The camera tracks her clear platform stilettos as she walks toward the audience and begins a slow pole dance, heels slicing the floor like an ice-skater's blades. She folds herself into the pole, then turns upside down and stretches her legs out into a 180-degree split. The ceiling opens to reveal a masked phoenix whose face Twigs tries to kick away, but the creature nevertheless sucks her in and spins her, still posing, through space until she lands in a pit where crawling people tenderly smear her with mud. She looks at the camera, shivering. But there is no telling whether she is shaken by a profound rite of renewal -- returned to clay, from which she will be reborn -- or if she's just cold.

Breakup aside, Twigs created ''Magdalene,'' her second full-length album, the first record she had released in three years and the most widely acclaimed of her career, in the midst of another personal crisis: her diagnosis with uterine fibroids -- what she has called her ''fruit bowl of pain.'' Pole dancing is an unlikely discipline for someone recovering from uterine surgery, as it's dependent on intense core strength and often expressive of sexual confidence. Yet Twigs's Los Angeles-based pole choreographer and instructor, Kelly Yvonne, who worked with her on ''Cellophane'' and on her earlier pole routine for the rapper ASAP Rocky's 2018 video for ''Fukk Sleep,'' explains that the art form is not simply a tool of male gratification centered in strip clubs; pole classes have helped women to ''regain their bodies, to regain their sexuality, to take that power back.'' Viewed in this light, Twigs's use of the pole tempers the song's story of loss and rejection with a vision of strength and prowess. At the same time, her use of oddness and artifice (the theatrical setting, the phoenix, the mud) subverts the cultural expectation that a Black woman's performance will be simple and transparent -- a straightforward narrative of recovery, a diary, an open book.

he notion that Black women's music (like their bodies) should be readily available and accessible is a holdover from slavery that has shaped popular Western music ever since critics framed Black female blues songs of the 1920s as direct testimonies about the singers' lives. James Baldwin, in his 1964 essay ''The Uses of the Blues,'' enforces that reductive equation, but he also offers an insight that anticipates Twigs's ironic approach to pain in her work: ''There's always something a little funny in all our disasters, if one can face the disaster,'' he writes. Indeed, Twigs, with her splendid pole dance, shows just how hard women try to ''do it for you'' -- whether colloquially (to satiate your particular desire) or literally (to serve you, to do it so you don't have to). And yet, when love fails, when the body fails, women assume they are insufficient. It's a dynamic that Baldwin might have called disastrous, yet it's also absurd. To ask how you fell short ''whilst doing these amazing tricks on the pole,'' Twigs has said, ''to me, there's almost something humorous about that.'' When performing the song live, she tells me, she toys with melodrama and theatricality -- removing one of her ''stripper'' heels and hurling it across the stage with a sort of campy excess that brings a glint and glitter to her seemingly transparent lament. Even the title of the song hints at that same sleight of hand: You can see through and peel off the layer of cellophane, but all you will find is more magazine gloss.

Twigs's ascent to the stratosphere and descent to the mud pit in ''Cellophane'' also offers a metaphor for the extremes she navigates while sliding away from conventional, eye-level expectations: deflation and transcendence, personal humility and creative grandiosity, the blunt reality of physical work and its stunning payoff in performance. She is a singer, songwriter, dancer and producer with epic stamina, impeccable taste and a monastic devotion to training: In her version of working at home under quarantine, she regularly practiced routines on the pole installed in her living room. She is often compared to Björk, David Bowie and Prince, because she is a world-builder who is unafraid to be strange, even grotesque. In her self-directed 2015 video for ''Pendulum,'' long before the dreamscape of ''Cellophane,'' she was bound in ropes, in a Japanese bondage style known as shibari, then hung from the ceiling by her own hair; her 2013 video for ''Water Me,'' which the artist Jesse Kanda directed, features a close-up of her face, which rocks like a bobblehead doll while her eyes and mouth slowly expand.

But in recent years, Twigs, now 32, has begun to harness her pursuit of avant-garde innovation and technical virtuosity toward a deeper exploration of pain and insecurity -- to unite stage presence with soul. One can find analogues between her work and that of contemporary artists: the showmanship of Janelle Monáe, the introspection of Fiona Apple and Solange, the vocal drama of Lana Del Rey. But Twigs is less earnest and more shape-shifting than those artists. Perhaps no other pop star delves inside as deeply while stretching so far out -- plumbing the interior, sometimes from a wry distance, while making of her own body a spectacular work of art.

hen we first meet, over FaceTime, this past summer, she seems reflective, high-spirited but relaxed. She is recording a new album at a studio that is a short walk across a park near her home in East London. When working long hours in the studio, she says, she eats lots of cakes and messes with her collaborators by telling them the musical ideas they come up with will work best when discarded: ''You know, that sound is going to be amazing ... when it's muted!'' She feels a bit woozy just now, she admits, having spent too long on her pole that day. In the event that I'm able to travel overseas to visit, she suggests I try it out, and assures me I would find it easy, as I studied dance growing up: ''You've already got the lines, so it's just about building strength.'' (''Don't let her fool you!'' counters Yvonne later on when I ask about this: ''It was easy for her. But it's not easy for the average person ... I've coached over a hundred dancers and I've never seen anything like her.'')

Yvonne is one of several masters to whom Twigs has apprenticed herself. In recent years, her new skills have included vogueing, krumping, tap dancing and wushu, a Chinese martial art that involves sword fighting. Physically small (at 5-foot-3) but athletically ambitious, she is a child of the stage who remains an ardent mentee -- ''I love being a student to a mentor that I love,'' she says. Growing up in Cheltenham, an uneventful, predominantly middle-class town in the southwest of England, she studied opera and ballet and performed in youth groups and dance competitions and jazz combos. She earned a scholarship to a private Catholic school, where she excelled despite and because of how acutely she felt her otherness, as a mixed-race kid in a very white area. (Her mother, a salsa teacher and costume designer, is English and Spanish; her biological father, a musician, is Jamaican.) She was raised in part by her stepfather, a man whose background she denotes as ''English/Spanish/Jamaican/Egyptian,'' and whose occupation, she says, involves a briefcase and a fondness for numbers. When Twigs was 7, he told her that she would need to be twice as good as the white girls in her class if she wanted to stand out. ''If I wanted to win a [dance] competition, I couldn't really afford to be good. I had to be excellent,'' she remembers. ''It had to be so obvious that I was going to win, that it would be ridiculous [if] I didn't.'' It's a common refrain for parents and kids of color, but Twigs, ever the student, took it to heart: ''I really heard that.''

Interviewers so often describe Twigs as being ''surprisingly'' engaging and fun, in contrast to her edgily glamorous persona, that I am determined to not be surprised by her personality when we speak. But I am nonetheless moved by her openness and candor; her speech is as detailed and direct as her song lyrics are oblique. When I ask how she develops the confidence to keep learning new skills, she says she has been thinking about that a lot while quarantining in the midst of the Black Lives Matter protests. She genuinely loves exploring new things, and ''changing the cultural DNA'' by highlighting aspects of culture (krumping, pole, opera) that others might wish to learn more about. But it saddens her to realize how intensely her efforts have been driven by her stepfather's mandate, which is really the culture's mandate, that she always be twice as good. Excellence for her has been a mode of survival, a way of securing a craft -- several crafts -- that no one can deny or take away from her. This is the bind of Black performance, especially for Black women: If you don't excel at everything, they'll say you don't deserve to be here. If you do, they'll say it must have been easy to do it all precisely because you have done it.

Twigs's mastery of forms of movement, as well as her status as a fashion icon -- with her septum ring, baby hairs and neo-gothic style -- has at times outshone her music. But her work as a singer, songwriter and producer is her foundation. On three early EPs and her first album, ''LP1,'' released in 2014, she innovated the '90s-era R&B slow jam by blending trip-hop's glitchy timing and industrial distortion with Kate Bush's high-pitched pop. Her signature sound, in which ethereal vocal pointillism details the upper limits of sensual songs driven by bouncing beats, expresses Twigs's embrace of embodiment as well as her penchant for the abstract. She is perhaps a literalist only when it comes to sex. Yet her unique brand of erotic excellence forgoes the braggadocio and realness popularized by female forerunners in hip-hop in exchange for an aestheticized play between dominance and submission: as sonically subtle as Sade and as lyrically explicit as Prince (at least until he became a Jehovah's Witness in 2001). ''My thighs are apart for when you're ready to breathe in,'' she quietly informs a would-be lover in 2014's ''Two Weeks.'' The video for 2013's ''Papi Pacify'' features a meticulously choreographed duet between Twigs and a man who keeps sliding his fingers into her mouth.

In time, the highly produced aesthetic of these early works came to seem, she has said, like an ''ornate golden birdcage'' -- beautiful but restrictive. Twigs remains an unapologetic classicist, invested in balletic lines and intricate networks of sound; yet on ''Magdalene,'' she pulls back some of the veils and effects to reveal what she calls ''a pure part of my soul talking.'' The album's layered sounds are equally organic and electronic, grounded as much in the piano as in the drum machine. The other crucial instrument is Twigs's voice, which she has worked to develop so that it occupies the center of her music rather than its upper edge. Historically, smaller-voiced pop singers, from Diana Ross to Janet Jackson, have distributed their creative energy across several realms (fashion, dance, film) rather than ask their music to carry the entire weight of their careers. It's a wise bid for longevity in an industry that pushes singers known as ''the voice'' (Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey) to the point of burnout. Twigs seemed primed to follow these trends: She is, after all, a disciple of fashion and fine art, and she played a small but memorable role in the 2019 Shia LaBeouf film ''Honey Boy.'' But she chose instead to train under a vocal coach, Nadine Marshall-Smith, who helped her recover the chops she had developed as a younger singer performing with jazz bands and in cabarets; Twigs credits Marshall-Smith with helping release her voice after it ''locked'' following fibroid surgery. Marshall-Smith says she met with the singer two or three times a week for a year, guiding her through scales and occasionally having her run while singing to develop her confidence, nuance and power. The fruits of these labors are audible in the vocal arabesques and robust shadings Twigs performs on ''Magdalene,'' the album, Twigs says, on which she has learned to write for her voice.

The album's exploration of the sacred and mundane is inspired by Mary Magdalene -- a figure who, despite once being framed by the Church as a sinful prostitute, was, as Twigs learned, a healer. Twigs recorded the album's title track, ''Mary Magdalene,'' at Electric Lady Studios in New York: She had been laboring over the song for months when, she told The Times in 2019, Nicolás Jaar, an experimental composer and D.J. with whom she co-produced several tracks on the album, finally got the right sound by finding ''a hardness in air.'' Earlier songs like 2013's ''Water Me,'' where dry knocking drums cut through the ambience, display a similar effect; but in ''Mary Magdalene,'' the hardness is a tinny clatter that strikes through the static in the bridge of the song and grows louder, as if to overtake it. Up until this point, Twigs has petitioned the saint -- ''Come just a little bit closer to me / Step just a little bit closer to me'' -- but now the singer's voice, zigzagged with distortion, seems possessed by her. The song is a musical séance; it recalls the traditional practice of using humble materials to invoke the supernatural, rapping on wood to call the spirits.

orn Tahliah Barnett, FKA Twigs was raised in suburban Cheltenham; her mother had moved there from Birmingham, a city in western England, to give her daughter a better, or at least a more pastoral, life. They ran low on food and didn't always have heat, but her mother worked to make life special for Twigs, her only child. Instead of decorating Twigs's room with the glow-in-the-dark stickers her friends had, she had her daughter's ceiling painted dark blue and speckled with stars. When Twigs was 17, she moved with her mother to study dance at the BRIT School, an institution whose alumna include Amy Winehouse and Adele, and which Twigs describes as ''a bit of a hood performing-arts school in South London.'' While there, she realized that her primary love was not dance but music, but she was rejected from the music program, so she left and went to nearby Croydon College to study fine art, literature and philosophy instead. For a time, she was a youth worker who helped traumatized kids create art, as well as a backup dancer in other artists' music videos, but she lost her job when funding was cut for civic programs, and so she began to pursue her own music through the club and cabaret scenes. In her early 20s, she sang at the Box, a debauched though commercial London club where aerialists and fire-breathers performed for stars like George Clooney and Queen Latifah, she recalls, and where she says she felt ''like a lamb to the slaughter'' but developed ''nerves of steel onstage.'' When I suggest that the move from studious, ***working-class*** striver to underground it-girl was not an intuitive arc, she challenges the terms of the question: ''But striving to do what? Striving to sing and dance?'' Those aspirations were themselves odd where she came from; and, despite her academic achievements, middle-class security was never her aim. What she wanted above all was to make things and live an interesting life.

She describes this as seeking ''the world.'' There is a story she sometimes tells from her teenage years in which her mother turned to her over a TV dinner one night and said, ''Tahliah, you don't want a normal life.'' In this origin story, the dreamy counterpart to her stepfather's pragmatic directive (''Be twice as good''), Twigs learns that the bleak routines of ***working-class*** life are not her birthright -- she should escape them by exploring the world. But in the actual moment, Twigs tells me, ''I'm just like, sitting in our council home in South London like, 'But where is the world?' And then I meet people and think, 'Oh my gosh, that person might know [singsongy voice] where the world is!' Or maybe this new music I've discovered that has this party -- that might be the world.''

For Twigs, this search has often required following a path through the dark lit by powerful women. At the Box, a group of more seasoned dancers motivated her by appearing to be much cooler and more urbane than she was; Twigs was at once scared of them and driven to keep up. Later, she was guided by a group of Black women who hosted parties in clubs internationally (including Sharmadean Reid, the founder of the London beauty and culture hub WAH Nails, and Irene Agbontaen, a London-based fashion designer). When certain spots needed other young singers on the bill, ''My girls would just be like, 'Twigs should do it.' ... We would arrive in New York on a Tuesday and they'd be like, 'You're cool to perform on Friday, aren't you?' And I'd be like, 'Yeah, yeah. I'll perform on Friday.''' It was at one such club that Twigs met the English visual artist Matthew Stone, who told her he wanted to photograph her. ''Everyone does,'' she deftly replied.

In the years between 2012, when Stone's photograph of her appeared on the cover of i-D magazine, and 2019, when she commissioned him to create her androgynous mixed-media portrait for the cover of ''Magdalene,'' Twigs became her own creative force, writing her own music and lyrics, co-producing her own songs and directing several of her own videos. She has always been mindful of money and respectful of contracts that regiment her productivity, yet her EPs, LPs and singles have not followed typical industry schedules; the risks she has taken have been thrilling to watch because they've seemed unmediated by label directives and prepackaged contemporary pop stardom. It seems unlikely that anyone advised her to make a video in which she hung from her hair, just as it's hard to imagine the higher-ups applauding 2014's ''Video Girl,'' a black-and-white art film disguised as a music video in which Twigs watches security-camera footage of herself dancing around a man in an execution chamber. Even the story behind her name encapsulates her seemingly unpremeditated, autonomous career moves, while also reflecting the tension between availability and evasion that animates her work. ''Twigs,'' a nickname she got as a teenager in dance class because her joints popped, is a nod toward the intimate -- an inside joke about a bodily curiosity. She added the FKA (''formerly known as,'' also ''forever known as'') before her first U.S. tour in 2014 to avoid being sued by a band called the Twigs. But the prefix also appealed because it amped up the name's androgyny and subverted a celebrity culture in which, as she says, the ''one-name'' female singer's persona can override women's ''contribution to their art.'' As she explains, ''FKA Twigs felt like something to explore, rather than a female artist to become obsessed with.''

eople are quite confused,'' says Twigs's trainer Efua Baker, ''especially men,'' by what Baker calls Twigs's ''two completely different energies.'' On the one hand is her lovely demeanor and ''childlike'' tendency to lose herself in the act of creation; on the other is her almost scarily immovable will. Baker is one of a few tough-loving matriarchs (Marshall-Smith is another) who take a holistic interest in Twigs's well-being -- trying to ensure that she sleeps (a losing battle), eats properly and surrounds herself with the right people. Baker, a former model and dancer, while hardly shy herself, sometimes wishes Twigs would ''just go along with'' things even if they run counter to her vision. But she laughs when describing Twigs's ''fearlessness.'' Once, when Twigs was directing a commercial shoot, she wanted a male athlete to unleash a primal scream of victory. The man hesitated. So, Baker recalls, ''Twigs is like, 'I'll show you, so you'll feel comfortable.' ... And this tiny little thing just gets on set and we've got, like, hundreds of people [there], and she goes into the middle of the set and just screams, until you feel her neck is going to rip open! And then she's just like [demure voice], 'See?'''

Twigs's collaborators often speak of her stamina and work ethic with mystified pride. Yvonne explains that the video shoot for ''Cellophane'' required Twigs to be on the pole for eight hours straight, whereas most other dancers might manage two. Imagine lifting your own body weight for that long, she says, while also dealing with the bruising and blisters that come with the pole dancer's art. Theo Adams, who directed Twigs's ''Magdalene'' tour in 2019, recalls the time when, because of an overlong video shoot in Los Angeles and an overloud seatmate on her flight, Twigs arrived in Berlin two hours before the first European show without having slept in 50 hours. In the concert, which brought together what Adams calls a series of nonhierarchical references, ''from opera and commedia dell'arte to punk gigs and Parisian cabaret,'' Twigs sang while executing tap, pole, wushu and several costume changes. As Adams wrote in an email, ''[The show] is relentlessly taxing on both Twigs's body and voice, and with such extreme sleep deprivation, I believed the task was practically impossible.'' But she aced it. I ask her if she ever worries things might go wrong in live performance. No, she says, ''because I will have practiced a not-OK amount.''

hen I speak with Twigs a month later, via Zoom, she is tired. She has nearly completed her new album, slated to come out next year but for now shrouded in secrecy, and needs to deal with the life side of life. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, I won't be able to travel to London to try out the pole in her home. Instead, we say things like, ''Maybe we'll meet at a show, if people ever play shows again.'' What does it mean for Twigs to record music without knowing when she'll be able to perform it live? It's a major question for any touring musician in this age, but it's especially salient for one whose stage roots run so deep. Describing the concept for the last tour, Adams told me that he and Twigs deliberately rejected the ''industrial warehouses or vast gallery spaces'' one might have expected from what he calls her ''alien-like'' persona: Instead, they developed the show at the Palace Theater in Los Angeles, a historic, proscenium arch theater with heavy red velvet curtains. The ''Cellophane'' video likewise reflects this embrace of the stage -- the place where, historically, the talented entertainer and avant-garde artist have become one -- not only in its basic conceit but in the click of Twigs's heels on the floor. That sound, the weight of an actual body, while seldom heard in music videos, brings its own erotic charge.

Twigs's video for her single ''Sad Day,'' which was released on Aug. 28 but was filmed before the pandemic hit, serves as a meta-commentary on the possible directions of her future work. It was directed by Hiro Murai, the filmmaker best known for his inventive music videos and work on Donald Glover's TV show ''Atlanta,'' and features the sword-fighting skills Twigs acquired for the stage but brings them to a late-night Chinese takeout spot and into a city apartment. In the restaurant, Twigs challenges a man to a lovers' duel, then they fly home, where the man slices through Twigs's face, cleaving the two halves of her body, between which something pink bubbles and blooms. The turn to the fantastic is signature Twigs, but the video's everyday setting, and the presence of other people in the frame, reflect her desire to trade what she calls the ''white space'' of her earlier videos for something like the real world.

But reality is as much a hindrance as an inspiration. And notwithstanding Twigs's inventive approach to the music video as a genre, the music industry has yet to figure out how to capitalize on the form other than by framing it as an advertisement for an artist's album or tour. The fact that live performance is currently impossible -- Twigs estimates she has lost a year's worth of shows -- thwarts her renewed devotion to the stage and the flesh-and-blood audience. It also deprives her of a major source of revenue. She admits to breaking down early on in the lockdown, falling to her knees and wondering, ''What is going to happen?'' She has always lived, calmly but fiercely, according to simple mottos, such as ''Preparation plus opportunity equals success.'' She says little about her new album except that it's a ''vibrant'' work spurred on by another such maxim: ''Keep the dream alive.''

She takes heart in thinking about how the universe has always opened a way for her. If her life were a movie, it might be like the 1986 cult classic fantasy film ''Labyrinth,'' she says, where, at the most vexing of times, ''a little creature comes up and it's like, 'Hey, come over here! It's this way!' And you're, like, ina nightie'' -- she laughs, gaining momentum -- ''and you're going through leaves and then a thing opens and you're at a party, or -- what's it called? A banquet ... and David Bowie's there to take you to the weird staircase.'' In other words, she believes in her ''through line,'' she adds, her ability to make it through the maze.

Of course, she has done so mainly by acquiring skills. As we speak, she moves nimbly from describing the wild, otherworldly labyrinth to making a pitch for the value of becoming good at things -- and one can hear how she navigates the poles that are central to her life and work: the cosmic and the mundane. With the modesty of a true artisan, she tells me that when she has children, she will teach them that ''skills can take you places'': ''Just learn something -- the violin or the oboe or play chess a lot -- and you might get to go to Italy one day and do a chess tournament.'' For now, she hopes to get good enough at martial arts to do something with it in China. She has seen a lot, and created a lot. But she's still the young woman who wants to know where the world is.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/18/t-magazine/18tmag-09\_well.fka-twigs-t.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/18/t-magazine/18tmag-09_well.fka-twigs-t.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: FKA Twigs, photographed in London on Aug. 23, 2020. Prada jacket, price on request, and shirt, $735, (212) 334-8888, vintage Judy Blame pin, price on request, foundandvision .com, and Twigs's own jewelry (worn throughout).

FKA Twigs, photographed in London on Aug. 23, 2020. Prada jacket, price on request, and shirt, $735, (212) 334-8888, vintage Judy Blame pin, price on request, foundandvision .com, and Twigs's own jewelry (worn throughout).

Versace jacket, $2,775, versace.com, Wales Bonner sweater, $470, ssense.com, and Eftychia pants, $910, machine-a.com.

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 6380 words

**Byline:** Elisabeth Zerofsky

**Highlight:** How Édouard Louis, a ***working-class*** gay man from the provinces, became France’s latest literary sensation — and its political conscience.

**Body**

Édouard Louis opened the door to the apartment at the top of the Tour Perret, the only skyscraper in the northern French city of Amiens. He said hello warmly before resuming his position in front of a large window, which looked onto a boulevard that cut through town and then vanished into green fields. The apartment belonged to someone called Noppe, who must have been an amateur artist and collector with a nostalgic idea of globe-trotting. On one wall hung a painting that bore the owner’s name, which somewhat stereotypically depicted four African masks suspended in a cloud of hieroglyphs; across from it stood a display case containing regional glassware and a number of vintage die-cast cars. Louis was in the midst of a preliminary shoot for a documentary with the working title “Édouard Louis, or the Transformation,” and the filmmaker, François Caillat, had rented the apartment for its views. “Now you have Amiens at your feet,” Caillat said. “When you arrived, it wasn’t like that.”

A cameraman and a sound operator closed in on Louis as Caillat positioned him. They requested a sound test, and Louis, who attended a performing-arts high school in Amiens, sang a short tune, an old song by the ’70s French pop star Daniel Balavoine called “The Singer”: “I want to succeed in life, be loved, be beautiful, earn money/Above all be intelligent/But for all that, it’s a full-time job.”

At 28, Louis is tall, statuesque, with sharp, angular features. He is also one of France’s most widely read and internationally successful novelists. He seems, however, to have skirted the complicated psychological dynamics that youthful fame can inflict. His sentences are punctuated with a lighthearted, reassuring laugh. Occasionally, you could see the drama student’s checklist reel through his mind: He would straighten his spine, press his shoulders back and down as he looked into the camera. Caillat asked if he could swing open the giant window to film Louis leaning out over town. Louis concurred, though with a faint cry of protest: “I’m not at all the type of person to open a window,” he said.

The boundaries of the self are central to the three novels that Louis has published since 2014, and perhaps even more central to understanding the prodigious reception they’ve had in France. His first novel, [*“The End of Eddy,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) became an international best seller and has been most accurately described as a “nonfiction novel.” In it, Louis recounted the desolate poverty he experienced growing up in the tiny village of Hallencourt, 20 miles from Amiens, in the remote reaches of France’s postindustrial north. “It was a literary bomb,” the philosopher and sociologist Didier Eribon, a close friend of Louis’s, told me, that upset the routine “navel-gazing of the cultural bourgeoisie.” Since then, some in France have questioned whether this precocious award-winning author, whose works have been translated into two dozen languages and adapted for the stage by Europe’s most prestigious directors, is really qualified to speak for those he left behind. Louis, in turn, likes to flip the question around: Had he not left Hallencourt, received the best education available in France and altered the way he spoke, ate and dressed, would French literary circles have expressed such profuse empathy toward him? Would they have cared at all?

Louis arrived in Amiens after fleeing the cruelty of life as a closeted teenager in Hallencourt. “I had no previous experience of being in a city,” Louis said to the camera. Caillat, looking like an American tourist in slouchy khakis and a striped polo shirt, asked him what it had been like for him to live there. “I remember a rainy city, with a certain architecture, which I think constitutes part of what I am,” Louis said. Though it was late summer, the sky was accommodatingly pale. “The bricks of the north and the gray sky, it’s a kind of radicality of melancholy.” Five years later, Louis left for Paris to attend graduate school and only then felt sufficiently at ease with himself and his social environment to come out publicly. “It’s strange, because Amiens, for me. ... ” He trailed off. “Often when you try to reinvent yourself, there are intermediary places in the reinvention of the self,” he said. “You think it’s a place of arrival, but in fact it turns out to be a place of departure.”

Louis is seen primarily as a literary figure in France, but he studied sociology in Paris at the École Normale Supérieure, perhaps France’s most hallowed institution of advanced education; many of the closest members of his circle are social scientists. In fact, Louis and Caillat first met five years earlier, when Louis worked as a consultant on [*a film that Caillat made about Michel Foucault,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) [*the iconic philosopher*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) (a concept that might only exist in France). A year before Louis achieved broader fame, he published his first book, a collection of essays that he commissioned and edited on Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist of social class.

Louis has a way of making all conversation feel like a late-night cram session for a final exam on 20th-century Continental philosophy; a heady excitement lurks in everything he says, often culminating in a considered appraisal of how a certain theory explains a particular emotion or behavior. Caillat observed that Louis was the opposite of the traditional French hero figure, who feels that he is destined for something greater than the conditions of his birth. “People tell me I’m different,” Louis said, “but I didn’t want to be different — I was forced to in spite of myself. I wasn’t born different, I became different.”

After half an hour, Caillat decided to move outside into the street to shoot a few city scenes. Filming would continue in front of Louis’s high school, a few blocks away. As the crew packed up, Louis scooped up a plastic bag containing hair gel and a tiny blue earring that he’d removed for the camera. A rectangular dish of potpourri on the kitchen table had become crooked, and Louis attentively straightened it before heading for the door. The crew squeezed into the elevator, leaving space for one more body, and at Louis’s insistence I wedged myself in. Louis disappeared into the stairwell, calling out that he would meet us in the lobby, 23 flights down.

The Édouard Louis phenomenon in France [*has been analogized*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) [*by some American reviewers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) to that of J.D. Vance, the Ohioan author of “Hillbilly Elegy,” in the United States. It’s a comparison that might work better if Vance were a communist inspired by the poetics of Toni Morrison rather than an aspirant to political office in the mold of Ronald Reagan. Still, both writers escaped the static, endemic poverty of forgotten places and climbed, against fearful odds, to the top of their countries’ elite education systems, writing damning accounts once they arrived. Both also became important public figureheads in the political movements convulsing their countries: Louis, who has been an activist since he was a teenager, was a highly visible supporter of the [*“Yellow Vest”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) protest movement that emerged across France in the fall of 2018, in response to Macron’s proposal to raise taxes on fuel, which disproportionately affected the working and middle class.

As with Vance’s book, “The End of Eddy” was a kind of unbidden oracle, offering, without really intending to, the possibility of a timely explanation of tumultuous events. It coincided in France with the “Manif pour Tous,” movement, or [*“Protest for All,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) a reactionary response to the policy passed by François Hollande, then France’s president, called “Marriage for All,” which extended marriage rights to same-sex couples. Tens of thousands of conservatives, many from traditional Catholic backgrounds, marched across the country against the “demolition of the family,” foreshadowing [*the electoral wave*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) that would propel the candidacies of both Marine Le Pen and the 2017 ultraconservative “trado” (traditional Catholic) François Fillon. This in a country where the influence of Freud, the idea that a properly raised child must have both a feminine and a masculine role model, remains potent.

“We were in a big debate about gender theory,” Marion Dalibert, a professor of media studies at the University of Lille, who has written extensively about Louis, told me. The media portrayal of these debates had tied homophobia in France, perhaps unfairly, to Catholics and Muslims. When Louis’s novel came out, Dalibert said, “ the white working classes also came to be connected to homophobia.” Jean Birnbaum, the literary editor of the newspaper Le Monde, told me that “up to that point, there was this idea that sexual politics was a ‘bobo’ question — a bourgeois question, generated by a certain neighborhood in the center of Paris.” Louis’s book insisted that this was everyone’s debate, Birnbaum said, planting it firmly within other debates “about immense poverty and social misery.”

Louis was born Eddy Bellegueule (which in French means “nice face” or, more precise, “nice mug”) in Hallencourt in 1991. He was his father’s first child and son (though not his mother’s, who was married before and who brought Louis’s half brother and sister into the new hybrid family). This was significant, because Louis’s father, who left school at 14 to work for a brass-parts manufacturer, imagined his firstborn inhabiting this given name, which was inspired by American TV and was, Louis writes, that of a “tough guy.” Life in Hallencourt was spare and harsh. There wasn’t enough hot water for everyone in the household to shower every day, and the most consistent source of light was the television screen. When food was scarce, Eddy’s parents would send him to the grocer to buy on credit, thinking the owners wouldn’t say no to a child. As Louis grew older, his father became alarmed when he discovered that his son didn’t like soccer, girls or pub brawls. His parents constantly pleaded with him to “stop putting on airs,” asking themselves why their son had to behave like a “sissy.”

In Hallencourt, Louis’s parents were not the only ones reacting to him in that way. Eddy found himself the target of perpetual harassment at school, including by two bullies, “the first tall with red hair, and the second short with a hunchback,” whose reign of terror he describes in painstaking physical detail in the opening scene of “The End of Eddy”: “The gob of spit dripped slowly down my cheek, thick and yellow, like the noisy mucus that obstructs the throats of old people or people who are ill, with a strong, sickening smell to it.” By the time the reader comes to the end of “The End of Eddy,” there is a kind of Proustian doubling-back, so that the very first lines (which, like a hit single, have taken on a fame of their own in France) may now be fully understood: “From my childhood I have no happy memories,” Louis writes. “I don’t mean to say that I never, in all those years, felt any happiness or joy. But suffering is all-consuming: It somehow gets rid of anything that doesn’t fit into its system.”

To get away from the bullying and the general misery of Hallencourt, Louis auditioned for, and was accepted by, a residential theater program at the arts high school in Amiens. There, he encountered the children of the professional class for the first time. Everything about him changed; or rather, he changed everything about himself — the way he dressed and spoke, the music he listened to and, eventually, his name. (“Louis” is Eribon’s middle name and also that of the main character in “It’s Only the End of the World,” a play by Jean-Luc Lagarce) As we wandered through town with the camera crew, he remembered a friend who once invited him for lunch. Having largely subsisted on processed meats and pasta, he was served a tomato salad for the first time. I asked him what his memory of it was. “It was slimy,” he said, laughing.

In 2009, Louis entered the university in Amiens, and the following year attended a talk by Eribon, the sociologist and author of a definitive biography of Foucault. Eribon had recently published “Return to Reims,” a personal book in which he wove together memoir, sociological analysis and political commentary. It recounted an emotional trip home to Reims, a town on the Champagne route not far from Amiens, where he grew up the gay child of factory workers. Louis, reading Eribon’s book, had the feeling that it explained his own life to him, perhaps better than his own perceptions of his own life. After the talk, he approached Eribon, who invited him to have a drink with a group of professors, and eventually Louis, a first-year student, joined Eribon’s graduate seminars. Eribon had also been close friends with Pierre Bourdieu. Louis, at 18, embarked on a course of reading, starting with Foucault and Bourdieu. “As soon as I quoted a book, he had read it by the following week,” Eribon once told Le Monde.

A year later, Eribon encouraged Louis to apply for the graduate program at the École Normale Supérieure. Louis was accepted and moved to Paris, leaving behind Amiens for the metropolis, where he could live freely as a gay man. It was also there, confronted with liberal circles that seemed utterly oblivious to the lives of families like his, that Louis began to write. When, eventually, he submitted the manuscript of “The End of Eddy” to a publisher, the publisher worried that the French public simply wouldn’t believe that the kind of poverty Louis described still existed in France.

Louis sees literature to a large extent as a political project, one that he believes may accomplish more than politics itself; the language of politics, he argues, is meant to conceal rather than reveal the truth. He often says that he hopes to confront readers “with what they don’t want to see.” But he also stresses the humility inherent in the act of writing. “I always write with a sense of shame,” Louis told me. After the shoot wrapped in Amiens, I met him back in Paris at what might be the only ***working-class*** cafe in the city’s 14th arrondissement, an unadorned space that sells espressos and lottery tickets on the cheap. Louis typically works until 2 or 3 in the morning and sleeps until noon, and he suggested we meet at around 4 p.m., though he showed up a few minutes late, perhaps intentionally. (A friend of his later told me that Louis finds being on time a “bit conformist.”) He knew the cafe’s Vietnamese owners well and sat down without ordering anything. “I have this feeling that I am here in front of my computer every day, for five hours, six hours, seven hours, when I could be in the street,” he said. “When I write, I compare my life to my mother’s, for example, and I think: What are you writing when she actually had to live it? From age 25 to 45 she was with a macho tyrant” — Louis’s father — “who took away her freedom, and you, what are you going to do, just write?”

Louis speaks of the decision to leave Hallencourt as the “tragedy of escape”: “It was a failure to conform to the norms of masculinity,” he said. But certainly, he had ambitions. [*The Malaysian writer Tash Aw*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html), who has become close friends with Louis and is 20 years older, regularly spent months at a time in Hallencourt with his French partner, who is from the region. One day, “when there was still a bakery in town,” Aw told me, his partner came home and said to him: “There’s a 15-year-old, you know the guy we see walking around the street, who is working there on Saturdays. He says he wants to become a writer. Maybe you can go and talk to him.” Aw said, laughing, that he replied: “You know what? I’m finishing my novel. I really just cannot deal with this — it’s Hallencourt, it’s never going to have a writer.” Years later, after Louis published his first novel, Aw ran into him at a literary festival in Lillehammer, Norway. He introduced himself and told Louis that he already knew who he was, and that he knew his entire family too.

There seems a certain ambivalence to Louis’s life now, an appreciation of and pleasure in accomplishment coupled with a measure of guilt about what it has brought him. He constantly turns the conversation to the needs of others, as if to reassure himself of his own intentions. Louis’s relationship with his family has become a kind of casualty of his immense success, subject to a public scrutiny that is no less difficult for being expected. After “The End of Eddy” was published, French journalists descended on Hallencourt to fact-check Louis’s portrait of the town. The Courrier Picard, a regional newspaper based in Amiens, filmed a short clip, which was picked up by a national broadcaster, with Louis’s mother and younger siblings appearing shellshocked and protesting that they didn’t recognize themselves in the book’s portrayals. Louis accused the journalists of exhibiting “racism of class.” He reflected later, however, that while the book had angered his mother, it had actually repaired his relationship with his father. “People surprise you sometimes,” he said. (I did not talk to the family, as they and Louis have understandably become reluctant to speak of the matter publicly and a certain amount of strain still exists among some family members. He worried aloud that I would publish the location of his apartment in Paris, and that one of his brothers would find out where he lived.)

When I attended a talk that Louis gave with Aw in Berlin last September, Aw tried to ask him about his relationship with his father. “I have seen you with your father, a little-known secret, but I have,” Aw said. “And I was trying to figure out when I saw you what your relationship was.” Louis deflected. “You ask very difficult questions,” he said. “I thought we were going to talk about literature, which is much easier.” Everyone laughed. Louis retreated into a consideration of how his father’s willingness to conform to masculine norms has made the relationships in his life more difficult. Aw eventually gave up and moved on. At another point in the talk, Louis likened publishing his book to an experience described in one of Aw’s own novels, in which a journalist tells the story of a poor migrant who has committed a murder. The journalist writes a book about the migrant’s story and throws a chic literary party to celebrate its publication. The migrant comes to the party, but he doesn’t really understand what’s going on around him. “Sometimes I have the feeling that the books I am writing are a party for the people I used to live with, but that they cannot attend,” Louis said.

It’s a complication of the genre that cropped up again with Louis’s second novel, [*“History of Violence,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) published in 2016. Also autobiographical, “History of Violence” is a subtle account of the interplay of race, class and the social systems that determine them. It recounts a harrowing incident that took place in 2012, in Paris in the early morning hours of Christmas. Louis was coming home from celebrating with Eribon when he was approached by a man in the street near his apartment. After some persistence, the man, who has Algerian roots and is named Reda, persuades Édouard (as the book calls Louis) to take him home. They make love, several times, and afterward, Édouard gets up to take a shower. When he returns, his phone and iPad are missing. Édouard tries to be gracious, asking Reda simply to return everything and they can pretend nothing ever happened. But Reda becomes defensive, his fury escalating into a brutal assault. He repeatedly rapes Édouard, at one point attempting to strangle him with a scarf and pulling a gun.

I spoke to Louis for the first time by phone, a few weeks before we met in Amiens, and he told me that he would not answer questions about the real-life Reda B., who was arrested and placed in custody in 2016, just as the book came out. Louis must have been in a cafe as we spoke; I heard him order an apricot juice. He told me that he had been unable to sleep or work for three weeks after being questioned about the rape. “He’s some guy who destroyed something inside me,” Louis said over the phone. “It’s a sad story for everyone, and that’s all.” Louis does not believe in incarceration or in any kind of repressive function of the state, having seen, by way of his own family members, how the French penal system compounds the cruelty of already-cruel lives. In “History of Violence,” he expresses a profound discomfort with the decision he ultimately makes to file a criminal complaint (which happened in 2012, before Édouard Louis was Édouard Louis). In the real case, Reda B. sued Louis, unsuccessfully, for “infringement on the right to presumption of innocence.” In 2016, he also requested a face-to-face meeting with Louis, which is often done in the French judicial system. Louis, having already gone through the details four times, declined. The somewhat spiteful reaction of the French press was to wonder why he would refuse to confront his aggressor. When a judge announced last year that the case would be heard by three judges instead of a jury, the newspaper Libération ran a long article pondering the effects that the already-published literary version of events might have on the judiciary fact-finding process, while also questioning the novel’s veracity. Louis denounced the paper for perpetuating a culture of disbelieving rape victims.

Reda B.’s trial was supposed to begin this March. In the months immediately preceding it, a stage adaptation of Louis’s novel played at a theater in central Paris. Reda B.’s lawyer went on a popular radio program to rebuke the spectacle as “indecent” and question Louis’s literary motives; Louis’s circle was aghast at this public degradation of someone who had been the victim of a crime.

“History of Violence” is perhaps Louis’s most searching work, precisely because the reader can see him struggling with such dissonances. In the novel, Édouard seeks respite after the assault and goes to visit his sister Clara, who still lives in northern France, thinking a few days in the countryside will revive him. He immediately regrets the decision: “I don’t know what I’m doing here,” Louis writes. “The last time, I got into the same car, . . . this depressing landscape made me nauseated.” But he is also there to settle accounts with his sister. And she plans to do the same with him. He is made to feel that he has abandoned his family; his sister even accuses him of secretly hoping as a child that his family would not accept him: “If we said that, it would distance him from us, because we would hold his secret against him, and then he could tell other people, in his arrogant way: You see, it’s their fault if I distance myself from them.” Then Louis does something rather ingenious. He allows Clara to tell the story of the rape, recounting it to her husband, while Édouard listens from the next room. In asides to the reader, he notes whenever she says something he thinks is wrong. Louis the writer seems to be trying to correct for the way in which he has been able to tell others’ stories while they remain silent, unable to offer their own version. Louis told me that with “History of Violence,” he wanted to write an autobiography in which someone else tells his story. “It puts me at the level of a character, like all the other characters in the story,” he said. “I’m not the subjective voice, above all the others, but rather part of the story like everyone else.”

Louis’s third novel, “Who Killed My Father,” was published in France in 2018. In it, Louis took aim at the last three French administrations, singling out specific policies and their effects on the life of his father. “Politics,” Louis says, “is controlled by those who are least affected by politics.” To be bourgeois “is to learn to ignore others and to be OK with that.”

As it happened, a few months after the publication of “Who Killed My Father,” French citizens who live in parts of the country that resemble Hallencourt began to don the traffic vests they are required to keep in their cars when commuting to the jobs that have moved out of their small communities. People gathered at roundabouts in Paris to hurl epithets at President Emmanuel Macron that, at times, eerily echoed Louis’s own. Louis was in New York at the time, but when he saw images of the protests, he flew back immediately and joined them, denouncing their depiction in the press. The street movements, wide-ranging and deeply contentious, arguably amounted to the most serious setback for Macron’s administration up to that point. Nearly a year later, in an incident that stunned the nation, a university student in Lyon set himself on fire to protest the precarity of his present and future. He had posted a note on social media that read, in part, “I accuse Macron, Hollande, Sarkozy and the European Union.”

Much of Louis’s political activity is undertaken as part of a trio, with Didier Eribon and his partner, the political philosopher Geoffroy de Lagasnerie. The three form a kind of intellectual triumvirate, critiquing one another’s work and sometimes co-signing articles, but also taking vacations together, posting photos of their travels and street marches on Instagram, their life a kind of glamorous 21st-century update of the Paris engagée of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus. (Eribon and de Lagasnerie appear as characters in “History of Violence.”) The three are frequently portrayed in the French press as a single unit. (“It’s not true!” Eribon insisted to me, though when I suggested to him that it was more envy than animus, he laughed. De Lagasnerie, who is 38, described the relationship as a “factory that mutualizes our knowledge.”) They often cite Michel Foucault’s dictum that friendship is a way of life; Louis has said that he would never have written a word without it.

The German director [*Thomas Ostermeier adapted Eribon’s memoirs for the stage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) in 2017, and then [*turned to “History of Violence.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html) Louis’s work reads, at times, like a performance of his emotions, and it’s easy to see how the text might turn into stage directions. As a child, he found the theater to be a natural refuge. There, his habit of role-playing (at being straight and macho) could be transformed into “a place in which others would see me,” he said. Like many kids from small towns with nothing else to do, he joined a drama club in middle school, partly to avoid being alone during recess. But enacting possible worlds also brought its discomforts. During high school, in Amiens, his class attended a production of Tony Kushner’s “Angels in America,” which showed men having sex together onstage. Fifteen years old at the time, Louis got up in the middle of the show, to announce angrily that he didn’t want to watch this “fag stuff,” and left the auditorium. “I’ll never forget it,” Louis says. “It was a whirlwind of emotion. The theater really forced me to face the part of myself that I did not want to acknowledge.”

“History of Violence,” is now part of the regular repertoire at the Schaubühne on Kurfurstendamm in Berlin. Ostermeier’s solution to the complicated narrative devices was to place a microphone at a front corner of the stage that the characters could grab in order to speak directly to the audience when so inclined (a live drum set on one side of the stage mimics the tensions between the characters). The German actor Laurenz Laufenberg plays a sweet, 20-year-old Édouard in a trim pink sweater and clean-fitting jeans, his beechwood hair neatly cut; Renato Schuch, in baggy streetwear, is his lover-turned-aggressor, Reda.

Laufenberg and Schuch told me that they were unsure how, or even whether, to stage the rape, wondering whether it might not be better to use some kind of image or metonymy to suggest what happens. But Ostermeier’s adaptation establishes in the opening seconds that some kind of chilling disaster will occur, and the actors decided that to not play that out would frustrate the audience. Then Louis attended their first week of rehearsals, and they had to perform the story in front of him. “I was always not really sure if I should do it like I was doing it,” Schuch told me. “Because emotionally, it’s a lot of pain coming up, and I was always concerned about him.”

When I attended a performance in Berlin, I found the rape scene complicated but necessary. The violence is blunt and unforgiving, and Schuch told me later that he had slapped Laufenberg in a way that wasn’t choreographed into the scene, taking Laufenberg by surprise, which he later regretted. But he acknowledged that being forced to improvise made them burnish their performance. Beneath the stage lights the two bodies, with all their social and racial markings, seemed to transcend the particulars of their circumstances, and I had the feeling that I was watching, all at once, many other acts of violence.

In his work, Louis always hews to stories that are strictly personal while also insisting that the experiences they delineate are collective. “The discussion about who can tell a story,” Laufenberg said, “it’s so interesting because Édouard said to us, more or less, It doesn’t matter if you’re gay or you’re older or anything.” The actor who plays Reda is not North African, and Laufenberg isn’t gay. “I totally see the point if there’s a minority that has no voice outside the majority world, then you need a voice, and it’s so important that they speak for themselves, that they can speak at all,” Laufenberg said. But he didn’t necessarily agree that others shouldn’t be allowed to tell that story, too, and Louis almost prefers it otherwise. “Why is it that the losers of the story always have to carry their loss on their backs when they didn’t choose it?” Louis often says. “Other people are responsible for the suffering of others.”

Last fall, Louis, Eribon and de Lagasnerie were in Berlin for the city’s annual Internationales Literaturfestival. They had been invited to give a talk entitled “France Under Macron.” The lecture was in a gallery on Berlin’s Museum Island, a superlative example of the towering neo-Classical style beloved of the German state. Many of the German members of the audience seemed unaware that the three were some of Macron’s most vocal critics.

As Eribon detailed in his memoirs, when he was growing up, his parents supported the French Communist Party, not because as factory workers they yearned for any kind of Soviet-style system but because the party gave them political weight within the system. In the late 1980s, when Eribon called home to speak with his mother, he realized that his parents were voting for the far-right National Front. They had not become right-wing ideologues overnight, but, as the Communist Party disintegrated, the National Front became the only organization that put pressure on the political establishment from the outside. The National Front, Eribon argued, had staged a kind of transference, replacing the sense of collective belonging provided by the Communist Party (“we the workers”) with the collectivity of the nation (“we the French”).

Louis’s parents, a generation younger than Eribon’s, had always been National Front voters; they came of age not in industrial France but in postindustrial France, no longer workers but out-of-work workers who had become dependent on the state. Louis got involved in politics when he was a teenager, though many of his early convictions were adopted as a way to rebel against his family. When he arrived in Amiens, he became a member of the Socialist Party. Soon thereafter, he joined a movement to protest against a reform proposed by the French education minister and was invited on the local news. His father proudly asked his friends over to watch Louis’s appearance on TV. But once on camera, Louis announced that he would not, as the program had invited him to do, speak about the proposed reforms, but rather about undocumented students who were being denied their rights. His mother, he recalled, later told him that his father exploded, humiliated in front of his friends, who were hardly keen to sympathize with the plight of immigrants.

Louis is an impassioned public speaker, his gentleness dissolving into an intensity of purpose. In front of an audience of several hundred packed into stadium-style seating, the moderator in Berlin mused that the last German chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, was the son of a laborer and had gotten his education at night school. She wondered whether such a thing was imaginable in France.

“The question of class seems, to me, a very important one,” Louis said. Macron had taken an increasingly hard line on asylum, which, in conjunction with the E.U. policy of giving money to offshore countries, especially Libya, to block migration, has led to thousands of deaths, not to mention the trafficking, torture and enslavement of would-be migrants. The Mediterranean, according to the U.N.’s migration agency, is now the deadliest border on Earth. In another example, the encounters of French police with the Yellow Vest protesters in late 2018 — videos showed riot police dragging protesters through the street, and 25 people lost an eye — prompted Amnesty International to call for an end to excessive use of violence by law enforcement in France, and in January, the Paris prosecutor opened an investigation. And yet the coverage of Macron, particularly internationally, and especially in Germany and the United States, continued to be overwhelmingly positive. Certainly, there was nothing resembling the outcry that followed the border policies of Donald Trump.

“When Emmanuel Macron speaks, he uses the language of the bourgeoisie,” Louis continued. “He has the body of the bourgeoisie, the culture of the bourgeoisie, and so the lesson is that this violence becomes acceptable when it is delivered by the bourgeoisie.”

The coverage of the Yellow Vests in the French press, on the other hand, had been, with some clear exceptions, condemnatory and dismissive. Eribon, at 66, is a more hesitant speaker than Louis. He noted that journalism is one of the most closed professions in Europe, accessible mostly to children of the upper middle class. Last winter, a French TV crew was assaulted by a group of Yellow Vest protesters in Rouen, a town not far from Amiens. Such attacks had become increasingly common. Afterward, in a gesture of self-critique, Libération, the most left-leaning of mainstream newspapers in France, conducted an internal survey: among 112 of its reporters, 81 had at least one parent in the highest income bracket. About 90 percent of the journalists who appeared on TV were upper middle class. “Journalists don’t need to be ordered to like Macron,” Eribon told me. “They recognize themselves in him, they come from the same milieus. They campaigned for him.”

At the panel, Eribon continued on the topic of the Yellow Vests: “How do you expect journalists to understand, to have a sort of spontaneous sympathy for these people?” The journalists come from a country where the “people” are entrepreneurs and C.E.O.s of start-ups; suddenly, they were faced with a group of people with a vocabulary, a language, a mode of expression out of reality TV. “German newspapers published the fact that the Yellow Vests were anti-Semitic,” Eribon went on. They all carried the story of the well-known French Jewish intellectual, Alain Finkielkraut, who had been assaulted on a sidewalk during a protest last February. Someone in a yellow vest called him a “dirty Zionist [expletive],” and told him to “go back to Tel Aviv.” In July, one of the harassers was sentenced to two months in jail for hate speech. But Finkielkraut himself has a long history of complaining about the “culture” of Muslim immigrants, arguing that “the colonial project sought to educate, to bring civilization to savages.” Most recently, he lamented that no one from the banlieues came out to mourn the death of the French rock star Johnny Hallyday — a litmus test, he said, for being French. Finkielkraut hosts a program on one of France’s most prestigious radio channels and is a member of the Académie Française. He has never been to jail.

“Alain Finkielkraut is a racist ideologue who has a radio show every Saturday morning to which he invites every racist and fascist that France has to offer — members of the extreme right, even anti-Semites,” Eribon said. “I’m not saying that you shouldn’t criticize. But it seems to me that if you criticize the one, then you also criticize the other, who is on the radio every Saturday morning for 35 years.”

Louis, Eribon and de Lagasnerie are united in putting pressure on politicians and policies that go against ***working-class*** interests, upholding what they feel is a long-abandoned social critique from the left. In December French railway workers, in response to [*pension reforms proposed by Macron*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html), began what would become the longest transport strike in French history; they were soon joined by teachers and lawyers. Amid extraordinary scenes of ballet dancers performing in protest and firefighters clashing with the riot police that lined the intersections, the three writers were in the streets, posing for photos, chins raised. They donated money to participants in the strike, they appeared with local leftist politicians and, of course, they wrote.

Reforms to retirement plans were, the three argued, one element of a larger, decades-long push to dismantle the country’s hard-won social protections. But it was a particularly telling development, they believed — proof, if more were needed, that contemporary France had lost its way: “There is undoubtedly nothing more efficient for understanding how the social world works than, quite simply, to look at who dies before whom,” Louis posted on Twitter. “We forget it too often: Politics is a question of life and death.”

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER ANDESON) (MM49); Top: Édouard Louis’s childhood home in 2010. Bottom: Louis, then called Eddy Bellegueule, at 10. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDOUARD LOUIS) (MM51); Stage adaptations of Louis’s novels ‘‘Who Killed My Father,’’ top, and ‘‘History of Violence. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RAYMOND DELALAND/SIPA, VIA AP; TEDDY WOLFF.) (MM52)

**Related Articles**

* [*‘The End of Eddy’ Captures a Savage Childhood and a Global Movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html)

1. [*For the French Author Édouard Louis, His Books Are His Weapon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html)

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[***On Politics: Iowa Caucus Edition!***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y4B-52W1-JBG3-62DM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** It’s really, finally, happening. This is your morning tip sheet.

**Body**

Good morning and welcome to On Politics, a daily political analysis of the 2020 elections based on reporting by New York Times journalists.

[*Sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) to get On Politics in your inbox every weekday.

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — On the morning after Hillary Clinton lost in November 2016, I stood wedged between television cameras, in the back of a hotel ballroom, and watched a Democratic breakdown.

Ashen-faced Clinton aides stood in stunned silence. Supporters wiped tears from their eyes. A sense of shock hung heavy in the room.

I kept returning to that moment as I traveled across Iowa in recent days as this Democratic primary moves, finally, toward votes being cast and counted with tonight’s Iowa caucuses.

The 2016 election was a turning point in Democratic politics; a deeply painful event after which nothing would ever be the same. Even now, that trauma lingers.

As the candidates made their way across Iowa, the 2016 race was the subtext — and often just the text — of their closing messages.

“The less 2020 resembles 2016 in our party and our country, the better,” Pete Buttigieg told voters. Amy Klobuchar pledged to build a “beautiful blue wall of Democratic votes,” citing her tour of “the states that we should have won in 2016.”

Even some of the political drama feels like a rerun: Some supporters of Joe Biden are fretting that some backers of Bernie Sanders may disrupt the caucuses tonight, citing old intraparty anger about the 2016 primary.

Yet, as much as Democrats cannot seem to escape their past, the country’s political story has moved on. And now, on the cusp of the caucuses, the party faces its most significant decision since that crushing defeat: Does that 2016 loss, and all that followed in the Trump era, lead Democrats to dream big or dream safe?

“I’m torn between, do you vote for what you really want, or do you vote for what you think can happen?” Sara Curtin-Delara, a teacher from Coralville, told me, as she managed her 3-year-old son and listened to Klobuchar addressing a crowded hotel ballroom.

Biden hopes voters like Curtin-Delara go with safe. He’s closing his Iowa campaign arguing for experience and stability, casting himself as a steady hand in a dangerous world and a divided nation. Buttigieg has adopted a slightly younger variation of the same argument, saying the biggest risk for Democrats is “to look to the same Washington playbook.”

Sanders and Elizabeth Warren say the 2016 loss delivered a different lesson: Democrats cannot win unless they go big.

For Warren, the mantra plastered on her mint-green campaign signs is “dream big, fight hard.” Sanders promises to bring together a movement of millions, urging voters to have “the courage” to take on Wall Street greed, corruption and the military-industrial complex.

Even in the final hours, after years of angst and agonizing, Democrats still seemed slightly immobilized over how best to move past their old electoral wounds.

Curtin-Delara, who said she was choosing between Warren and Klobuchar, wondered if she should back the woman less likely to succeed in the caucuses to prolong her presence in the race. That, she argued, could give Democrats more time to pick the right candidate this time around.

“For the caucuses, it’s like, who do I want to keep in the race until tomorrow?” she said. “We can’t mess this up.”

Photo of the day

It was time for final preparations on Sunday in Ames, Iowa, where Warren supporters organized caucus cards at a “Get Out the Caucus” rally.

A final snapshot from the Iowa trail

Our politics reporters were fanned out across Iowa this weekend, attending dozens of events and following the major candidates as they made their final pushes. We asked each reporter for a quick appraisal of their candidate’s campaign.

* [*Katie Glueck*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline): I’ve been on the Biden bus for the last few days, and the key test for him here boils down to two questions: 1) Is beating Trump the top priority? 2) Do Iowa Democrats buy Biden’s argument that he is the best-positioned candidate to do that? The Biden campaign bet goes like this: Democrats here may have thrilled to the expansive policy proposals of Warren and Sanders, relished the idea of a fresh face like Buttigieg or felt affinity for their neighbor from Minnesota, Klobuchar. But ultimately, they want to defeat the president, and believe Biden can do that. Yet over the last week, Biden’s crowds have often been thin compared to his rivals’. Party officials have quietly noted gaps in his campaign organization. And poll numbers suggest a volatile race. Will moderate voters come home to Biden? Or does that vote splinter, raising questions about Biden’s message — that he is the most electable candidate?
* [*Sydney Ember*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline): Sanders has distilled his closing message here in Iowa down to one word: turnout. It’s historically been a theme of his campaigns, but never more so than now: To win in Iowa — and in the general election, should it get to that — he needs more people to come out and vote. Sanders has a particular set of voters in mind. For his entire political career, he has gambled that he can get ***working-class*** voters and young people, both groups that typically do not turn out in large numbers, to vote — and to vote for him, because his message speaks to them. If he can get these people to caucus on Monday night, he has said repeatedly, he will win.

1. [*Astead W. Herndon*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline): Warren’s final pitch in Iowa comes down to converting undecided voters to her message of unity. The campaign has largely ceded the idea that Sanders will own the committed left wing, and therefore it must make up ground by pulling in more pragmatic voter. That’s why she’s largely abandoned the talk of what her plans entail: She started the election motivating people on big change, but her final pitch was centered on her ability to win through uniting the party around a message of anti-corruption.
2. [*Reid J. Epstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline): Buttigieg hopes Democrats are sick of relitigating the 2016 primary. The 38-year-old’s big message in the past week has stressed the need to “turn the page” on both the long-ago past and the party’s still-raw wounds. It’s less about ideology (he’s openly courting Republicans) and more about tapping into how people feel. It’s a savvy way of dismissing Sanders and Biden in the same breath. Buttigieg usually follows it up by reminding audiences that every newly elected Democratic president since John F. Kennedy had the sheen of somebody new to the national political scene. With three septuagenarians as his top rivals, Buttigieg hopes that means his turn is now.
3. [*Nick Corasaniti*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline): For Klobuchar, the final pitch has been simple: Iowa, I’m one of you, and I can win. She has been attracting crowds in the 200 to 300 range, with a Saturday morning event at a brewery topping 500 people (and forcing me to file my story from the top of a brew canister). But for Klobuchar to be successful on caucus night, she needs Iowans to buy into her argument that her ability to win in Minnesota will translate to other Midwestern states — a “big blue wall” that can turn back the Trump tide.
4. [*Trip Gabriel*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline): At a Mexican restaurant in Boone on Saturday, amid a crowd duly packed with millennials — so-called digital natives — there was Andrew Yang, offering his biting critique of the digital economy. Stuck in low single digits in Iowa polls, he has little chance of emerging from the caucuses with delegates. No matter how long his candidacy lasts, his ideas seem destined to have an enduring impact on American politics. At the end of his appearance, a graduate student told him he used to be a Republican, and that he had never donated to a Democrat; then he pressed Yang to take the $35 he had in his wallet. It reminded me of Bernie Sanders’s first visit to Iowa as a presidential candidate in 2015, when a hat was passed among supporters who filled it with loose bills.

Compton’s mayor endorses Bloomberg

While the rest of the candidates duke it out in Iowa, Michael Bloomberg is stumping across California. It’s voting day there too, sort of — early ballots will be mailed to millions of California voters today ahead of the state’s Super Tuesday primary. The former New York City mayor is making stops in Sacramento and Fresno before ending his day in Compton.

He will pick up the endorsement of Aja Brown, the mayor of Compton, a rising star in Democratic circles. Brown is one of several black California mayors backing Bloomberg, joining London Breed of San Francisco and Michael Tubbs of Stockton. With 415 delegates (10 times as many as in Iowa) California is one of the most important states in Bloomberg’s unusual bid for the Democratic nomination.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Sanders Ends Bid As Biden Gets Set To Battle Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YMC-9XM1-DXY4-X0Y8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Mr. Sanders, a democratic socialist making his second run for the White House, withdrew after a series of losses to Joseph R. Biden Jr., who emerges as the presumptive nominee for the general election.

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont ended his presidential candidacy on Wednesday, concluding a quest that elevated him as a standard-bearer of American liberalism and clearing the way for a general election between the presumptive Democratic nominee, Joseph R. Biden Jr., and President Trump at a time of national crisis.

In a live-streamed speech, Mr. Sanders, eloquent but without his characteristic spark, cast his decision in the broader context of the fight against the coronavirus. ''I cannot in good conscience continue to mount a campaign that cannot win and which would interfere with the important work required of all of us in this difficult hour,'' Mr. Sanders said, adding, ''While this campaign is coming to an end, our movement is not.''

If Mr. Biden, the former vice president, can now lay claim to the Democratic nomination, he still faces considerable challenges in uniting the party and mobilizing a broad base of voters for the November election. Unlike Mr. Sanders, Mr. Biden inspired little enthusiasm among young voters, nor did he develop signature policy proposals. He triumphed because many voters rejected Mr. Sanders's policy agenda as too far to the left and prohibitively expansive, and were convinced that Mr. Biden had the best chance to beat Mr. Trump in November.

To motivate liberal Democrats who find him frustratingly conventional, Mr. Biden, 77, will most likely need to do far more to articulate an agenda on foundational Democratic issues like health care and climate change.

Those issues are central to Mr. Sanders's candidacy, and in recent days, as Mr. Sanders began to consider dropping out more seriously, his aides intensified talks to find common ground with the Biden campaign. Mr. Sanders ultimately became satisfied that there was movement in directions that he wanted, a top aide said. The Biden campaign is expected to roll out a series of policy agreements with Mr. Sanders on health care and other issues -- potentially including student loans -- starting on Thursday, according to three people with direct knowledge of their plans.

The two camps were still negotiating the details on Wednesday, and while Mr. Biden is not expected to embrace Mr. Sanders's full-throated call for ''Medicare for all,'' for example, they are striving to arrive at positions with which they are both comfortable.

Shortly after Mr. Sanders spoke on Wednesday, Mr. Biden issued a statement thanking his opponent while acknowledging the need to draw Mr. Sanders's loyal base into his coalition. ''I'll be reaching out to you,'' Mr. Biden wrote. ''You will be heard by me.''

''And to your supporters," he added, ''I make the same commitment: I see you, I hear you, and I understand the urgency of what it is we have to get done in this country.''

Though Mr. Sanders made it clear on Wednesday that he viewed Mr. Biden as the party's 2020 nominee, he said he would remain on the ballot in states that still have primaries to try to gather delegates -- a move that could give him leverage to influence the Democratic platform and continue carrying his message.

Mr. Sanders's departure from the race is a striking turnaround for a candidate who less than two months ago was the clear front-runner, after finishing in a virtual tie for first in Iowa and winning in New Hampshire and Nevada.

But in a race reshaped, and eclipsed, by the escalating coronavirus crisis, Mr. Sanders faced no realistic path to the nomination after a series of lopsided losses to Mr. Biden, beginning in South Carolina in late February and culminating with victories by Mr. Biden in crucial states like Michigan and Florida last month.

Persistent and unyielding in pushing his agenda, Mr. Sanders is loath to admit defeat; his withdrawal represents a tacit concession that without a chance of overtaking Mr. Biden, he would have more leverage to advance his priorities if he ceded the race and joined forces with his rival.

His exit is also a sharp contrast to his bid in 2016, when he stayed in an increasingly acrimonious race against Hillary Clinton even after it became clear she would be the nominee. Talks between the Biden and Sanders camps this time around were eased by the cordial relationship between the two principals. Mr. Sanders has told people close to him that he appreciated the fact that Mr. Biden did not overtly pressure him to quit after Super Tuesday.

Mr. Sanders also talked to former President Barack Obama at least twice in the last month, a person familiar with the discussions said, with Mr. Obama praising the Vermont senator's campaign and emphasizing the need to unite against Mr. Trump. Mr. Obama, who has told friends he hopes to ease the integration of Sanders voters into the party, made no effort to pressure him to leave.

As Mr. Sanders pursued the White House for a second time, he promised that he could transform the electorate, bringing new voters under the Democratic tent, but that goal eluded him. Even Mr. Sanders has lamented that he was unable to produce a surge in young voters.

In early primaries this year, he also failed to show that he had remedied a crucial weakness from his 2016 run: a lack of support from black voters, a vital base of the Democratic Party. In state after state across the South -- Alabama, the Carolinas, Mississippi, Virginia -- he was unable to chip away at Mr. Biden's strong support among African-Americans.

In many ways, Mr. Sanders never overcame the widely held view among Democrats that he was a political outlier, a self-described democratic socialist who proudly proclaimed himself to be an independent senator from Vermont rather than a member of the party establishment.

Mr. Sanders championed liberal policies like ''Medicare for all'' and tuition-free four-year public colleges aimed at lifting up America's ***working class***, but he faced opposition from many party leaders, elected officials and major donors, as well as large numbers of moderate voters who saw him as too far left.

Mr. Sanders never accepted that argument. In recent weeks he said repeatedly that he had won the ideological debate, asserting that a strong majority of Democrats supported his progressive agenda.

But during a striking news conference in Burlington, Vt., last month, he also acknowledged that he was losing the electability battle to Mr. Biden, saying voters had made clear that they thought the former vice president was the best candidate to beat Mr. Trump.

The president immediately tried to sow discord among Democrats. In a Twitter post he blamed Mr. Sanders's inability to win Super Tuesday states on his ideological rival, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and then invited Sanders supporters to ''come to the Republican Party.'' At his evening news briefing Mr. Trump was more pointed toward Mr. Biden, saying ''It amazes me that President Obama hasn't supported Sleepy Joe. It just hasn't happened. When's it going to happen?''

Indeed, Mr. Trump's penchant for no-holds-barred political combat presents another challenge for Mr. Biden. Some Democrats question whether he can withstand the kind of bitingly personal onslaught that Mr. Trump is certain to direct his way in the general election. The president's efforts to tar Mr. Biden with the overseas business dealings of his son, Hunter, already upended the campaign once and led to Mr. Trump's impeachment.

Mr. Sanders, 78, leaves the campaign having almost single-handedly moved the Democratic Party to the left. He also transformed the way Democratic campaigns raised money, eschewing big fund-raisers and instead relying on an army of small-dollar donors.

But as he ascended to the top of the field in February, establishment Democrats scrambled to block his path, convinced his far-reaching proposals would alienate great swaths of the electorate and make him an easy target for Mr. Trump.

Moderate candidates in the race who could not overcome Mr. Biden dropped out and endorsed him just before Super Tuesday, on March 3, helping him sweep 10 of 14 states on the biggest voting day of the primary. That led to a wave of new endorsements and a remarkable coalescing around Mr. Biden that Mr. Sanders could not match on the left.

Mr. Sanders's insistence on Wednesday that he wants to amass delegates to exert influence on the platform has convinced some Democrats that a scaled-down or even virtual convention this summer might be preferable to a traditional event. If the nomination is conferred virtually, the argument goes, Mr. Biden's campaign can control the platform deliberations and program entirely, and ensure minimal dissent from Sanders supporters.

The networks and cable stations would still carry whatever speeches Mr. Biden's advisers plan and there would be no live audience to interrupt the proceedings.

For most of his campaign Mr. Sanders largely stuck to his familiar message, battling establishment forces rather than his immediate rivals. Amid a slump in the polls in the fall, he suffered a heart attack while campaigning in Las Vegas, a startling event that threatened to upend his bid.

But in a remarkable turn of events -- as he stood on the debate stage just two weeks after his heart attack -- he received the endorsement of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, one of the most visible liberal congresswomen and a star of the left. It helped jump-start his candidacy just as it appeared in jeopardy of collapsing.

The endorsement helped carry him through the late fall and early winter, and in January, as the first voting approached, Mr. Sanders was surging. When he dominated the field in the Nevada caucuses in February there was suddenly talk that he might run away with the nomination.

But his loss in South Carolina to Mr. Biden, who had emerged as the leading moderate in the race, brought his momentum to an abrupt halt.

Glenn Thrush, Alexander Burns, Jonathan Martin and Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting.Reporting was contributed by Glenn Thrush, Reid J. Epstein, Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Bernie Sanders told supporters that their cause would go on. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Senator Bernie Sanders at rallies last month in Los Angeles, top

St. Paul, Minn., left

and Ann Arbor, Mich., with Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, whose endorsement of Mr. Sanders had helped rejuvenate his candidacy after his heart attack in the fall. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A22)

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Jason Furman; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64R9-H611-DXY4-X1J8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 9359 words

**Highlight:** A conversation with the economist

**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Jason Furman. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

EZRA KLEIN: I’m Ezra Klein, and this is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

[MUSIC PLAYING]

So I’m going to be honest about my motivations for this conversation. This one is borne of frustration. I’m frustrated covering the economy right now. I’m frustrated by the conversation around the economy right now. There’s this palpable desire for it to be just one thing. For pundits like me, for analysts, for economists, for politicians to be able to wrap it in the comfort of a single narrative. It’s a good economy. It’s a bad economy.

But no, no, it isn’t. And we don’t like that. We don’t like that it’s a confusing economy. We know how to talk about booms, like in the ’90s. We know how to talk about busts like after the ’08 financial crisis. We know how to talk about normalcy, about stagnation, a bit of progress, a bit of backsliding.

What we don’t know how to talk about is contradictory extremes coexisting together, but that is the economy we have right now. An economy that defies a lot of our models. An economy that surprised a lot of our forecasters.

Last year, the US economy grew 5.7 percent, the largest annual increase since 1984. Since 1984. Unemployment plummeted. Workers, and especially low-income workers, they saw massive wage gains. New businesses formed at record rates. Poverty fell below prepandemic levels. It’s wild. Savings skyrocketed. Bankruptcies are way down. This is great news and not expected, not inevitable and definitely not to be taken for granted politically or economically. Although, many are sure as hell trying.

But then there is inflation — also real. Year and year inflation is running at 7 percent, the highest rate in decades. It’s going up now faster than workers’ wages are, at least for most workers. And it’s not just price increases. It’s shortages of goods, of workers that was supposed to be temporary. It’s empty shelves, shipping delays, long lines, just a sense of worse service and a worse experience in the economy.

Obviously, a lot of that is mediated by coronavirus. But how much? How much? And I think it’s important to say this — that most forecasters, and economists, predictions got this wrong. The forecasts and the market thought inflation was going to be low. They thought unemployment was going to be a lot higher. So new thinking is needed and it has to begin with a confrontation with the economy as it actually is, which is why I wanted to have Jason Furman on to talk about this.

Furman is an economist at Harvard University. He was chair of Barack Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers from 2013 to 2017. But more than that, there are two reasons I thought he was the right guy for this conversation. First, he was closer than most to calling the economy right. He certainly took the risk of inflation more seriously than most did. And second, he’s been far better than most at admitting and tracking the complexity of the economy — its fundamentally confusing and uncertain and contradictory nature right now.

So this is a wonky conversation. I just want to skate on the surface of this thing. And I also want to note it was taped before the new data from January, which just showed a huge amount of new jobs added, so I think it fits what we’re talking about here quite well. But if you’re here, I think wonky economic conversations are probably what you like. So buckle up, buttercups.

As always, my email [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com) for guest suggestions, thoughts, recommendations of things I should read, or listen to, or watch. Here is Jason Furman.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Jason Furman, welcome to the show.

JASON FURMAN: Great to be with you.

EZRA KLEIN: So how do you tell the story of the U.S. economy over the past two years?

JASON FURMAN: It’s a crazy story. When Covid hit, the economy just collapsed. A very different type of collapse than you would normally get in a recession, something more like a natural disaster. At the time, the big question was, how long would this last? Would it be like a natural disaster, where you just pop right back once you contain the disaster, or would it be more like a financial crisis, which tends to have very lingering effects?

We’ve snapped back a lot further and a lot faster than I would have expected when, Ezra, you and I started talking about this when the pandemic hit. We have an amazingly low unemployment rate after such devastation a year and a half ago.

EZRA KLEIN: If I go back to that conversation we had — now, it feels like 1,000 years ago — but if I go back to that conversation more towards the beginning of Covid, where we were talking about what would happen to the economy, if you had asked me where we are in January of 2022, I would have guessed a significantly higher unemployment rate. I would have guessed significantly lower wage growth and I would have guessed significantly lower inflation.

Which would be to say, I would have guessed what most forecasters guessed, what the Fed guessed, and what turned out to be wrong. So how do you understand the misses in our predictions over the past couple of years?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah, and Ezra, that’s what almost everyone would have expected. I think there are two sets of misses. And I’m not sure of the exact ratio of the two. The first set of misses was that— by the way, we’re not out of this. We’re really deep into it right now. But in terms of people’s economic behavior, we are mostly out of it. People are mostly spending as normal. They’re living a normal-ish life, or at least they were a month ago. And I think they probably will a month from now.

So when I say out of it, I’m not talking about out of the human tragedy. I’m talking about out of it in the very narrow sense of the economy. So I think one miss was that this had more in common with a natural disaster. That when the virus came, it would derail activity. When the virus either left, or some of the dangers of the virus, or people got used to it, that that would come back.

The second part of it is the policy response was gargantuan. $5 trillion I did not imagine being spent. And basically policymakers said, yes, there’ll be a recession in the economy, but we’re going to give you so much money that for most people you’re actually going to get more money than you would have made if you had stayed in your job. And so they, in some sense, immunized people from the recession. And it’s probably the combination of these two — the natural disaster-like features plus the enormous policy response — that got us where we are today.

EZRA KLEIN: So I want to hold on that for a minute. So between all the stimulus that got passed, some of which was direct transfers to people— like the stimulus checks, the child tax credit, the expanded unemployment insurance, which is now over — some of which was just pumping money into the economy through businesses, through state and local government support, et cetera, the tighter labor market, which has led to a fair amount of wage increases, and the rise in inflation, which was 7 percent year over year in the most recent numbers. What is your guess on whether the median worker is better off today financially than they were a year ago?

JASON FURMAN: It depends what you mean by today. If you mean the year 2021, the median worker probably got about $6,000 of transfers and probably lost a couple thousand dollars to inflation, and so, all in, came out ahead. If you’re looking at where that person was just in the month of December and going into 2022, the transfers are mostly gone, but the inflation is still here. So we’re going into 2022 with about ¾ of workers having wage increases that aren’t sufficient to keep up with inflation and the transfers being in the past.

EZRA KLEIN: So you might expect from that that attitudes on the economy are going to get significantly worse. A lot of people have noted — I’ve noted — this difference between what people say when you ask them right now about their personal financial situation and what they say when you ask them about the economy. And people say my personal financial situation is pretty good. I think the economy is pretty bad. You’re suggesting there that those things might be on a path to converging.

JASON FURMAN: I think that’s possible. I mean, sentiment is affected by the pandemic. It’s affected by partisanship. It’s affected by all sorts of things outside the economy. But I think the economic data does move it as well. And yes, in December, most households had more in their checking account and less rolling over on their credit card balance than they had prior to the pandemic. But with prices what they are and wages not having kept up with them, those cushions — we’ve been seeing them fall month after month after month.

EZRA KLEIN: I’m going to be very honest here about the problem I’m having just even talking about this on the podcast, writing about it in columns. I don’t think I’ve ever covered as bifurcated an economic story as this one. And I genuinely don’t know what sentiment to apply and what weighting to apply when I’m trying to explain it, because some of the data is so good. More new business formation than we’ve ever seen. A poverty rate that fell during this period, which I never would have expected, not in a million years. Genuine, as you know, wage increases. Very high quit and higher rates, which is a good signal that there is at least some worker power, people feeling like they can get better jobs.

But then there is this inflation story, which really, really dominates. And as you say, it does — it’s big enough now. I don’t think that you can wipe it away or say that it’s just going to be overwhelmed by wage increases. And yet, the inflation story also — you could imagine reasons why it might be more temporary.

And so I’m curious where you fall on that. How do you try to balance both genuinely good news — and genuinely good news I think against a counterfactual, right? It’s very easy to imagine us under-powering the response here and people really suffering — versus the risks and genuine problems we see from inflation.

JASON FURMAN: I’m also a little bit confused, Ezra. I don’t have an exact answer to your question, but I’ll try to. First is just glass ⅔ full. A 3.9 percent unemployment rate, workers with this degree of confidence willing to quit, and the fact that wage growth is so fast, and I think inflation probably will come down— I don’t think it’ll come down as much as others do. We can come back to that. Are all a very positive thing. But only one third, because for most people, the most important thing is how much money they have after taxes. And right now the amount they’re getting month after month is lower.

When I evaluate the policy response, I think there’s two different questions. One is would I have voted for the American Rescue Plan in an up-or-down vote? Absolutely yes. A lot of what we’ve seen — the amazing things we’ve seen in terms of, for example, poverty overall and child poverty — and we haven’t gotten the data for 2021. I think that’ll be even better than it was in 2020, and that itself was down— is thanks to the American Rescue Plan.

There’s then another question, though, which is if I could have redesigned it and cut it in half, could I have gotten 95 percent of those benefits and a decent amount less of the cost? I think the answer to that question is probably yes, too. And so then the question is every bit of legislation is imperfect. Everyone always has the way they could have improved it. How harshly should one judge in that circumstance?

EZRA KLEIN: It’s funny to have this conversation with you, because, I mean, we spoke many, many, many times in the 2009 to 2016 period. But particularly in ’09, ’10, ’11, ’12, there was this constant debate discussion over whether the stimulus then could have been bigger. And the thing that lingered was that we did too little at the time when we could do something. And so we underfilled what then got called the output gap in the economy.

And for me, as well as for others, there was a sense of, well, this time err on the side of too much. If you don’t know what’s coming — and you don’t know what’s coming — don’t err on the side of doing too little, because very likely you cannot go back to the well. The idea that the Obama administration had had in 2009 that, well, if the economy’s bad, you can get a lot more — a little bit more passed over time. But there wasn’t a real ability to turn the dials in response to the economic news.

And so I think the Biden administration went in and said we’re going to get almost everything we can get and hope for the best. Do you think that was the wrong political bet to make? Do you think that was too much of fighting the last war?

JASON FURMAN: I think by March it was too much fighting the last war. In 2020, who knew what was going to happen in the economy? If you went back and said in retrospect the CARES Act was too big, you had no idea how to put together a size. A year later things had settled down more. We’re improving more. And to some degree I think the too large, too small is almost the wrong question. You want to ask, how many dollars per month and how many months?

So the CARES Act, which was passed in March 2020, it was a huge amount of money. But the big problem with that was it didn’t last long enough. It was designed for a short, sharp pandemic. Then we had basically no support for the economy. And then we did another round that was a ton of dollars per month and itself didn’t last very long. There’s not really very much assistance going out now when people still need it.

So I would focus in the future on the way to not make the error we made in the financial crisis of too little, not make the error here of doing too much. Try to do more automatic stabilizers, things that last automatically as long as they’re needed, come back when they’re needed, but also go away when they’re not needed as much.

EZRA KLEIN: So these are things like you have expanded U.I., but only so long as unemployment is above X, or you have a boost to this particular plan, but only so long as wages are Y.

JASON FURMAN: Exactly. And in the current circumstances, you might have done it ad hoc based on the number of Covid cases. We had a pandemic unemployment assistance program that if you lost your job because of the pandemic, it would pay you. It’d be really nice to have that back right now.

And I’m not, by the way — I think there are people that would have wanted to write — so this isn’t necessarily criticism — but the better policy would have been any time the caseloads are above blank, if you lose your job because of the pandemic or need to leave it because of the pandemic, you can get unemployment assistance. Because you’re always uncertain. You never know how long these things are going to last. You never know how deep they are. And I think you can make errors in both directions, both too much and too little.

EZRA KLEIN: Let’s drill in on the inflation. So there are a couple schools of thought on what this inflation is and why we have it. Do you want to just describe as fairly as you can what the sides in the debate are?

JASON FURMAN: Sure. One side focuses on what I would call a microeconomic bottom-up perspective, and it tries to explain the anomalous things about different prices. For example, used cars. All the car rental companies dump their fleets in 2020. They needed to put fleets together this year. At the same time, there aren’t a lot of microprocessors and used car prices have gone up. You can then tell other stories like that.

From that perspective, these are a sequence of anomalies, most of them caused by the pandemic. And as the pandemic goes away, the anomalies will go away. And there’s a good reason why the freakish price increases, like in used cars, will go away. That micro bottom-up perspective has tended to be more sanguine, has tended to see a slowdown in inflation right around the corner.

The second perspective is more of a macro top-down perspective. And it says people have a lot of money to spend. We don’t quite know what they’re going to spend it on. Maybe they’ll spend it on cars. Oh, if there aren’t enough cars, then they’ll spend it on something else. And this will all express itself somehow in prices being higher, because people overall want to spend more than the economy is able to produce. And when aggregate demand is too high, aggregate supply is too low, you’ll see inflation.

From a macro perspective, you’re worried that we might have more inflation this year, because labor markets are tighter now than they were a year ago. Inflation expectations matter a lot. They’re higher now than they were a year ago. Wage increases are economywide. It’s not just a used car thing. That will pass through. And that macro perspective would say maybe even expect more inflation in 2022 than 2021.

EZRA KLEIN: So I’ve been spending a lot of time sitting in these two arguments in preparation for this podcast. And they have a strange quality to me, where the deeper you dig into them, the less different they begin to appear. So I want to try to do that here. Let’s start a little bit with the more microeconomics.

Listen, we’ve got a series of supply chain areas that are having pandemic-related problems. And as people try to buy cars or they try to buy a ton of goods, because they got these stimulus checks, you’re just not being able to keep up in this moment and so you have a lot of inflation. But the supply chain is going to adjust and we’re going to figure it out.

I think the key question there is, are you dealing with supply chains that can adjust? Either supply chains that can adjust because the company simply mismeasured or misforecasted demand in the way a lot of other people did or that they will adjust because it is various frictions of the pandemic, disruptions of the pandemic, confusions of the pandemic that have made supply chains rigid.

And that as those ease or as companies become better at adjusting to the pandemic — they got better testing policies in their plants, and they understand how to ship in this period, and they make better forecasts about their own demand — that they’ll go away. So where do you fall on that set of questions? That supply chains are the problem here. They are problem-driven by the pandemic and they will adjust.

JASON FURMAN: I think people have overstated the supply chain part of this. One great example of that is ports. We’ve seen endless footage of all the ships waiting to dock at ports. We’ve heard all the terrible things about our ports. But our ports are processing nearly 20 percent more now than they were two years ago. That’s a big jump in two years. We would have liked them to process even more than they’re processing, so we are running up against a supply chain problem.

But the problem we’re running up against isn’t that our ports have gotten worse at processing things or Covid is shutting down our ports. The problem is actually that demand is really high and our supply chains can’t cope. That’s not the only thing going on, but that’s a lot of what’s going on.

I love looking at spending every month on sporting goods, hobbies, musical instruments and books. It’s a strange category, but it’s all stuff no one really needs but we all love to buy. Spending in that area, in real terms adjusted for inflation, is 40 percent above where it was prior to the pandemic. Even an economy not hobbled by Covid is going to have a hard time ramping up production 40 percent if that’s what people want to spend their money on.

EZRA KLEIN: But this is what I mean — that when you lay this out, the stories begin to feel a little less different. So as you described it to me earlier, the other story is that we just have too much demand in the economy. We made some policy mistakes. Also it was a quicker snapback. It’s an old story about inflation. Too much money chasing too few goods.

And yet, what’s odd about that, if you look — Paul Krugman, my colleague, calculated that overall consumption is up 3.5 percent since the pandemic began. It’s roughly in line with normal growth. But then as you say, just a huge amount of that consumption has moved over to goods.

Just a tremendous amount has moved over to instead of you go see a baseball game, you buy a baseball bat. Instead of you go see — I used to go to a lot of shows before the pandemic. I love going out to see live music. I have not gone out to see live music in more than two years. Now, I haven’t bought musical instruments, because I’m not a very musical person.

[LAUGHTER]

But one could imagine that, yeah, I definitely had the thought that it would be nice to learn to play the guitar again during this period. And so that sounds to me, again, like a story of the pandemic shifted consumption in a strange way. But as the pandemic eases, consumption is going to shift back. I have gotten now into a period, which I take as a sort of measure of things getting back to normal, where instead of not buying tickets to shows, I buy tickets to shows and then I don’t go because the pandemic has gotten bad again.

[LAUGHTER]

But clearly the next step is I’m going to go at some point. And so you’re just going to have an adjustment backwards. But that’s a place where it seems like you’re still dealing with a pandemic story that has a pretty clear adjustment, whether you think the problem came from the demand side going up too fast or the supply side coming down too sharply. Either way, the causal factor was the same — the pandemic shifting what people wanted and the chains breaking down along that line. And that should, I would think, make you more optimistic.

JASON FURMAN: So here’s where the two hypotheses will differ and how we can distinguish between them. And the question is, what happens to prices in the non-freakish areas over the next year? So one mental exercise is what would inflation be if used car prices hadn’t gone up so much and everything else was exactly the same? That’s the micro-perspective.

The macro-perspective says what if used car prices didn’t go up so much, maybe people would have had more money to spend on something else and some other price would have gone up. Or to make a prediction over the next year, it would say that service price inflation is going to be faster over the next year than it was over the last year. So yes, the freakish stuff on the goods side will end, but now people will have more money to spend on services. We’ll see more inflation there.

And one of the issues is services are so much bigger than goods. So it only takes a one percentage point increase in the inflation rate for services to undo a five percentage point reduction in goods. So that to me is the big difference. Do you think of your story as in everything else being equal, which is the micro-story, or as, yes, you deflate the balloon here, but it pops up there. That’s the macro-story. And the way to distinguish will be to look at service prices over the next year.

EZRA KLEIN: But then jump to service prices, because it does not seem implausible to me we’re going to see inflation in services. But it would seem to me to come from a different place than goods. So when we tell the goods story, we’re telling a story about supply chains not being able to produce as much as people want to buy right now for the prices they were buying it before. It’s pretty standard. And on some level, well, we got to fire up more factories, or print more books, or whatever it might be.

If you would see service price inflation, I think what — you’re looking at two things. One is that you’re going to have higher wages in the service industry, because workers have more power, or these jobs have become more dangerous, a little less desirable, and in order to attract people to them, you need to pay them more. It’s just a different feel to wearing a mask all day and knowing you can get infected with something from before when you didn’t have some of those considerations. And that in order to make these jobs safer, they need infrastructural upgrades. They can’t take as many clients. To start there, is that where you think service inflation would come from?

JASON FURMAN: I think a few different places for service inflation. Some of it would be what you just said. Some of it is a tight labor market. Services are mostly delivered by people. People are not in unlimited supply. And if you need to put on a lot more performances, you’re going to have to find more people to pay and staff arenas and the like. So people in some ways are a supply chain issue and they’re always a supply chain issue whenever the unemployment rate starts to get low.

There’s some idiosyncratic things on the surface side, like the price of rent and then this weird thing called owners equivalent rent, which is where the government tries to figure out what rent you’re paying to yourself and they put that in the Consumer Price Index. That’s likely to go up. Health prices have been relatively moderate for the last two years. I think they’ll go up more, but I’m not remotely confident in saying that.

So there’s different micro-stories on the service side. But the overall most important macro-story is that services are made by people and people’s wages are going up because the labor market is tighter.

EZRA KLEIN: And this is what I mean when I say some of the story that’s getting told begins to be unnerving to me. Because you look back over everything we’re talking about here. And the first step is, well, during a pandemic, we made big transfers particularly to ***working class*** people. Most people who make a lot of money weren’t getting the U.I. plus $600 checks. And if they did, it didn’t matter to them. The labor market got tighter.

And now the increased demand of those transfers plus the tighter labor market might also lead to service sector inflation. And you’re seeing an economy that on some level seems to me to be fragile against an increase in worker power, a sharp increase in worker living standards or a significant change in the kind of wages workers can demand, which at least looks to me like it poses some real problems for those of us who think the economy’s been pretty imbalanced. You really see, well, if you tried to balance it in a different way, here’s where the economic problems and the political problems would come from. How do you think about that?

JASON FURMAN: For me a lot of it comes down to how quickly you think you can solve these problems. We’ve had two remarkable periods in the U.S. economy. One was in the late 1990s. One was in the period right up until the pandemic. In both of those, the unemployment rate seemed like it was below where most people thought it could be and then it just kept falling further and further. And mostly good things happened as a result. A lesson some people took from that is you can always go further.

I think that lesson might be right, but with a very important qualification. In both of those experiences, each year we improved a bit. We cut the unemployment rate by half a point per year. I think of it as a hot economy, but heating it one log at a time. So there’s no point where I’d say, oh, I’m so nervous now, let’s raise the unemployment rate. I think we can always— not always do better. At some point maybe I’d say that. But I think we can do better than where we are now.

We probably could have continued to improve before the pandemic from the 3.5 we had then. But there’s a difference in terms of how quickly you’re trying to improve. If we tried to lower the unemployment rate to 2.5 percent over the next six months, I have no doubt we’d run into tons and tons of problems — supply chains, inflation exploding, et cetera. If we try to lower it by half a point a year for three years, we might see some wonderful things happen.

So I know it’s hard to talk about patience when you have a big problem. But if the economy is — we’re trying to solve it too quickly, and it blows up in your face with inflation, and you lose support for it and things become destabilized, you’re not going to be able to make that slow and steady progress.

EZRA KLEIN: Let me ask you about the future then. I saw you say on Twitter that you expect — so much econ analysis now is on Twitter — that you expect around 3 percent inflation next year, although 1 percent or 6 percent wouldn’t shock you. Is that still your prediction?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah, there’s different ways to measure inflation. So I am roughly in the 3 to 4 percent range, but that is not a super scientific forecast. So as you said, 1 to 6 percent wouldn’t shock me. 3 percent would be more for the thing the Fed is targeting — the personal consumption expenditure price index — 4 percent would be more for the CPI, which tends to get most of the press attention.

EZRA KLEIN: So one of the interesting things about the inflation debate to me right now is that there’s pretty different views about how we got here. And then those views seem to narrow quite a bit as to what we should do in the near future. So let’s say the difference between you and my colleague, Paul Krugman — Paul is more on team transitory inflation, that the inflation has been pandemic-induced, it’s going to work itself out. You’ve been more of the view that there’s a big demand side problem here.

But I think both of you want to see the Fed raise interest rates at some point this year. And the Fed at this point says it’s going to raise interest rates at some point this year. So how much of a policy debate are we really having? Do you think there’s a big argument over what we need to do? Or is what we’re going to do pretty set, and we’re going to do it and this is a bit more diagnostic than prescriptive?

JASON FURMAN: I think the policy debate has narrowed over time. Part of why it’s relatively narrow is that most of the players in the policy debate actually are fine with and supportive of monetary policy being expansionary in 2022. And the debate is over how expansionary it is. One way to think about it from the Fed’s perspective, 2.5 percent Fed funds rate is a neutral interest rate. And anything below that is expansionary, anything above that is contractionary.

EZRA KLEIN: Can you explain that a little bit more?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah, so there’s something called the neutral interest rate. We don’t directly observe it. We don’t quite know exactly what it is. But it seems to be maybe the Fed thinks around 2.5 percent. I wouldn’t be surprised if it was lower than that. If your interest rates are set to that, then in a normal economy at full employment, where everything is synced up the way it’s supposed to be, the amount that people want to save will equal the amount that businesses want to invest and credit markets will clear.

When you lower the interest rate below that neutral rate — and certainly zero is below any estimate of the neutral rate — you essentially have the accelerator on. You’re pushing businesses to invest more, households to borrow more. And when you’re above that neutral rate — I don’t know, 4 percent would certainly be above it — it’s like having the brakes on and you’re slowing the economy down.

So what the Fed is doing this year is better described as pulling back on the accelerator rather than tapping on the brakes. And all the debates are should you go from pedal to the metal to the accelerator down halfway or the accelerator down ¾ of the way?

EZRA KLEIN: And so tell me a little bit about what is implied by so many people in this debate feeling comfortable with continued expansionary policy, even if somewhat less expansionary policy. Does that mean that people think, hey, the inflationary pressures we’re seeing remain modest and a relatively modest intervention plus adjustments from the pandemic and so on can more or less do what’s needed? Is that a way of understanding actually how hard people don’t think this will be to repair?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah. I mean, one is it might be wrong. So it might be a year from now, oops, should have done something more dramatic. I wouldn’t rule that out at all. The Fed has a lot of chances to correct over the course of the year. And I think they’ve shown in the last few months that they will make changes if the data changes.

Another thing is I think we’ve spent way too much time fighting the last war, but we also can’t forget what the economy was like before. And in the year 2019, the U.S. economy did pretty well. But it did pretty well only because it had a lot of monetary stimulus and some fiscal stimulus as well. And so I’m just not prepared to believe that the U.S. economy can be fully self-sustaining without some additional support. And so I wouldn’t want to pull it away too quickly.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, that’s an important point, because one thing that has been disorienting for me about this debate is if I back up four years, there is an ongoing and now long-running debate about why the U.S. economy seems to have structurally low demand. Why we always need this hyper — not always, but in recent years — always need this very, very expansionary monetary policy.

Larry Summers, who has now become, I think, one of the more leading inflation hawks. He’s got a theory of secular stagnation, which is about this very, very low ongoing demand. And so I would have said at that point that it’s really unclear how we fix the ongoing demand problem.

And one thing that has not been clear to me is if people believe actually the demand problem wasn’t as hard to fix as we thought or simply the pandemic is so weird that it interrupted this structurally low demand period, but when it actually does drain out of the system, which God willing it will — although it keeps taking longer than I think — that then we’re going to have the demand shortfall we’ve been observing and the high level of marginalized workers we’ve seen again.

JASON FURMAN: Some of this is about magnitudes and timing, I think even more than the pandemic. We put about 15 percent of G.D.P. in fiscal stimulus into the economy in the first half of 2021. That is — the economy — yes, it was demand-deficient — I’m making up a number — it was 3 percent of GDP demand-deficient before. Well, we way more than overcompensated for that in the first half of this year.

But you look forward a year or two and you’re not going to have anything like that type of fiscal stimulus in the economy. The Fed has more degrees of freedom probably at this stage than Congress does. And that’s where I start to get a little bit more worried. So I think some of the aha, is it demand-constrained, is it not demand-constrained — these things are all numbers.

In the year 2021, the US economy was definitely not demand-constrained. We poured a ton of money into it. The Fed right now is setting policy that’s really more about the year 2023, given the lags in monetary policy. What’s demand going to be like in 2023? I’m not as sure. And to have a little bit of extra help there, which we’d get even with four rate hikes this year, would be, as a prudential matter, worth trying out.

EZRA KLEIN: You’ve said that the mistake here was treating the economic problem of the pandemic as a demand side problem and not a supply side problem. So when you look at what we’ve learned since then, do you think we are persistently supply-constrained? And if we are, what can we do about it?

JASON FURMAN: I love what you’ve been writing about the supply side of the economy. There needs to be more of almost an explicit — people saying their supply side and being proud of it. That’s so important to what we do. Now, supply side doesn’t mean you cut taxes and deregulate. But reclaim the word.

My ideas tend to be less creative than yours and more conventional — so more investment in research, in education, in infrastructure. I’m more of a fan of when you need something, the government will offer to overpay for it. Tell people we’ll pay $30 a test. Tell people will pay $50 a shot. And Pfizer will figure out how to improve its advertising campaign, because it’s going to make that much more profit from all of it.

So I don’t know exactly what the right supply side policies are. But having the debate and discussion about those is really important and it’s been probably underdone on the progressive side.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: One of the points you made a few times is that you can think about the supply chains of goods, and then in a very, very economist way, you could think about the supply chains of people. And we’re seeing very high quit rates across the economy. We’re also seeing very high hiring rates. Something my friend and past colleague Matt Yglesias has observed is the ratio there doesn’t look that abnormal. Do you buy the narrative of the great resignation?

JASON FURMAN: There is something going on in labor markets, but it’s definitely not about quits. The quits that we see are roughly what you’d predict in a labor market as hot as the one we have with so many job openings and so many abilities to find other jobs. Most of the people quitting are quitting in order to take another job.

It is the case, though, that the labor force participation rate is surprisingly low. There are about two million people that you’d normally think would be in jobs or actively looking for them who aren’t. And when you try to look at who those two million people are, it’s about half men, about half women. You look at their age — about half of them are above 55, half of them below. There’s not really a strongly unifying story.

One possibility is continuing psychological effects and physical effects associated with Covid have prevented people from coming back to the work force. One possibility is people can afford to wait an extra month or two to find a job both because they have a bit more money and they have more confidence that a job will be there for them when they want it.

So I don’t like the word great resignation. I don’t like it at all in the context of take your job and shove it — people quitting. There is something, though, about people who haven’t returned to jobs in a way that normally you would have expected by now.

EZRA KLEIN: So I was joking earlier in our conversation about buying tickets to shows and wanting to go, which that wasn’t a joke. But something I expect is that when I do go back, I’m going to find it very uncomfortable. And laddering this up a little bit, something that worries me in the narratives around the great resignation that I think could become a structural thing in the economy is that Covid has made a lot of jobs where you deal with a lot of people under close and not always well-protected circumstances just scarier — much scarier if you are immunocompromised or have vulnerable people in your household, but also just scarier, weirder. People seem like biological weapons now in a way they didn’t always before.

And I think one place you see this is in places where workers have power, like teachers unions. There is a lot of friction about going back into the classroom and under what circumstances. It’s not that people never want to go, but they don’t feel safe going unless the classrooms change quite a bit. Now, there are a lot of places in the economy, workers don’t have that much power and can’t demand all that much in terms of changes to the way their workplace is designed.

But something that I wonder about just going on the great resignation is people just being more afraid of these jobs. These just have become structurally worse jobs. A lot of jobs in the economy have become structurally worse jobs. And I mean, you could pay people a lot more to do them. That’s one possibility. But people don’t want to do them.

And I think sometimes I see on the left this being framed as an exciting issue of worker power. But because the support is draining out of the economy, I’m worried a lot of workers are about to face a pretty miserable choice between jobs are now afraid of and poverty or economic evisceration. And this great resignation narrative is going to come to a pretty unhappy close.

JASON FURMAN: There’s no question that people have more demands for their work now, whether those demands are safety. There’s also a lot more people that want to work from home now that discovered they liked it than was the case prior to the pandemic. So there’s some resorting based on different characteristics of jobs going on. Some of this is a great thing, but there is a certain amount of scarcity in the economy.

People’s wages are, in part, determined by their marginal revenue product — how much they are making per hour for the firm they’re working for — and, in part, determined by their bargaining power, which might mean you get 20 percent less than that or 5 percent more than that. And so the bargaining power can help. But if businesses are having to spend more money, if they’re getting fewer customers, and there’s only so much room in the profit margin, these aren’t all fully soluble problems.

EZRA KLEIN: But then let me go back to the inflation conversation for a minute. A lot of the inflation we’re talking about is in things you see in the economy or deal with in the economy a lot. Inflation as a political problem tends to be gas prices, food prices, all these things you consume regularly. But obviously there are things people buy less frequently— a home, higher education, health care, which they buy a lot, but often the true cost of it is hidden from them — that have had huge, huge, huge price increases now for decades that have just been going up way, way, way, way, way higher than they should be.

And one of the things that Biden is arguing is that his Build Back Better proposals are long-term disinflationary. That they are trying to address the productive capacity and the prices in the economy in some of these markets, also particularly in energy — I don’t want to say climate change to be understood as an inflationary problem, but we are definitely not producing enough renewable energy. Do you buy that version of Build Back Better, that interpretation of Build Back Better?

JASON FURMAN: I think to some degree it’s semantics. There’s one question is what would Build Back Better do to the Consumer Price Index, the official measure of inflation? The answer to that is on a 5 to 10-year horizon, very, very little would change, because it’s mostly paid for, there’d be time for the Fed to offset it. It’s not that much money per year. And various independent experts have come to that same conclusion.

And there’s then a second question of what would happen to after-tax income and purchasing power for households? And for households with children, it would go up. They’d be getting money every month. They would be able to buy more things, basically because their income went up. And so I don’t call that second one inflation. If somebody wants to say you can afford more stuff, so it’s as if stuff is cheaper, that doesn’t bother me a lot. It’s a semantic distinction.

EZRA KLEIN: There’s pretty big housing and child care and education components to the bill. How do you see those?

JASON FURMAN: The child care, in part, raises the gross cost of child care by improving quality. I don’t think that price increase is going to be that large, but I’m not completely confident that I fully analyzed it or read an analysis I find credible. And then the after-tax and transfer costs will go down if you’re a household roughly in the bottom half of the income distribution that is getting money for it.

So child care is something where they’re effectively saying the problem isn’t that we’re producing it inefficiently and spending too much on it, we’re actually doing it too much on the cheap. We need to spend a little bit more and we want to protect your household from the extra spending, which will get extra quality and bring more people in.

So in many ways, that’s different from health care. Health care — you’re trying to drive the cost down and then subsidize people. Child care — you might be trying to actually drive the costs up and subsidize people.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: You’d said earlier in our conversation that you feel you could have designed the American Rescue Plan to have most of its positive effects at roughly half the price. Funnily enough, that is the question that seems to be facing Democrats on Build Back Better. Joe Manchin is — if he votes for anything, he’s not voting for what has already been offered.

He has said it’s got to cost actually $1.75 trillion over 10 years, not have a bunch of weird expiration dates inside of it to maybe hide the 10-year cost. If you were putting together a bill trying to get a lot of this done at $1.75 trillion, how would you do it? Because it’s still quite a lot of money.

JASON FURMAN: So first of all, from an economic perspective, Build Back Better is very, very different from the Rescue Plan because the money is spending out over time and it’s addressing structural needs, not just ephemeral cash in people’s hands. So I would have been fine, probably even enthusiastic, with $6 trillion from Build Back Better, and would have wanted to pay for a lot of the $6 trillion, but not all of it. I think we could have afforded to borrow some.

That’s my economic perspective. So my answer on size is very different if you’re talking about major structural changes going forward for preschool, child care, education than if you’re talking about ephemeral cash. That’s the economics. That’s obviously not particularly relevant at the current moment.

If I was assigned a budget constraint of $1.75 trillion — I think that’s a mistaken budget constraint. But if that’s your constraint, then I think Joe Manchin is right. You should have fewer things that should be done better and they should be permanent. I think that less for the reason Joe Manchin does.

I’m not that worried about the deficit. I’m petrified the programs would end. That you’d get one year of a child credit and then it would expire. You get three years of preschool. No states would take it up. And at the end of those three years, it would go away with Republicans’ decent chance being in charge of at least something when these programs expire that I just wouldn’t count on them continuing.

So figure out how to prioritize. I’d probably do climate change, some stripped-down version of the child tax credit that focuses especially on lower income and younger families and preschool.

EZRA KLEIN: When you think forward to 2022, which we’re in, what to you is the plausible good case scenario — if we’re talking in a year and 2022 went quite well economically, what do you think will have happened? And what is the plausible more pessimistic scenario?

JASON FURMAN: The good case scenario is the economy ends the year with an unemployment rate around 3.5 percent, the labor force participation rate has come back to roughly what it was before the pandemic, and the inflation rate is in the 2 to 3 percent range. That’s a real possibility for the economy. I don’t think that’s a wild-eyed pipe dream. I think it’s a plausible good outcome. The more likely case is something like what I just said, but inflation more in the 3 to 4 percent range, and it hasn’t really left the national conversation and people are still bothered by it.

And then the bad cases are — the worst one would be an actual recession where the unemployment rate starts rising because it’s been derailed by the virus, or the rapid movements of the economy up down every which way, or the financial system has had a problem as rates rose. That’s far and away the worst. And if we end the year at 4 to 5 percent inflation rate, I think that’s pretty bad. People would hate that and it would greatly constrain the Fed’s abilities going forward. That’s probably the most plausible bad outcome is that higher inflation one.

EZRA KLEIN: When you think of the risks that if something happened here that we’re not exactly talking about, are there risks that you feel are underrated, like a sharp China slowdown or some kind of geopolitical risk? When you think about something that could waylay everybody’s best laid plans, is there something you wish policymakers were paying more attention to?

JASON FURMAN: Anything large with China could be huge for the U.S. economy, the global economy, and for much, much more than that. If it’s just a garden variety Chinese property markets collapse and their economy goes into recession, I think that’s probably a couple tenths off of U.S. G.D.P.

Probably the biggest risk other than the virus is that our economy is built around low interest rates. I think that’s roughly the right bet and I expect interest rates to be low. But if I’m badly wrong in that bet, a lot of other people with a lot more money at stake are badly wrong in that bet, too. And that could have knock-on consequences throughout the economy.

EZRA KLEIN: And then let me try to get you to throw the long ball here and talk a little bit more about the 2020s. And I’m particularly interested in this from the standpoint of productivity. So one theory right now is we’re in an era where a long period where technology actually wasn’t, whether you think it was advancing quickly or not, it wasn’t changing the economy all that much. A lot of things had remained vaporware.

Maybe that’s over. Maybe this is we’re really getting the remote work and all that that could unlock. mRNA platforms, along with a lot of other biotech looks really, really promising for a bit. There’s incredible things happening in renewable energy. There’s interesting things happening in A.I. and bringing a lot more cognition and computing power online for a lot of different services. When you look at all this, do you think, oh, we might be on the cusp of a really exciting economic period or do you think we’re going to muddle along, more or less, as we have been?

JASON FURMAN: I’m closer to the muddle camp and would distinguish between inputs and outputs. The inputs to the economy will get more and more impressive, but the outputs won’t be commensurately so. So for example, if you want to make progress in agriculture now, you can have the most cutting edge A.I. and robotics in order to have a machine that can pick soft fruit, like strawberries and blueberries. The problem is all the genius in the world that goes into mastering the soft fruit mechanization problem is going to make very small difference to an economy where the vast majority of agriculture, in things like corn, soybean and wheat, was mechanized, much of it, 150 years ago.

You see the same thing in cancer. It is much, much more impressive to make progress on cancer today than it was in the early days of chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. But the gains we get from that really, really impressive research just aren’t as big as we had before. So this is the good ideas are hard to find theses. Nick Bloom, an economist at Stanford, and other co-authors have written about it. And for me, it’s the right way to square the really impressive advances in how we do things versus the actual magnitudes of the gains we get from those things.

EZRA KLEIN: One read some people have had of the Nick Bloom kind of arguments is that, well, it’s not that good ideas are so rare, it’s that it’s hard to deploy them. And it’s hard to deploy them for a bunch of different reasons, and some of them are political, and some of them are just people are used to doing things, some of them are it takes time to understand how something actually works — this is the old line that you can see the computer revolution everywhere except in the productivity statistics and then eventually you could.

So new things are happening. There’s a malaria vaccine. There are all kinds of things that could come out of mRNA vaccines. We do seem able to vaccinate against things that are pipe dreams pretty recently. So you’re not convinced we’re on the cusp of an era that is going to look pretty different. Like maybe it’s — I guess I should ask how much crypto you now own, because I hear a lot of excitement about web3 and how it’s going to upend the monetary system of the whole world.

I’m a skeptic, but certainly a lot of other people aren’t. But you’re not convinced that we’re on the cusp of a new kind of technological era. You think it’s going to be more incrementalism.

JASON FURMAN: I try to be thoughtful and balanced on most topics. But my efforts to do that on crypto so far have not succeeded, and I’m just an unbalanced skeptic and mostly deriding of it and hold none of it. I’m only 90 percent proud of that and 10 percent embarrassed. I’m not confident about anything about the future. I used to hold those two theses — the we haven’t figured out how to make use of our general purpose technologies, and once we do, just like electricity, we’ll figure out how to wire everything and get light bulbs and changed the way factories are shaped, then everything will take off versus the running out of good ideas.

In the last decade, I have downweighted the optimistic one and upweighted the pessimistic one, because we haven’t seen the optimistic one happen yet. You gave the productivity — that was 1987, I think, when Robert Solow said “We’ve seen productivity everywhere except in the data.” Some people made fun of him, because, oh, you just needed to wait a decade and you saw it. But you actually only saw it for a decade.

So if you look at the full 35-year period since he made that prediction, you actually don’t see it there. You just see it briefly and it averages out. So unfortunately that prediction wasn’t just right until it was wrong. It was right, then wrong, and then in retrospect actually probably right again.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that’s a good place to end. So always our final question — what are three books you’d recommend to the audience?

JASON FURMAN: I’ve gotten so excited about questions of how psychology is shaped in a social manner and what that means for our politics. The first thing I read in this was a long time ago and I’ve read it a couple of times since, which is Bryan Caplan’s “The Myth of the Rational Voter,” where he takes apart this idea that everyone’s rational and talks about the implications for our political system.

The most recent version of it I read was a colleague here at Harvard, Joe Henrich’s book called “The Weirdest People in the World,” that tries to understand why people in the West really are quite different, and, in his terms, weird compared to others. And points out many of the psychology experiments we’ve done for years aren’t on humanity as a whole, it’s on college students in Western universities. And they’re not exactly the most normal.

Finally, we’re trying to peer into the future. It amazes me how much better we can look at the past. And “Who We Are and How We Got Here” by David Reich, another professor here at Harvard, is just an extraordinary look using ancient DNA, like Neanderthal DNA, to find out things about humanity hundreds of thousands of years ago that I never would have dreamed we could have understood.

EZRA KLEIN: Jason Furman, thank you very much.

JASON FURMAN: Thank you.

EZRA KLEIN: That’s the show. If you enjoyed it, there are a few ways you can help us out or shape the next episode. You can rate the podcast on whatever play you’re listening on now, or send this episode to a friend, family member, if you didn’t like it, an enemy who you think deserves it, or you can tell us who you think we should have on the show next by emailing me at [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com) We really do get suggestions for guests we have on from the email. And though we can’t respond to every message, we really do read every single one.

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**Body**

If you support a lower-tier candidate in Iowa, don't be surprised if people look at you ... hungrily.

INDEPENDENCE, Iowa -- Is Senator Amy Klobuchar the key to the Iowa caucuses?

Maybe. But not for the reason you might think.

Sure, Ms. Klobuchar is running a vigorous campaign in the state. Stuck in the Senate for the impeachment trial most of the week, she flew back for a hastily scheduled event in Council Bluffs on Tuesday night. Her daughter, Abigail Bessler, has been traveling across Iowa in her stead, wooing voters with Ms. Klobuchar's family hot dish recipe.

But in poll after poll, Ms. Klobuchar still hasn't hit the 15 percent threshold needed to win delegates. Her standing hints that her supporters could be up for grabs on the second ballot in many precincts. And four days before the caucuses, rival camps are already coming courting, trying to increase their margins by scooping up some of her caucusgoers.

Call it the second-place shuffle.

''Second choice matters,'' said Norm Sterzenbach, a caucus adviser to Ms. Klobuchar. ''You have to be careful in how you talk about not only your own candidacy and your strengths but the strengths of the other candidates as well.''

Already, aides to former Vice President Joe Biden reached out to Ms. Klobuchar's team to try to broker a caucus-night alliance -- and were rebuffed, according to her advisers. Her team says she's running to win in Iowa and plans to remain in the race at least through the New Hampshire primary eight days later. There are no plans to direct her backers to a second choice.

But chances are, if you're a lower-tier candidate, your supporters are being eyed by the higher-ups like a heaping serving of hot dish.

Andrew Yang said he anticipated that much of his backing would naturally gravitate to Senator Bernie Sanders, though he declined to give the ''Yang Gang'' specific directions.

''The people that support my campaign are very diverse in their leanings,'' Mr. Yang told reporters. ''I frankly think I'd have a hard time getting them to do anything that they weren't naturally inclined to do.''

With nearly 1,700 caucuses across the state, even some of the higher-polling candidates are unlikely to make the 15 percent threshold in all of them. On Wednesday, the former mayor Pete Buttigieg declined to point his supporters toward another candidate when asked by reporters.

This isn't the first time Democratic strategists have tried to play a game of caucus chess. In 2008, some supporters of Bill Richardson flocked to Barack Obama after rumors circulated of a pact between the two campaigns -- even though they were denied by both camps.

How these kinds of efforts will actually play out is harder to predict, say old Iowa caucus hands. In the moment, individual caucuses can be chaotic, making it hard to pull off the kinds of deals that the campaigns and their top aides might like to strike.

Even more important, voters often think about the race in ways the political experts might not anticipate. That may be particularly true this year when many caucusgoers are considering a wide -- and ideologically diverse -- field of candidates.

At an event for Mr. Buttigieg on Wednesday evening, Ginger Thompson, 63, said she was considering Mr. Buttigieg and Mr. Yang. ''I think Bernie and Biden are too old,'' said Ms. Thompson, a retiree. ''They're younger, and to me, it seems they give us hope.''

Facing a big field packed with well-known names, Democrats sometimes seem as if they want to back multiple people at once. In town hall meetings, voters have frequently asked the candidates whom they would consider as a running mate.

On Jo Walter's list? Mr. Buttigieg, along with Mr. Sanders and Senator Elizabeth Warren.

''Well, they're all Democrats. We got to get the Trumpster out of there,'' said Ms. Walter, an emergency medical technician from Clarksville. ''None of them are anything like him.''

Maggie Astor contributed reporting from Des Moines.

Drop us a line!

We want to hear from our readers. Have a question? We'll try to answer it. Have a comment? We're all ears. Email us at [*onpolitics@nytimes.com*](mailto:onpolitics@nytimes.com)

The final countdown

With just four days remaining before the Iowa caucuses, we're all in the homestretch before voting begins. I was curious how the candidates are ending their campaigns in this crucial state. Fortunately, I have a whole bunch of friends who can help answer that question.

Here's what our campaign reporters are hearing from the leading candidates as they crisscross the state:

Astead Herndon:

Elizabeth Warren has shifted away from her policy focus in the run-up to the Iowa caucuses. Instead, she's making the case that she's best suited to beat President Trump and unite the Democratic Party. The plans are still there, but she focuses on rooting out Washington corruption and outlining her path to victory more.

Reid Epstein:

Pete Buttigieg is closing his Iowa campaign by pitching himself as the arbiter of a new era in American politics, attacking Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders and calling for the party to move past the ''the same Washington playbook.''

Thomas Kaplan:

Joe Biden is emphasizing the need to defeat Mr. Trump. He's leaning hard into contrasting himself with the president, speaking of bringing people together and unifying the country, and telling voters that ''character is on the ballot.''

Sydney Ember:

Bernie Sanders's closing argument has hardly differed from his core message: He is fighting for the ***working class***, emphasizing ''Medicare for all'' and climate change. But he is also focusing more than ever on voter turnout, and his campaign is urging people to ''fight for someone you don't know.''

And me:

Amy Klobuchar is casting the election as a ''decency check'' on Mr. Trump, arguing that she can unite the country -- including moderate Republicans -- around the idea of restoring American values.

The week in impeachment

With the impeachment trial possibly headed toward its conclusion after a wild week, my colleague Noah Weiland, who writes our Impeachment Briefing newsletter, volunteered to catch us up on the latest. Here's what happened this week:

The trial could end in the next few days. In the last 48 hours, Senator Mitch McConnell, the majority leader, and the rest of the Republican leadership team have rallied their senators against tomorrow's vote to hear new witnesses and consider more evidence, effectively shutting down the trial and speeding toward a presumed acquittal. Mr. McConnell argued that opening the trial to witnesses would extend it indefinitely and introduce a degree of uncertainty that would cede control of the proceedings to Democrats, who are eager to call several top current and former White House officials to testify.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: Amy Klobuchar's Taconite Tater Tot Hot Dish, named for a rock mined in Minnesota's Iron Range. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2020

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[***Everyone Wants a Piece; On Politics With Lisa Lerer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y3M-77J1-DXY4-X50W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 30, 2020 Thursday 00:13 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1522 words

**Byline:** Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** If you support a lower-tier candidate in Iowa, don’t be surprised if people look at you … hungrily.

**Body**

If you support a lower-tier candidate in Iowa, don’t be surprised if people look at you … hungrily.

INDEPENDENCE, Iowa — Is Senator Amy Klobuchar the key to the Iowa caucuses?

Maybe. But not for the reason you might think.

Sure, Ms. Klobuchar is running a vigorous campaign in the state. Stuck in the Senate for the impeachment trial most of the week, she flew back for a hastily scheduled event in Council Bluffs on Tuesday night. Her daughter, Abigail Bessler, has been traveling across Iowa in her stead, wooing voters with [*Ms. Klobuchar’s family hot dish recipe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/dining/amy-klobuchar-hotdish.html).

But in poll after poll, Ms. Klobuchar still hasn’t hit [*the 15 percent threshold needed to win delegates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/dining/amy-klobuchar-hotdish.html). Her standing hints that her supporters could be up for grabs on the second ballot in many precincts. And four days before the caucuses, rival camps are already coming courting, trying to increase their margins by scooping up some of her caucusgoers.

Call it the second-place shuffle.

“Second choice matters,” said Norm Sterzenbach, a caucus adviser to Ms. Klobuchar. “You have to be careful in how you talk about not only your own candidacy and your strengths but the strengths of the other candidates as well.”

Already, aides to former Vice President Joe Biden [*reached out to Ms. Klobuchar’s team*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/dining/amy-klobuchar-hotdish.html) to try to broker a caucus-night alliance — and were rebuffed, according to her advisers. Her team says she’s running to win in Iowa and plans to remain in the race at least through the New Hampshire primary eight days later. There are no plans to direct her backers to a second choice.

But chances are, if you’re a lower-tier candidate, your supporters are being eyed by the higher-ups like a heaping serving of hot dish.

Andrew Yang said he anticipated that much of his backing would naturally gravitate to Senator Bernie Sanders, though he declined to give the “Yang Gang” specific directions.

“The people that support my campaign are very diverse in their leanings,” Mr. Yang told reporters. “I frankly think I’d have a hard time getting them to do anything that they weren’t naturally inclined to do.”

With nearly 1,700 caucuses across the state, even some of the higher-polling candidates are unlikely to make the 15 percent threshold in all of them. On Wednesday, the former mayor Pete Buttigieg declined to point his supporters toward another candidate when asked by reporters.

This isn’t the first time Democratic strategists have tried to play a game of caucus chess. In 2008, some supporters of Bill Richardson flocked to Barack Obama [*after rumors circulated of a pact between the two campaigns*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/dining/amy-klobuchar-hotdish.html) — even though they were denied by both camps.

How these kinds of efforts will actually play out is harder to predict, say old Iowa caucus hands. In the moment, individual caucuses can be chaotic, making it hard to pull off the kinds of deals that the campaigns and their top aides might like to strike.

Even more important, voters often think about the race in ways the political experts might not anticipate. That may be particularly true this year when many caucusgoers are considering a wide — and ideologically diverse — field of candidates.

At an event for Mr. Buttigieg on Wednesday evening, Ginger Thompson, 63, said she was considering Mr. Buttigieg and Mr. Yang. “I think Bernie and Biden are too old,” said Ms. Thompson, a retiree. “They’re younger, and to me, it seems they give us hope.”

Facing a big field packed with well-known names, Democrats sometimes seem as if they want to back multiple people at once. In town hall meetings, voters have frequently asked the candidates whom they would consider as a running mate.

On Jo Walter’s list? Mr. Buttigieg, along with Mr. Sanders and Senator Elizabeth Warren.

“Well, they’re all Democrats. We got to get the Trumpster out of there,” said Ms. Walter, an emergency medical technician from Clarksville. “None of them are anything like him.”

Maggie Astor contributed reporting from Des Moines.

Drop us a line!

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The final countdown

With just four days remaining before the Iowa caucuses, we&#39;re all in the homestretch before voting begins. I was curious how the candidates are ending their campaigns in this crucial state. Fortunately, I have a whole bunch of friends who can help answer that question.

Here’s what our campaign reporters are hearing from the leading candidates as they crisscross the state:

Astead Herndon:

Elizabeth Warren has shifted away from her policy focus in the run-up to the Iowa caucuses. Instead, she’s making the case that she’s best suited to beat President Trump and unite the Democratic Party. The plans are still there, but she focuses on rooting out Washington corruption and outlining her path to victory more.

Reid Epstein:

Pete Buttigieg is closing his Iowa campaign by pitching himself as the arbiter of a new era in American politics, attacking Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders and calling for the party to move past the “the same Washington playbook.”

Thomas Kaplan:

Joe Biden is emphasizing the need to defeat Mr. Trump. He’s leaning hard into contrasting himself with the president, speaking of bringing people together and unifying the country, and telling voters that “character is on the ballot.”

Sydney Ember:

Bernie Sanders’s closing argument has hardly differed from his core message: He is fighting for the ***working class***, emphasizing “Medicare for all” and climate change. But he is also focusing more than ever on voter turnout, and his campaign is urging people to “fight for someone you don’t know.”

And me:

Amy Klobuchar is casting the election as a “decency check” on Mr. Trump, arguing that she can unite the country — including moderate Republicans — around the idea of restoring American values.

The week in impeachment

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[***Real-Life Costs of a Geopolitical Meltdown***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CY-8M41-DXY4-X0V8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 19, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 1931 words

**Byline:** By Ian Johnson

**Body**

When countries clash, here's what happens to those of us caught in the middle.

LONDON -- Soon after I was informed in mid-March that my journalist visa for China had been canceled, I faced a dilemma: what to do with my collection of wooden staffs used in a style of Chinese martial arts that I had been practicing for nearly 10 years.

Should I give them back to my master, an affable 40-year-old bus driver and inheritor of the practice, who had made it his life's work to revive the stick fighting that had once been so common in Beijing's ***working-class*** neighborhoods? Or should I have the movers ship them to London, where I would now be living?

The staffs weren't expensive and I could buy them at martial arts shops in any major city around the world. On the other hand, my teacher didn't really need them: He had a storeroom full of sticks that he used to teach anyone interested for free.

Yet mine were priceless to me. Made of white ash, many were darkened with the sweat and oil from other people's hands, especially my sparring partner, a carpenter who had spent countless hours in a park helping me learn the steps to the different fighting poses. I felt that the staffs belonged there, in Beijing. But they also were part of me and I wanted them, even if I wouldn't have anyone to practice with anymore.

In the big picture my dilemma sounds like a ridiculously petty problem: Compared with the daily circus of the Trump administration, the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, even the dispute between China and the United States seems like another one of those international spats that matter little outside the navel-gazing world of China-watchers.

If this dispute does matter beyond that, it surely is on the abstract stage of geopolitics, where people move aircraft carriers, plot sanctions and wield diplomatic ties like chits on a board game.

But the meltdown in China-United States relations has real-life implications as well. Taken individually, stories of severed friendships and strained family ties seem insignificant -- certainly they do when you talk to a true believer who thinks that the United States' policy toward China is necessary to make the world safe for democracy. Yet cumulatively these small wounds change how all of us experience the world, forming a collective trauma over the loss of an optimistic era dating back several decades, when the world seemed to be opening up, however imperfectly.

Not to sound maudlin, but people like me built our lives around a premise: that the world was interconnected and that it was a worthwhile calling to devote one's life to making other cultures a tiny bit more intelligible. And also that even if dedicating oneself to this life wasn't going to be easy or necessarily well-paid (unless one wanted to hawk dodgy Chinese securities), it would be meaningful and was in some way safe: The world wasn't about to return to old-style blocs, where people from one camp couldn't enter the other's side. This was a world of standardized visas, regular flights and some sort of career prospects, whether in business, journalism, academics or cultural exchanges.

For me, it was an invitation to study Chinese starting in my sophomore year of college and work at the school newspaper. Later, I went to Beijing and wrote a senior thesis about North American journalism in China because I wanted to understand the best way to report on the country. I got a master's degree in Chinese studies to help prepare me to become a correspondent in China, and went to Taiwan to improve my Chinese.

None of this meant I was entitled to a job as a correspondent, but along the way people almost always nodded and said that I was choosing a smart career path. China was an evermore important country in the world, business ties were increasing and we would always need to know about this growing giant.

But like many people who have devoted themselves to learning about another place, immersing myself in all things Chinese became more than a clever career choice: It became my calling. Yes, China had political oppression and air pollution and a million other problems, yet I came to love it -- from the culture and the people to its can-do spirit and embrace of innovation.

My bucket list of places to visit before leaving -- the expat's eternal calculation -- never got shorter. In fact, it grew longer each year.

The more I stayed in China, the more I learned and the more I wanted to see: more holy mountains, more breathtaking landscapes, more places where Chinese myths had their roots, more homes of famous artists or writers, more friends in different cities.

After a while that idea came to seem idiotic: What was the point of living in a country that was just a checklist of things to be done and then abandoned? That wasn't living; that was dying.

The years added up, and one day I realized that I'd spent more of my life in China than any other place on the planet -- more than the 15 years in my country of birth, Canada, the dozen in the United States, where I moved during high school and became a citizen, or the decade in Germany.

China wasn't an easy country to call home. It is the original land of genetic determinism; you cannot really become Chinese unless you look a certain way. You can be sixth-generation Chinese-American, speak only ''ni hao ma'' and know little more about the place than General Tso's Chicken, but to China (and to many Americans in the United States) you're Chinese.

Conversely, even though I had lived there for so long, learned the language and so on, I would never become Chinese. On a practical level, it's almost legally impossible to settle down and become a citizen: There is no real equivalent to a green card nor, therefore, a real immigrant culture. And yet it was a place that I had loved from my first visit in 1984 and that I still loved when I left earlier this year.

The yearning to belong works the other way around, too. Many Chinese people went to the United States to study and came to love that country. Many built their lives around settling in America while also being able to jet back to China for family holidays. They started to pay attention to American politics, they put up with discrimination, and one day they realized that their children hadn't just been born in the United States but had grown up there. In some way, they were American, even if they still had Chinese passports.

For all of us, the Covid-19 pandemic has made transcontinental living more difficult. But the real damage is longer term: The worsening of ties between countries means that today people are viewed suspiciously for things that previously were lauded.

Chinese who went to the United States to study -- once seen as a great boon to America -- are now often treated as saboteurs or spies. The Trump administration has visited petty humiliations and slights upon many foreigners, insisting on calling the new coronavirus the ''Chinese virus'' or suspending the work visas of hundreds of thousands of non-Americans in the name of controlling the pandemic.

I cannot excuse China's behavior in recent years -- the internment camps for Uighurs, the incessant crackdown on free speech, the territorial grabs in the South China Sea -- but the Chinese Communist Party has always made its ambitions and methods clear. What it is doing isn't shocking if you've paid attention to the way it obtained power and has held it over the past seven decades.

What has changed are the strategies and tactics that the United States now deploys to deal with China. Starting in the 1970s, a bipartisan policy of engagement was pursued, with the idea that it would help bind China to the international order.

Some critics of China claim that engagement was always a naïve dream and, as evidence, point to the fact that China hasn't become more liberal. But most realists knew that democratization was at best a distant objective; the main idea was that pragmatic engagement would be more productive than blind confrontation.

Yet blind confrontation is now the order of the day. And just as people who understood China had predicted, the result has been zero. America's trade dispute has yielded no change in China's behavior and no grand deal benefiting American producers. No Uighurs have been let out of camps. Hong Kong is less free. And Western reporters' access to information about China has been kneecapped, thanks to the expulsion of foreign reporters.

These expulsions were the direct result of American policy. In March, the Trump administration in effect expelled some 60 Chinese journalists from the United States, arguing -- disingenuously, I think -- that the move was retaliation for the mistreatment of foreign reporters in China.

The numbers might seem small. In addition to myself, only about a dozen other journalists were kicked out of China then. The expulsion order concerned holders of American passports whose visas were due to be renewed in 2020 and were sponsored by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post.

But in practice it gutted the American press corps in China. That's because only these media organizations, especially the Times and the Journal, had the staff and the budget to mount ambitious investigative reporting on sensitive issues there, such as the treatment of the Uighurs, the finances of senior leaders or the rise of digital surveillance.

The few reporters who remain will hardly have the resources for such projects, meaning that outsiders' understanding of China will be increasingly limited to daily news.

For the ideologues in the White House this outcome doesn't matter: Taking a hard-line approach against China today is just unavoidable realpolitik.

The main goal, however, has nothing to do with standing up to China; it's about turning China into a tool to help President Trump get re-elected in the fall. And if his tough talk hurts the Times, the Journal and the Post, then so much the better. Mr. Trump's real objective is to dupe American voters into thinking that China is responsible for the coronavirus and, by extension, for the economic depression the pandemic has caused.

That's why my agony over being expelled from China is so acute. I could accept leaving if China really were 1930s Germany and the world were heading toward a necessary showdown. But China is not Nazi Germany, despite what some have claimed.

Yes, many of its policies are antithetical to the values of open societies, yet the country still has many people with whom outsiders can engage: independent filmmakers, writers, intellectuals, even government officials. Some form of engagement will continue, but it's hard to see most of the study-abroad programs, academic exchanges, tourism or, of course, investigative journalism returning in the near future.

For months I couldn't decide what to do with my fighting sticks. Finally, last week I wrote to my teacher asking for his advice.

He told me to keep them, saying we shared something called ''yuan'' -- fate, or an affinity.

''Please take them to a park in London and practice with them there,'' he said. ''And think of us.''

Ian Johnson (@iandenisjohnson) is the author most recently of ''The Souls of China: The Return of Religion After Mao.''

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael Houtz FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2020

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[***To Find Running Mate, Obama Model Will Do***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YK3-GNW1-DXY4-X0RF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 3, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1687 words

**Byline:** By Katie Glueck, Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin

**Body**

Joe Biden and his associates are consulting allies, Eric Holder and Barack Obama as he weighs his options -- including a woman of color -- for the Democratic candidate for vice president.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. has spoken with former President Barack Obama about the process of selecting a running mate.

His allies remain enthusiastic about Mr. Biden's promise of a female vice-presidential candidate, despite growing Democratic fixation on Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York as he commands loyal audiences for his daily briefings on the coronavirus.

And Mr. Biden's associates have reached out to former Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. about the 2008 search process, which Mr. Holder helped steer for Mr. Obama.

Interviews with nearly two dozen Biden allies and donors over the last week provided the clearest picture yet of the critical early phase in Mr. Biden's efforts to choose a running mate. It is a process made even more complicated by the fact that Mr. Biden and his team are quarantined in different locations and grappling with how to run a campaign during a national health crisis.

Mr. Biden has stayed in touch with friends, though, and the question of his choice surfaces often on private donor calls. His allies and advisers are also bombarded with outside opinions, and it is something that Mr. Biden, himself a former vice president, cares deeply about.

There is not yet a consensus choice or a sense of who would deliver a surefire boost to the potential ticket, according to those interviewed, many of whom spoke on condition of anonymity, though the two names most frequently mentioned were Senators Kamala Harris and Amy Klobuchar. And his supporters are divided over whether Mr. Biden should prioritize selecting a woman of color as his running mate or whether regional considerations, like ties to the industrial Midwest, should hold greater weight.

''My preference would be a black woman,'' said Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina, the highest-ranking African-American in Congress and perhaps Mr. Biden's most crucial supporter. ''But I don't think it has to be a black woman.''

The outbreak of the coronavirus has heightened the stakes of the vice-presidential search. A decision that traditionally reflects a cocktail of political calculations, personal chemistry and governing experience has now taken on outsize importance for Mr. Biden. He would be 78 at inauguration, might not seek a second term should he win, and would be trying to rebuild the country in the wake of a pandemic -- factors that make it less likely that he would select someone who offers strong political assets but a relatively thin résumé.

''With all due respect to Biden, I think it's much more important than any selection since Harry Truman's,'' said Mr. Clyburn, alluding to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's elevating Mr. Truman as a compromise pick in 1944. Mr. Roosevelt did not live out the term, leaving Mr. Truman to take over before the conclusion of World War II, another moment of great peril and uncertainty for the nation.

Mr. Biden, who is not yet the nominee but holds a large delegate lead over Senator Bernie Sanders, has indicated that his search process will intensify in coming weeks.

He is said to view Mr. Obama's vice-presidential selection process -- the one that eventually selected him -- as a model for his own. In 2008, Mr. Obama designated three prominent Democrats to lead an exhaustive search and vet his options: Mr. Holder and Caroline Kennedy led the initiative, along with the longtime party power broker Jim Johnson, who ultimately withdrew from the process because of concerns about his personal finances.

Mr. Biden said this week that he was looking at somewhere between six and 10 candidates, a number that has fluctuated. He has indicated that he would consider several former presidential rivals (Ms. Harris, Ms. Klobuchar and Senator Elizabeth Warren) along with other Democrats, including governors. Among them is Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, who has been one of the most prominent governors confronting the coronavirus crisis at a moment when state leaders have become the faces of the response to the outbreak.

''She made the list in my mind two months ago,'' Mr. Biden said of Ms. Whitmer in an MSNBC interview on Tuesday.

Other names often mentioned by allies include Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada and Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, two Latina leaders from the West; Representative Val Demings of Florida; and Stacey Abrams, the 2018 candidate for governor in Georgia.

Mr. Clyburn has also publicly floated others including Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta, an early and loyal supporter of Mr. Biden.

If the list is wide-ranging, Mr. Biden has been consistent about the criteria: He must be ''simpatico'' with his potential running mate on major priorities and on philosophy, even if they have tactical disagreements. And his choice must be prepared to step into the presidency immediately if needed, he has said, a reminder of how much Mr. Biden values experience.

''It's a big process for him, having been vice president,'' said former Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia, who has spoken with Mr. Biden. ''For him, the most important thing is, who can step in? Who can help him lead?''

Mr. Biden is weighing other factors as well. Some allies are focused on which potential running mate could most excite progressive voters who are currently unenthusiastic about Mr. Biden.

Others argue that selecting a woman of color -- Ms. Harris, with her experience in the national spotlight, is the most obvious choice -- is critical to turning out younger members of the Latino or African-American communities, depending on the choice.

And still others say that Democrats will turn out regardless of the running mate and that the priority should be engaging more independent-minded voters.

The campaign has not yet announced a search committee or any other details of the process other than promising a thorough vetting operation. But in the Tuesday interview with MSNBC's Brian Williams, Mr. Biden said he hoped to have an operation to ''run the background checks'' in place by mid-April.

On a staff level, several Democrats interviewed said they expected a cadre of Mr. Biden's longtime advisers to have input. But they said they also expected Mr. Biden to consider a wider range of outside perspectives as he assesses potential candidates.

Part of the advantage of putting prominent Democratic leaders in charge of the search, as Mr. Obama did, is that it could help ensure broad acceptance of the eventual selection across a fragmented party.

Several Biden allies suggested it would be important for the search panel itself to reflect the diversity of the party, so that any disappointed constituencies feel at least that they were listened to in the process.

Traditionally, said former Senator Christopher J. Dodd of Connecticut, a friend of Mr. Biden's, there are ''certain people you'd seek out to conduct the vetting process and so forth. I think he'd like to hear from a broader spectrum of people.''

That is a priority for Representative Cedric Richmond, Democrat of Louisiana and Mr. Biden's national campaign co-chairman, who said that he expected to be part of the search process in some capacity, but that he was most concerned with ensuring any team reflected a range of views.

''Our candidate, since Day 1, has stressed diversity,'' said Mr. Richmond, a former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. ''Diversity in terms of gender, in terms of race, in terms of age.''

''So I think the vice president's search committee should reflect the vice president's values in that sense,'' he added.

Mr. Clyburn, for his part, said he did not want to serve on a search committee, though many prominent Biden allies have said that the Biden campaign should seriously consider Mr. Clyburn's opinion on the matter, something they intend to do, Mr. Richmond said.

Asked if he had any names in mind, Mr. Clyburn quickly cited four of his colleagues: Representatives Marcia L. Fudge and Karen Bass as well as Ms. Demings and Ms. Harris.

Mr. Clyburn acknowledged that some black voters would be angry if Mr. Biden picks a white running mate -- ''I'm sure that would be the case,'' he said -- but was quick to note it was African-American women like his three daughters who helped Mr. Biden to the doorstep of the nomination without needing any additional inducement like a preferred vice-presidential choice.

''None of that is going to distract from our No. 1 goal, which is getting this guy out of office,'' he said of President Trump.

Other allies and advisers have said that Ms. Klobuchar or Ms. Whitmer stands the best chance of helping Mr. Biden achieve that goal, because of their Midwest roots and abilities to connect with white ***working-class*** voters, many of whom embraced Mr. Trump in 2016.

Mr. Biden, himself a former senator, and Ms. Klobuchar in particular share both more centrist tendencies and a reverence for Washington institutions and bipartisan deal-making.

Some Democrats have cited those similarities in suggesting that Mr. Biden could have a comfortable working relationship with her, though others have suggested that she would not help Mr. Biden with one of his major weaknesses: motivating younger progressives to turn out.

Representative Tim Ryan, a former presidential candidate who represents a part of Ohio where many onetime Democrats swung to Mr. Trump in 2016, spoke highly of several possible contenders but said that his ''favorite person to be with on the campaign trail was Kamala Harris'' who ''checks a lot of the boxes.''

He argued that there were multiple ways to create the kind of coalition that can wrest back the presidency.

''Ideally you want someone who can both energize our base, especially the African-American base that is so important for us to win, but also be able to connect to a lot of those voters who did go vote for Trump,'' Mr. Ryan said. ''Figuring out, OK, who best can complement him, is ultimately what they've got to decide.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president-choice.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president-choice.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Joseph R. Biden Jr. said recently that he was still looking at somewhere between six and 10 potential running mates. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator Kamala Harris is often mentioned as a possible candidate for vice president, allies and advisers of Mr. Biden said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2020

**End of Document**



[***‘Never Thought I Would Need It’: Americans Put Pride Aside to Seek Aid***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJM-DBC1-DXY4-X2S1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 3, 2020 Friday 17:39 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1658 words

**Byline:** Cara Buckley

**Highlight:** With coronavirus-related job losses, many workers are reluctantly seeking charity and unemployment benefits for the first time in their lives.

**Body**

With coronavirus-related job losses, many workers are reluctantly seeking charity and unemployment benefits for the first time in their lives.

The cars arrived at the food bank in southern Dallas in a stream — a minivan, a Chevrolet Tahoe, a sedan with a busted window, a Jaguar of unclear vintage. Inside the vehicles sat people who scarcely could believe they needed to be there.

There was a landscaper, a high school administrator, a college student, and Dalen Lacy, a warehouse worker and 7-Eleven clerk.

Like 70 percent of the people who showed up at Crossroads Community Services one day last week, Mr. Lacy had never been there before. But when the coronavirus pandemic drove the economy off a cliff, Mr. Lacy, 27 and a father of two, lost his warehouse job and saw his hours at 7-Eleven slashed.

“I’ve never had to actually do this,” Mr. Lacy said, after a gloved pantry worker hefted a box of food into the trunk of the car he was riding in along with two neighbors. “But I’ve got to do what I’ve got to do for my kids.”

By the hundreds of thousands, Americans are asking for help for the first time in their lives, from nail technicians in Los Angeles to airport workers in Fort Lauderdale, from bartenders in Phoenix to former reality show contestants in Minnesota. Biting back shame, and wondering guiltily about others in more dire straits, they are [*applying for unemployment*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/26/upshot/coronavirus-millions-unemployment-claims.html), [*turning to GoFundMe*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/26/upshot/coronavirus-millions-unemployment-claims.html), asking for money on Instagram, quietly accepting handouts from equally strapped co-workers, and showing up in unprecedented numbers at food banks, which in turn are struggling to meet soaring demand as volunteers, many of them retirees, stay home for safety.

David Greenfield, chief executive of Met Council, a nonprofit that provides food and housing assistance in New York City, said that at first, “we saw retail workers, chefs and waiters, and restaurant owners.”

By last week, he said, they were seeing employees from law firms: “Folks who in many cases were employed their entire lives.”

In its unsparing breadth, the crisis is pitting two American ideals against each other — the e pluribus unum credo of solidarity and its near-religious devotion to the idea that hard work brings rewards. Those notions coexist peacefully in prosperous times.

Today, both are being put to the test, forcing the newly unemployed to re-evaluate beliefs about themselves and their country.

In St. Louis Park, Minn., Scott Theusch, 61, a mechanic, filed for unemployment benefits for the first time, becoming one of the record-shattering 3.3 million people who made claims across the country in one week. He set aside his deeply felt conviction that people who had to seek the aid, which is largely funded by payroll taxes on employers, weren’t trying hard enough. “There really isn’t any option for people,” Mr. Theusch said. “They’re told not to show up for work, so what do you do?”

In Los Angeles, Samantha Pasaye, a 29-year-old nail technician, pleaded for donations on Instagram after the salon where she worked shut its doors. The request made her mother cry. “I’m not someone who asks for help,” Ms. Pasaye said. “I do everything by myself. But at this moment, I needed to put my pride aside.”

Another new Dallas food-bank client, Adedyo Codrington, a trade-show worker and union steward, filed for unemployment as soon as his jobs were canceled on March 8. But the first check would not arrive in time.

So Mr. Codrington, a 41-year-old father of two, went to the food bank, only to learn its supplies had run out. Humiliated, he tried again last week, arriving early. But people were already lined up around the block by then, and he left with a lone bag of green beans. Colleagues scrounged together $100 for him, but it is nearly gone, and he is down to eating just one meal a day, living off sugar water and what he calls “wish sandwiches” — two slices of bread with imaginary filling.

“To go from making $1,500 to $2,000 a week,” he said, “to be reduced to this.”

Even with America’s long tradition of giving, from immigrant-aid groups begun by religious organizations in the 19th century to the politically polarizing social welfare programs born in the 20th, rugged individualism has remained a defining feature of the national identity. Perhaps no class of worker is more lionized today than the start-up tech entrepreneur.

“A lot of people in the United States are very proud of feeling self-sufficient and independent,” [*Alice Fothergill*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/26/upshot/coronavirus-millions-unemployment-claims.html), a professor of sociology at the University of Vermont who has studied the human effects of natural disasters. “This is something that is definitely going to be very, very difficult.”

She said that people who feel ashamed about seeking help are often the ones who need it the most. In one study of women who had endured devastating floods in North Dakota, she found that ***working-class*** and middle-class women were the ones who despaired most about needing public assistance, because of a fear of a loss of status. They did not want to be seen as poor. They also engaged in techniques to make it clear — to themselves and others — that they were accepting charity reluctantly, such as offering to pay for donated items and refusing to refer to their government-supplied trailers as “home.”

Mr. Greenfield, of New York’s Met Council, said the scores of people approaching his charity for the first time are roundly apologetic: “They’re saying: ‘I’m sorry but can you help me? I’m sorry but I need food, I’m sorry but I need rent, I’m sorry but I need help.’”

For people of some means, deciding whether to file for benefits also involves second-guessing. Does the fact that others are in greater need mean that they should not apply, even if they are qualified?

Kirk DeWindt, 36, a personal trainer from Brooklyn Park, Minn. and [*a three-time contestant on “The Bachelor”*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/26/upshot/coronavirus-millions-unemployment-claims.html) television franchise, saw his business come to a halt after all in-person sessions had to be canceled. He has some savings, so when his mother urged him to apply for unemployment benefits, Mr. DeWindt hesitated.

“I’m in a more privileged situation than I would assume most that are filing,” he said. “So what do you do with that?” He decided he would file.

The anonymity of the internet has helped some charity-seekers get over any shame, with restaurant and other business owners setting up online fund-raising campaigns that keep their workers’ names private. On GoFundMe, some $120 million has been donated for campaigns related to the pandemic since the first week in March, a spokeswoman said. By comparison, that is more than four times as much as campaigns for the Australian wildfires raised in three months.

But unlike natural disasters, the pandemic has hit a far greater swath of people hard, making it difficult for some to gin up help. And some campaigns have fallen short.

In Phoenix, Raven Green, a 28-year-old single mother of two young girls, turned to GoFundMe after losing all three of her jobs — bartending, promotional work and singing gigs — in less than a week.

Ms. Green was terrified. She had a few days’ worth of groceries but her car payment had wiped her out, and she wasn’t sure she qualified for benefits. She [*set up a GoFundMe page*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/26/upshot/coronavirus-millions-unemployment-claims.html) seeking $1,500 but, abashed at having to ask for help, couldn’t bring herself to share it on social media. “I don’t want people to know that I’m struggling like this,” she said. As of Tuesday afternoon, the campaign had no donations.

(After this article appeared online Tuesday evening, she quickly raised double her original goal. “Bless you all!” she wrote to her donors.)

The abrupt change in circumstances may perhaps be toughest for people who reordered their whole lives around the American dream: immigrants.

[*Alex Rotaru*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/26/upshot/coronavirus-millions-unemployment-claims.html), 48, a filmmaker and actor in Beverly Hills who left Romania at age 21, said, “the idea of welfare from a communist country was quite natural to me.”

“When I came to America,” he said, “I never thought I would need it.”

He was wrestling with the idea of filing for unemployment after all his work screeched to a halt. Then he considered the stack of bills he faced. “There was a certain embarrassment and I got over it quick thinking about my son,” he said.

Ernst Virgile, 38, moved from Haiti with his wife in 2012, determined to work tirelessly. He held two jobs at the Fort Lauderdale airport, as a wheelchair attendant and in international arrivals customer support, and she worked in concessions. They saved painstakingly for a house, and bought one last year, where they are raising their three children, ages 7, 5 and 2. They were stunned when they both lost their jobs in March, and bereft.

Mr. Virgile’s wife wept at the prospect of having to ask the bank to put their mortgage payments on hold. Mr. Virgile is still trying to figure out how to apply for food stamps and unemployment benefits, and fears seeking out food banks because of possible virus exposure.

They had never before needed such assistance, and both, he said, are devastated.

“We’re not used to it,” Mr. Virgile said. “We knew before we got here that we had to work hard, very hard, to live the American dream. But we have to file unemployment. We have no choice. There’s nothing we can do.”

Christina Capecchi, Marina Trahan Martinez and Adam Popescu contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Left, a client last week at a Dallas food bank. About 70 percent of those arriving that day had never been to the pantry. Kirk DeWindt, a former reality show contestant, had lost all of his personal training jobs because of social distancing concerns. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN ZIZZO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JENN ACKERMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); “I don’t feel comfortable asking for help,” said Jose Torres, who nevertheless went to the Dallas food bank after losing two jobs. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN ZIZZO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Raven Green, a single mother of two young girls, turned to GoFundMe after losing all three of her jobs in less than a week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAITLIN O’HARA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10)

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Will Joe Biden Find His Joe Biden?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJW-VVW1-DXY4-X010-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 2, 2020 Thursday 17:16 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1725 words

**Byline:** Katie Glueck, Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin

**Highlight:** Joe Biden and his associates are consulting allies, Eric Holder and Barack Obama as he weighs his options — including a woman of color — for the Democratic candidate for vice president.

**Body**

Joe Biden and his associates are consulting allies, Eric Holder and Barack Obama as he weighs his options — including a woman of color — for the Democratic candidate for vice president.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. has spoken with former President Barack Obama about the process of selecting a running mate.

His allies remain enthusiastic about Mr. Biden’s promise of a [*female vice-presidential candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html), despite growing [*Democratic fixation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html) on Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York as he commands loyal audiences for his daily briefings on the coronavirus.

And Mr. Biden’s associates have reached out to former Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. about the 2008 search process, which Mr. Holder helped steer for Mr. Obama.

Interviews with nearly two dozen Biden allies and donors over the last week provided the clearest picture yet of the critical early phase in Mr. Biden’s efforts to choose a running mate. It is a process made even more complicated by the fact that Mr. Biden and his team are quarantined in different locations and grappling with how to run a campaign during a national health crisis.

Mr. Biden has stayed in touch with friends, though, and the question of his choice surfaces often on private donor calls. His allies and advisers are also bombarded with outside opinions, and it is something that Mr. Biden, himself a former vice president, cares deeply about.

There is not yet a consensus choice or a sense of who would deliver a surefire boost to the potential ticket, according to those interviewed, many of whom spoke on condition of anonymity, though the two names most frequently mentioned were Senators Kamala Harris and Amy Klobuchar. And his supporters are divided over whether Mr. Biden should prioritize selecting a woman of color as his running mate or whether regional considerations, like ties to the industrial Midwest, should hold greater weight.

“My preference would be a black woman,” said Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina, the highest-ranking African-American in Congress and perhaps Mr. Biden’s most crucial supporter. “But I don’t think it has to be a black woman.”

The outbreak of the coronavirus has heightened the stakes of the vice-presidential search. A decision that traditionally reflects a cocktail of political calculations, personal chemistry and governing experience has now taken on outsize importance for Mr. Biden. He would be 78 at inauguration, might not seek a second term should he win, and would be trying to rebuild the country in the wake of a pandemic — factors that make it less likely that he would select someone who offers strong political assets but a relatively thin résumé.

“With all due respect to Biden, I think it’s much more important than any selection since Harry Truman’s,” said Mr. Clyburn, alluding to President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s elevating Mr. Truman as a compromise pick in 1944. Mr. Roosevelt did not live out the term, leaving Mr. Truman to take over before the conclusion of World War II, another moment of great peril and uncertainty for the nation.

Mr. Biden, who is not yet the nominee but holds a large delegate lead over Senator Bernie Sanders, has indicated that his search process will intensify in coming weeks.

He is said to view Mr. Obama’s vice-presidential selection process — the one that eventually selected him — as a model for his own. In 2008, Mr. Obama designated three prominent Democrats to lead an exhaustive search and vet his options: Mr. Holder and Caroline Kennedy led the initiative, along with the longtime party power broker Jim Johnson, who [*ultimately withdrew*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html) from the process because of concerns about his personal finances.

Mr. Biden said this week that he was looking at somewhere between six and 10 candidates, a number that has fluctuated. He has indicated that he would consider several former presidential rivals (Ms. Harris, Ms. Klobuchar and Senator Elizabeth Warren) along with other Democrats, including governors. Among them is [*Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html), who has been one of the most prominent governors confronting the coronavirus crisis at a moment when state leaders have become the faces of the response to the outbreak.

“She made the list in my mind two months ago,” Mr. Biden said of Ms. Whitmer in an [*MSNBC interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html) on Tuesday.

Other names often mentioned by allies include Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada and Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, two Latina leaders from the West; Representative Val Demings of Florida; and Stacey Abrams, the 2018 candidate for governor in Georgia.

Mr. Clyburn has also [*publicly floated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html) others including Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta, an early and loyal supporter of Mr. Biden.

If the list is wide-ranging, Mr. Biden has been consistent about the criteria: He must be “simpatico” with his potential running mate on major priorities and on philosophy, even if they have tactical disagreements. And his choice must be prepared to step into the presidency immediately if needed, he has said, a reminder of how much Mr. Biden values experience.

“It’s a big process for him, having been vice president,” said former Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia, who has spoken with Mr. Biden. “For him, the most important thing is, who can step in? Who can help him lead?”

Mr. Biden is weighing other factors as well. Some allies are focused on which potential running mate could most excite progressive voters who are currently unenthusiastic about Mr. Biden.

Others argue that selecting a woman of color — Ms. Harris, with her experience in the national spotlight, is the most obvious choice — is critical to turning out younger members of the Latino or African-American communities, depending on the choice.

And still others say that Democrats will turn out regardless of the running mate and that the priority should be engaging more independent-minded voters.

The campaign has not yet announced a search committee or any other details of the process other than promising a thorough vetting operation. But in the Tuesday interview with MSNBC’s Brian Williams, Mr. Biden said he hoped to have an operation to “run the background checks” in place by mid-April.

On a staff level, several Democrats interviewed said they expected a cadre of Mr. Biden’s longtime advisers to have input. But they said they also expected Mr. Biden to consider a wider range of outside perspectives as he assesses potential candidates.

Part of the advantage of putting prominent Democratic leaders in charge of the search, as Mr. Obama did, is that it could help ensure broad acceptance of the eventual selection across a fragmented party.

Several Biden allies suggested it would be important for the search panel itself to reflect the diversity of the party, so that any disappointed constituencies feel at least that they were listened to in the process.

Traditionally, said former Senator Christopher J. Dodd of Connecticut, a friend of Mr. Biden’s, there are “certain people you’d seek out to conduct the vetting process and so forth. I think he’d like to hear from a broader spectrum of people.”

That is a priority for Representative Cedric Richmond, Democrat of Louisiana and Mr. Biden’s national campaign co-chairman, who said that he expected to be part of the search process in some capacity, but that he was most concerned with ensuring any team reflected a range of views.

“Our candidate, since Day 1, has stressed diversity,” said Mr. Richmond, a former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. “Diversity in terms of gender, in terms of race, in terms of age.”

“So I think the vice president’s search committee should reflect the vice president’s values in that sense,” he added.

Mr. Clyburn, for his part, said he did not want to serve on a search committee, though many prominent Biden allies [*have said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/joe-biden-vice-president.html) that the Biden campaign should seriously consider Mr. Clyburn’s opinion on the matter, something they intend to do, Mr. Richmond said.

Asked if he had any names in mind, Mr. Clyburn quickly cited four of his colleagues: Representatives Marcia L. Fudge and Karen Bass as well as Ms. Demings and Ms. Harris.

Mr. Clyburn acknowledged that some black voters would be angry if Mr. Biden picks a white running mate — “I’m sure that would be the case,” he said — but was quick to note it was African-American women like his three daughters who helped Mr. Biden to the doorstep of the nomination without needing any additional inducement like a preferred vice-presidential choice.

“None of that is going to distract from our No. 1 goal, which is getting this guy out of office,” he said of President Trump.

Other allies and advisers have said that Ms. Klobuchar or Ms. Whitmer stands the best chance of helping Mr. Biden achieve that goal, because of their Midwest roots and abilities to connect with white ***working-class*** voters, many of whom embraced Mr. Trump in 2016.

Mr. Biden, himself a former senator, and Ms. Klobuchar in particular share both more centrist tendencies and a reverence for Washington institutions and bipartisan deal-making.

Some Democrats have cited those similarities in suggesting that Mr. Biden could have a comfortable working relationship with her, though others have suggested that she would not help Mr. Biden with one of his major weaknesses: motivating younger progressives to turn out.

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He argued that there were multiple ways to create the kind of coalition that can wrest back the presidency.

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PHOTOS: Joseph R. Biden Jr. said recently that he was still looking at somewhere between six and 10 potential running mates. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Senator Kamala Harris is often mentioned as a possible candidate for vice president, allies and advisers of Mr. Biden said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Leader of Far-Right Party Remains at Center of Political Storm in Italy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y2M-HXP1-JBG3-61SP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1568 words

**Byline:** By Jason Horowitz

**Body**

The hard-right leader may be poised for a breakthrough in two traditionally hostile regions. If he can win there, his opponents fear, he can win anywhere.

ROME -- Chaos once again reigns over Italian politics. The government is adrift. The political parties are cratering and cracking. But there remains one center of gravity around which everything revolves.

Matteo Salvini, the tough former interior minister and leader of the anti-migrant League party, is that organizing force, despite having lost his powerful position and grip on the government in a dramatic shake-up last summer.

Any semblance of stability comes from coalitions awkwardly forged to prevent him from prompting early elections and taking what he has called ''full powers.''

But on Sunday, Mr. Salvini will have an opportunity to apply what he hopes will be unbearable pressure on the tenuous bonds between his enemies in the fragile governing alliance.

Polls show that his hard-right League party is well positioned to win in regional elections in the northern region of Emilia-Romagna, which has for decades been synonymous with the Italian left, and in the region of Calabria -- in the country's south, from which Mr. Salvini not so long ago advocated secession.

If the rabble-rousing nationalist can win in these places, he will solidify his centrality and his case that he can win anywhere.

''That's the goal,'' he said in an interview this month in Emilia-Romagna after a long day of posing for selfies and campaigning in front of a floating Nativity scene, and dictating, quite literally, the day's news cycle to reporters. ''It would be a clear sign on a national level, but also on a European level.''

Sitting under an ''Italians First'' banner and surrounded by 400 party activists at a dinner in Lugo di Romagna, he ate pasta, sipped local red wine and spoke about how a victory in this traditionally left-leaning region would ''absolutely'' demonstrate that he should be the one leading the country.

Mr. Salvini predicted that his victory would ''open an enormous problem'' between the governing coalition of his former allies the Five Star Movement and the center-left Democratic Party, and make its collapse, and early elections, more likely.

Some damage had already been done. On Wednesday, Luigi Di Maio, the embattled political leader of Five Star, resigned his position amid falling poll numbers and climbing internal dissatisfaction.

But Mr. Salvini's problem is that the stronger he gets, the less incentive his opponents have to face him in new national elections. ''They can't delay forever,'' Mr. Salvini said.

In the meantime, liberals worry about the national significance of Mr. Salvini winning in Emilia-Romagna, long the Communist buckle of Italy's Red Belt.

A victory ''would mean that society has different values from before and wants an alternative,'' said Elly Schlein, a liberal candidate for local office, who took part in a tiny demonstration outside a Bologna theater where Mr. Salvini was warmly greeted at a holiday celebration for the children of police officers. ''A nationalist turn.''

A victory in Calabria would also clearly signal the national reach of Mr. Salvini's League, a party born as a northern secessionist movement that exalted an imaginary region called Padania.

For years, the party denigrated the south as a thieving leech on the resources of the more prosperous north. But as Mr. Salvini has shifted his ire to migrants coming illegally from Africa, he has expanded his base to the south.

''Calabrians and Italians first,'' he now says. ''Then the rest of the world.''

In Emilia-Romagna, he has tirelessly campaigned for his candidate, the League politician Lucia Borgonzoni, seeking to turn out his base in rural districts with his usual recipe of anti-migrant language and nostalgic appeals to the Italian good old days.

But Mr. Salvini has also sought to convince frustrated workers in the cities that the traditional left had abandoned them for big banking interests and that he was the working man's choice.

Above all, Mr. Salvini has sought to nationalize the election.

''It's not a regional election. Because for the first time in 50 years we can win,'' he told supporters in front of an enormous bonfire in Terra del Sole, referring to the left's longtime dominance of the region. ''And it's in your hands.''

Nationalizing the race is a strategy that makes particular sense in Emilia-Romagna, a wealthy region governed by the Democratic Party, where unemployment has shrunk, health care services are admired and the quality of life is high.

''The region has always been governed by the left, also governed well,'' said Claudio Casari, a 64-year-old carpenter who cheered Mr. Salvini as his ''captain'' outside a marine museum in Cesenatico.

But he said that a general Italian malaise had led young people to leave the country and the region, and that Italy needed a strong leader like Mr. Salvini to restore faith. ''He brings hope to Italy,'' Mr. Casari said.

Mr. Salvini's many detractors argued that he used his time in government to draw attention to himself and increase his political support with publicity stunts rather than help get Italy out of its slump.

On Tuesday, Mr. Salvini streamed video of himself buzzing the doorbell of a Tunisian family in a ***working class*** section of Bologna and asking the person who answered the intercom if their son dealt drugs, as locals asserted. The Tunisian ambassador protested that the incident ''was a deplorable provocation'' that ''stigmatized the whole Tunisian community in Italy.''

But national leaders of the Democratic Party are loath to make their case on the ground in Emilia-Romagna, and have largely steered clear of the region to keep the race local and play down the consequences if they lose.

Enthusiasm there has largely come from the Sardines, a liberal grass-roots movement created to stop Mr. Salvini.

The Sardines packed Bologna's main square with tens of thousands of people on Sunday night and plan to close out the race with a rally in the beach club where Mr. Salvini spent most of the summer. They have repeatedly taken credit for infusing the candidacy of the region's incumbent governor, Stefano Bonaccini, with life.

Mr. Bonaccini has himself urged voters to recall that Mr. Salvini is not on the ballot and that Ms. Borgonzoni, who picked fights with France over Leonardo da Vinci paintings as a Ministry of Culture under secretary and who struggled to name Emilia-Romagna's bordering regions in a radio interview, was the ''ghost candidate.''

''After Jan. 26, Salvini will leave,'' Mr. Bonaccini, who has not included his party's symbol in campaign posters, has repeatedly said. ''But Borgonzoni will stay in the region.''

Instead of delving into local issues, Mr. Salvini, who often dressed in the uniforms of Italy's law enforcement during his time in power, has fully immersed himself in the corduroy pants and jackets, sweaters and suede shoes associated with the liberal intellectuals and Communists who long held sway here.

He sings the folk song ''Romagna Mia'' at events. He waxes poetic about tortellini and elevated Parmesan cheese to a moral value.

But for Mr. Salvini, the substance of the remarks is often Matteo Salvini. He has developed a knack for victimization, a tactic in Italian politics perfected by former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who Mr. Salvini has fully eclipsed as the central player of Italy's right.

In the interview, Mr. Salvini clearly relished the attacks of his opponents.

''Surely it doesn't scare me, or do me harm,'' he said, adding: ''When there are protests against the League and Salvini, it only makes me happy. Because the regular Italian chooses -- either Salvini or that other stuff there.''

Most recently, Mr. Salvini has identified Italy's judicial system as his preferred foil in an effort to motivate voters.

Specifically, Mr. Salvini talks about the efforts of Sicilian magistrates to prosecute him for ''abduction,'' related to his refusal as interior minister to let a Coast Guard ship full of rescued migrants dock in Italy.

By trying him, he told the cheering crowd in Cesenatico, ''they will put the entire Italian people on trial.''

On Tuesday, he kicked off a ''FastForSalvini'' campaign, in which he urged his supporters to show solidarity with him in a daylong hunger strike. He began it with a cup of ginseng and vitamins.

More broadly, Mr. Salvini has managed to remain the object of obsession for Italy's varying political parties and media. His Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok posts reliably generate articles in the country's politically obsessed, and clubby, media.

At the marine museum in Cesenatico, when Italian reporters pleaded with him for a sound bite, he used the moment to decide what the day's subject of conversation would be.

''I haven't even read the papers today,'' Mr. Salvini, a little glassy-eyed, said as he popped some mints into his mouth. He opened up Il Corriere Della Sera newspaper on his cellphone and took a minute to scan through while the reporters waited silently.

A reporter of the state broadcaster RAI gave his microphone to a local Salvini supporter who stood next to him.

''Let's do it on the trial and the road deaths,'' Mr. Salvini said, pausing to collect his thoughts. ''And go.''

Then, they asked about the trial and the road deaths.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/22/world/europe/italy-salvini-elections-emilia-romagna-calabria.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/22/world/europe/italy-salvini-elections-emilia-romagna-calabria.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Matteo Salvini, the leader of the far-right League party, poses for selfies with a supporter in Faenza, Italy. Elly Schlein, left, fears a Salvini victory would mark a ''nationalist turn'' for the country. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIANNI CIPRIANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2020

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[***Newly Needy, And Abashed To Seek Help***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YJP-5991-JBG3-637K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 1, 2020 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1559 words

**Byline:** By Cara Buckley

**Body**

With coronavirus-related job losses, many workers are reluctantly seeking charity and unemployment benefits for the first time in their lives.

The cars arrived at the food bank in southern Dallas in a stream -- a minivan, a Chevrolet Tahoe, a sedan with a busted window, a Jaguar of unclear vintage. Inside the vehicles sat people who scarcely could believe they needed to be there.

There was a landscaper, a high school administrator, a college student, and Dalen Lacy, a warehouse worker and 7-Eleven clerk.

Like 70 percent of the people who showed up at Crossroads Community Services one day last week, Mr. Lacy had never been there before. But when the coronavirus pandemic drove the economy off a cliff, Mr. Lacy, 27 and a father of two, lost his warehouse job and saw his hours at 7-Eleven slashed.

''I've never had to actually do this,'' Mr. Lacy said, after a gloved pantry worker hefted a box of food into the trunk of the car he was riding in along with two neighbors. ''But I've got to do what I've got to do for my kids.''

By the hundreds of thousands, Americans are asking for help for the first time in their lives, from nail technicians in Los Angeles to airport workers in Fort Lauderdale, from bartenders in Phoenix to former reality show contestants in Minnesota. Biting back shame, and wondering guiltily about others in more dire straits, they are applying for unemployment, turning to GoFundMe, asking for money on Instagram, quietly accepting handouts from equally strapped co-workers, and showing up in unprecedented numbers at food banks, which in turn are struggling to meet soaring demand as volunteers, many of them retirees, stay home for safety.

David Greenfield, chief executive of Met Council, a nonprofit that provides food and housing assistance in New York City, said that at first, ''we saw retail workers, chefs and waiters, and restaurant owners.''

By last week, he said, they were seeing employees from law firms: ''Folks who in many cases were employed their entire lives.''

In its unsparing breadth, the crisis is pitting two American ideals against each other -- the e pluribus unum credo of solidarity and its near-religious devotion to the idea that hard work brings rewards. Those notions coexist peacefully in prosperous times.

Today, both are being put to the test, forcing the newly unemployed to re-evaluate beliefs about themselves and their country.

In St. Louis Park, Minn., Scott Theusch, 61, a mechanic, filed for unemployment benefits for the first time, becoming one of the record-shattering 3.3 million people who made claims across the country in one week. He set aside his deeply felt conviction that people who had to seek the aid, which is largely funded by payroll taxes on employers, weren't trying hard enough. ''There really isn't any option for people,'' Mr. Theusch said. ''They're told not to show up for work, so what do you do?''

In Los Angeles, Samantha Pasaye, a 29-year-old nail technician, pleaded for donations on Instagram after the salon where she worked shut its doors. The request made her mother cry. ''I'm not someone who asks for help,'' Ms. Pasaye said. ''I do everything by myself. But at this moment, I needed to put my pride aside.''

Another new Dallas food-bank client, Adedyo Codrington, a trade-show worker and union steward, filed for unemployment as soon as his jobs were canceled on March 8. But the first check would not arrive in time.

So Mr. Codrington, a 41-year-old father of two, went to the food bank, only to learn its supplies had run out. Humiliated, he tried again last week, arriving early. But people were already lined up around the block by then, and he left with a lone bag of green beans. Colleagues scrounged together $100 for him, but it is nearly gone, and he is down to eating just one meal a day, living off sugar water and what he calls ''wish sandwiches'' -- two slices of bread with imaginary filling.

''To go from making $1,500 to $2,000 a week,'' he said, ''to be reduced to this.''

Even with America's long tradition of giving, from immigrant-aid groups begun by religious organizations in the 19th century to the politically polarizing social welfare programs born in the 20th, rugged individualism has remained a defining feature of the national identity. Perhaps no class of worker is more lionized today than the start-up tech entrepreneur.

''A lot of people in the United States are very proud of feeling self-sufficient and independent,'' Alice Fothergill, a professor of sociology at the University of Vermont who has studied the human effects of natural disasters. ''This is something that is definitely going to be very, very difficult.''

She said that people who feel ashamed about seeking help are often the ones who need it the most. In one study of women who had endured devastating floods in North Dakota, she found that ***working-class*** and middle-class women were the ones who despaired most about needing public assistance, because of a fear of a loss of status. They did not want to be seen as poor. They also engaged in techniques to make it clear -- to themselves and others -- that they were accepting charity reluctantly, such as offering to pay for donated items and refusing to refer to their government-supplied trailers as ''home.''

Mr. Greenfield, of New York's Met Council, said the scores of people approaching his charity for the first time are roundly apologetic: ''They're saying: 'I'm sorry but can you help me? I'm sorry but I need food, I'm sorry but I need rent, I'm sorry but I need help.'''

For people of some means, deciding whether to file for benefits also involves second-guessing. Does the fact that others are in greater need mean that they should not apply, even if they are qualified?

Kirk DeWindt, 36, a personal trainer from Brooklyn Park, Minn. and a three-time contestant on ''The Bachelor'' television franchise, saw his business come to a halt after all in-person sessions had to be canceled. He has some savings, so when his mother urged him to apply for unemployment benefits, Mr. DeWindt hesitated.

''I'm in a more privileged situation than I would assume most that are filing,'' he said. ''So what do you do with that?'' He decided he would file.

The anonymity of the internet has helped some charity-seekers get over any shame, with restaurant and other business owners setting up online fund-raising campaigns that keep their workers' names private. On GoFundMe, some $120 million has been donated for campaigns related to the pandemic since the first week in March, a spokeswoman said. By comparison, that is more than four times as much as campaigns for the Australian wildfires raised in three months.

But unlike natural disasters, the pandemic has hit a far greater swath of people hard, making it difficult for some to gin up help. And some campaigns have fallen short.

In Phoenix, Raven Green, a 28-year-old single mother of two young girls, turned to GoFundMe after losing all three of her jobs -- bartending, promotional work and singing gigs -- in less than a week.

Ms. Green was terrified. She had a few days' worth of groceries but her car payment had wiped her out, and she wasn't sure she qualified for benefits. She set up a GoFundMe page seeking $1,500 but, abashed at having to ask for help, couldn't bring herself to share it on social media. ''I don't want people to know that I'm struggling like this,'' she said. As of Tuesday afternoon, the campaign had no donations.

(After this article appeared online Tuesday evening, she quickly raised double her original goal. ''Bless you all!'' she wrote to her donors.)

The abrupt change in circumstances may perhaps be toughest for people who reordered their whole lives around the American dream: immigrants.

Alex Rotaru, 48, a filmmaker and actor in Beverly Hills who left Romania at age 21, said, ''the idea of welfare from a communist country was quite natural to me.''

''When I came to America,'' he said, ''I never thought I would need it.''

He was wrestling with the idea of filing for unemployment after all his work screeched to a halt. Then he considered the stack of bills he faced. ''There was a certain embarrassment and I got over it quick thinking about my son,'' he said.

Ernst Virgile, 38, moved from Haiti with his wife in 2012, determined to work tirelessly. He held two jobs at the Fort Lauderdale airport, as a wheelchair attendant and in international arrivals customer support, and she worked in concessions. They saved painstakingly for a house, and bought one last year, where they are raising their three children, ages 7, 5 and 2. They were stunned when they both lost their jobs in March, and bereft.

Mr. Virgile's wife wept at the prospect of having to ask the bank to put their mortgage payments on hold. Mr. Virgile is still trying to figure out how to apply for food stamps and unemployment benefits, and fears seeking out food banks because of possible virus exposure.

They had never before needed such assistance, and both, he said, are devastated.

''We're not used to it,'' Mr. Virgile said. ''We knew before we got here that we had to work hard, very hard, to live the American dream. But we have to file unemployment. We have no choice. There's nothing we can do.''

Christina Capecchi, Marina Trahan Martinez and Adam Popescu contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/us/virus-food-banks-unemployment.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/us/virus-food-banks-unemployment.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Left, a client last week at a Dallas food bank. About 70 percent of those arriving that day had never been to the pantry. Kirk DeWindt, a former reality show contestant, had lost all of his personal training jobs because of social distancing concerns. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN ZIZZO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JENN ACKERMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

''I don't feel comfortable asking for help,'' said Jose Torres, who nevertheless went to the Dallas food bank after losing two jobs. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN ZIZZO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Raven Green, a single mother of two young girls, turned to GoFundMe after losing all three of her jobs in less than a week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAITLIN O'HARA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2020

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[***How Biden Can Govern in Spite of Everything***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6187-J691-DXY4-X14F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

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**Byline:** Kevin Baker

**Highlight:** It won’t be easy, but coming after a self-styled “disrupter” opens up its own possibilities.

**Body**

It won’t be easy, but coming after a self-styled “disrupter” opens up its own possibilities.

“The People Have Chosen EMPATHY,” read the video screens flanking President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris during their victory speeches in a Delaware parking lot on Saturday night.

They also told us that the people had chosen “UNITY” and “SCIENCE,” but they had it right the first time. Empathy — or rather, President Trump’s inability to even fake it — was what doomed him.

Politically, the arrival of Covid-19 should have been a godsend to Mr. Trump, as any experienced politician would have known. A natural disaster is a leader’s meat. No one was about to blame him for a virus that originated in China. All he had to do was to make a good-faith effort to suppress it — and to show empathy.

A President Trump who started each daily news conference at the height of the (now resurgent) pandemic by reading a letter from the loved one of a victim or lauding a frontline worker; a President Trump who flew into Detroit or Chicago, or even the “anarchist city” that is his native New York, with an Air Force One full of PPE; a President Trump who did everything he could to empathize with the American people and turn the medical response over to the experts, would likely have breezed to victory in last week’s election.

Yet in a wider sense, the president’s inability to even fake a show of empathy hamstrung his entire administration.

Mr. Trump ran and was elected as a “disrupter” president, in a long American tradition. Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, both Roosevelts and Ronald Reagan are previous examples of disrupters — presidents who upset the political status quo, broke up a political stalemate, resolved or at least confronted a lingering problem head on and changed the course of our country’s history. And different as the times they lived in and the problems they faced were, they all had one thing in common: an ability to empathize with Americans at a moment of confusion or crisis.

Jefferson, Jackson and both Roosevelts were wealthy landowners, Reagan was a former Hollywood star, and Lincoln a well-off railroad lawyer. Yet all of them were able to at least project a populist image: Jefferson greeting the British ambassador in his bedroom slippers, Jackson the very personification of frontier toughness, Reagan a genial alternative to the scowling, Cold War conservatism of Barry Goldwater. Teddy Roosevelt, the youngest man ever to hold the office, and his adorable family entranced the nation. Franklin Roosevelt was “the only man we ever had in the White House who would understand that my boss is a son-of-a-bitch,” as a North Carolina textile mill worker once said of F.D.R.

All of them had their own prejudices and hypocrisies, all of them failed or fell short at times. Yet they had more than just the common touch. They genuinely believed in what they were doing, were fully engaged in pushing the national project forward, whether or not we all agreed with what that project could or should be. They wanted to take us, ultimately, to where most Americans wanted to go.

Thomas Jefferson kept America from falling apart by refusing to retaliate in kind against the partisan violations of civil liberties and limits on immigration that had been installed under John Adams. He doubled the size of the country with the Louisiana Purchase, opening up vast new territories to satisfy the restless ambitions of the yeoman farmers in whom he put his faith — though in so doing, he also started an expansion of slavery and another dispossession of Native Americans. Jackson made white, male suffrage universal, and as a military leader had already added still more territories to the United States — though he also encouraged the growth of the slave power and included an unforgivable betrayal of America’s Native American allies, one that led to the genocide of the “Trail of Tears” and nearly overthrew the power of the U.S. Supreme Court in the bargain.

Lincoln ended the festering sin of slavery, even if at times he favored the idea of shipping Black people back to Africa. He passed legislation to provide land-grant colleges to the states and homesteads to the people, and flung the Transcontinental Railroad across the nation. Teddy Roosevelt pushed through the long-delayed, progressive reforms that first checked the absolute power of big business — though he embraced the fraudulent, white-supremacist theories of eugenics that were prevalent in his time, and embarked on imperialist adventures abroad. Franklin Roosevelt fundamentally changed the nature of American life, in the midst of battling the Great Depression and defeating worldwide fascism, although he also made limited progress on race and acceded to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. Ronald Reagan deregulated businesses and markets, and pushed the Cold War to a triumphant end, even as he destroyed much of the labor movement, ignored the plague of his day — AIDS — for years and played the race card in shrinking the social welfare state.

I would argue that Reagan was the most destructive and backward-looking of all the disrupters who preceded Mr. Trump, certainly in the modern era. Reagan’s policies created much of the disparity in wealth and opportunity so corrosive in American life today. But as President Barack Obama noted, Reagan was “transformative,” whether you agreed with what he did or not, and there is no doubt that his politics served as an inspiration to a generation of American conservatives and entrepreneurs. Flawed men with flawed policies, all of these presidential giants stood for something real that could be debated or denied.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, always seemed like a facsimile of a president, just as he had been mostly a facsimile of a builder, a casino magnate, an airline owner, a university founder. Even when he was playing a business tycoon on TV, his lines and his persona were largely provided by the show’s producer. He was a virtual man in a virtual era, and for a time that served him well. He came to power repeating the grievances of the man on a bar stool — or in his case, on a golf course. He could be funny and audacious and irreverent, and his followers adored that, mistaking it for honesty and openness. What president other than Mr. Trump would announce that he had thought of getting a dog, but that it “feels a little phony to me.” “That’s not the relationship I have with my people,” he said.

Yet in the end the president also had no coherent plan, no worldview to address the concerns of the tens of millions who voted for him, because in the end he possessed no ability to truly put himself in their place and discern what they might want beyond the superficial grumblings of another working day.

Mr. Trump, it is true, faced more amorphous problems than previous disrupter presidents — how to humanize globalization and make it work for all Americans; how to deal with the challenge of a revitalized China and rapid climate change — but he came up with only amorphous solutions or pure denial. Sporadic stabs at reworking trade deals, throwing up part of a border wall to stop illegal immigration from Mexico, railing against this or that foreign nation, embracing the coal industry in its death throes. He failed utterly to do what any effective leader must do, which is to convert vague feeling into specific policies. Worse even than the ineffectuality of these erratic approaches was the lack of any humanity underlying them, the disdain that kept slipping out: the separation of immigrant children from their parents at the border; the characterization of other countries and the people who live in them as beneath contempt; the description of veterans as “suckers” and “losers.”

Donald Trump, like other presidents before him, grasped and mastered the new media of his day — but it was a devil’s bargain. Unlike other presidents, he never backed out of the public eye because ’round-the-clock entertainment is what the internet requires. The internet is also all about entertainment at any cost, not empathy or humanity, and lost in its brambles Mr. Trump could not find a way forward (if he was ever interested in that), or to find the hearts, and the real wounds of his supporters (if he was ever interested in that).

Empathy is not something that Joe Biden has ever been accused of lacking. (I write this as the recipient of a Biden bearhug at one of his speaking engagements, even though I had never met him before and he doesn’t know me from Adam.) He will need every bit of it in the days and the years ahead.

The challenge to Mr. Biden before Election Day looked as if it would be holding together a broad coalition and organizing it to deal with the same challenges Mr. Trump had faced and more. The question of how to proceed was fraught. All American political coalitions hold the seeds of their own destruction and the larger those coalitions are, the shorter they tend to last.

Instead, as it turned out, that coalition seemed to fracture before it ever took power. For various reasons, some of the male Hispanic and Black voters Mr. Biden had hoped to pick up did not come along, and his appeal to the white ***working class*** was more limited than had been hoped. Instead of riding a blue wave, the president-elect finds himself at the front of a Democratic Party that is at best a long shot to retake the U.S. Senate, that saw its majority in the House much diminished, and suffered yet another in what has now become a long string of state and local election losses.

This will greatly limit his options. Without the Senate, Mr. Biden will have no chance to expand the Supreme Court even if he wanted to. Some equivalent of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s Green New Deal is imperative as time runs out on stopping irreversible climate change, but good luck on getting that past a still powerful Republican opposition, or even a divided Democratic House caucus. Other ambitious proposals from the left, like statehood for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, or reparations for slavery are almost certainly dead letters. Expanding health care, increasing the wages and benefits of working people, even rebuilding the nation’s crumbling infrastructure — another unfulfilled Trump promise — will be an enormous lift and may require dispiriting compromises from Democrats. In some ways, an opposition party able to stifle a bold agenda will make it easier for the new administration to deal with the disparate parts of its coalition. But will anything get done, including things that have to be done and fast?

Given all this, how is a President Biden to act? Some clues might lie in the records of those presidents who followed not successful disrupter presidents — all of whom succeeded in putting their handpicked successors into power, one more proof of the popularity of their projects — but in those presidents who followed what Mr. Trump now appears to be: not a true disrupter at all, but a merely contentious president, with a rejected agenda.

These would include the likes of both Adamses, John Tyler, Andrew Johnson, William Howard Taft, Herbert Hoover, Richard Nixon and George W. Bush. Succeeding even such unpopular figures has often not been easy. But here a good model for Mr. Biden might be found in President Ulysses S. Grant, who replaced Andrew Johnson, an accidental president who ended up being at least as widely hated as Donald Trump. The slogan of Grant’s campaign — and his administration — came from his famous reply accepting the Republican Party nomination: “Let us have peace.”

This was more than merely a pious wish for harmony. Peace, for Grant, would mean suppressing the first Ku Klux Klan by force and trying to guarantee the civil and voting rights of newly free African-Americans through signing the Civil Rights Act of 1875 and supporting the passage of the 15th Amendment in 1870. He also appointed his longtime aide, Ely Parker, a Native American from the Seneca nation, commissioner of Indian Affairs, as part of a bold new “peace policy” of justice and reconciliation with Native American peoples throughout the continent. “Peace,” in other words, was not simply a sentiment, but an active effort to right old wrongs and forge a path to a more just and equal future.

Things didn’t work out as Grant hoped. White supremacists ended Reconstruction and canceled civil rights for Black people almost as soon as he was out of office. His Native American policies, well-intentioned though they were, proved to be misconceived and meaningless in the face of whites’ continuing desire to grab Indian lands. The runaway corruption of his own administration — and throughout American politics at the time — along with an economic crash in 1873, negated Grant’s large majorities in the Congress, and most of his reforms. But Grant’s essential decency shone through — at the time, and in a legacy that at least demonstrated what might be possible in American race relations (and for which his standing in the historical record has skyrocketed of late).

Or — for another example, there is Mr. Biden’s old boss, President Barack Obama. Mr. Obama’s caution frustrated many of us who had supported him, and he, too, ended up losing a congressional majority of a size that Mr. Biden will never get to enjoy. But he did guide America out of the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression, passed the first major, social welfare reform in forty years, and established a new presidential benchmark of decency, class and incorruptibility for the American presidency.

If Mr. Biden can emulate this achievement, it will be a good start toward mending the country without surrendering his principles or the reform platform he ran on. He will probably have to do it mostly through executive orders and key appointments — choosing a truly liberal secretary of labor or head of the Environmental Protection Agency would alone do wonders — but if nothing else, maybe the sense of empathy he will restore to the White House can pull him, and us, through.

Kevin Baker is a novelist and a historian and the author, most recently, of “[*The Fall of a Great American City*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Fall-of-a-Great-American-City/Kevin-Baker/9781947951143): New York and the Urban Crisis of Affluence.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Fall-of-a-Great-American-City/Kevin-Baker/9781947951143) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Fall-of-a-Great-American-City/Kevin-Baker/9781947951143). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Fall-of-a-Great-American-City/Kevin-Baker/9781947951143).

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PHOTO: Celebration time.  (PHOTOGRAPH BY Damon Winter/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2020

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[***Salvini Remains at the Eye of Italy’s Political Storm***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1Y-7B21-DXY4-X2CP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jason Horowitz

**Highlight:** The hard-right leader may be poised for a breakthrough in two traditionally hostile regions. If he can win there, his opponents fear, he can win anywhere.

**Body**

The hard-right leader may be poised for a breakthrough in two traditionally hostile regions. If he can win there, his opponents fear, he can win anywhere.

ROME — Chaos once again reigns over Italian politics. The government is adrift. The political parties are [*cratering*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/18/world/europe/italy-five-star.html?searchResultPosition=2) and   [*cracking*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/18/world/europe/italy-five-star.html?searchResultPosition=2). But there remains one center of gravity around which everything revolves.

Matteo Salvini, the tough former interior minister and leader of the anti-migrant League party, is that organizing force, despite having lost his powerful position and grip on the government in a dramatic shake-up last summer.

Any semblance of stability comes from coalitions awkwardly forged to prevent him from prompting early elections and taking what he has called “full powers.”

But on Sunday, Mr. Salvini will have an opportunity to apply what he hopes will be unbearable pressure on the tenuous bonds between his enemies in the fragile governing alliance.

Polls show that his hard-right League party is well positioned to win in regional elections in the northern region of Emilia-Romagna, which has for decades been synonymous with the Italian left, and in the region of Calabria — in the country’s south, from which Mr. Salvini not so long ago advocated secession.

If the rabble-rousing nationalist can win in these places, he will solidify his centrality and his case that he can win anywhere.

“That’s the goal,” he said in an interview this month in Emilia-Romagna after a long day of posing for selfies and campaigning in front of a floating Nativity scene, and dictating, quite literally, the day’s news cycle to reporters. “It would be a clear sign on a national level, but also on a European level.”

Sitting under an “Italians First” banner and surrounded by 400 party activists at a dinner in Lugo di Romagna, he ate pasta, sipped local red wine and spoke about how a victory in this traditionally left-leaning region would “absolutely” demonstrate that he should be the one leading the country.

Mr. Salvini predicted that his victory would “open an enormous problem” between the governing coalition of his former allies the Five Star Movement and the center-left Democratic Party, and make its collapse, and early elections, more likely.

Some damage had already been done. On Wednesday, [*Luigi Di Maio*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/18/world/europe/italy-five-star.html?searchResultPosition=2),   [*the embattled political leader of Five Star*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/18/world/europe/italy-five-star.html?searchResultPosition=2), resigned his position amid falling poll numbers and climbing internal dissatisfaction.

But Mr. Salvini’s problem is that the stronger he gets, the less incentive his opponents have to face him in new national elections. “They can’t delay forever,” Mr. Salvini said.

In the meantime, liberals worry about the national significance of Mr. Salvini winning in Emilia-Romagna, long the Communist buckle of Italy’s Red Belt.

A victory “would mean that society has different values from before and wants an alternative,” said Elly Schlein, a liberal candidate for local office, who took part in a tiny demonstration outside a Bologna theater where Mr. Salvini was warmly greeted at a holiday celebration for the children of police officers. “A nationalist turn.”

A victory in Calabria would also clearly signal the national reach of Mr. Salvini’s League, a party born as a northern secessionist movement that exalted an imaginary region called Padania.

For years, the party denigrated the south as a thieving leech on the resources of the more prosperous north. But as Mr. Salvini has shifted his ire to migrants coming illegally from Africa, he has expanded his base to the south.

“Calabrians and Italians first,” he now says. “Then the rest of the world.”

In Emilia-Romagna, he has tirelessly campaigned for his candidate, the League politician Lucia Borgonzoni, seeking to turn out his base in rural districts with his usual recipe of anti-migrant language and nostalgic appeals to the Italian good old days.

But Mr. Salvini has also sought to convince frustrated workers in the cities that the traditional left had abandoned them for big banking interests and that he was the working man’s choice.

Above all, Mr. Salvini has sought to nationalize the election.

“It’s not a regional election. Because for the first time in 50 years we can win,” he told supporters in front of an enormous bonfire in Terra del Sole, referring to the left’s longtime dominance of the region. “And it’s in your hands.”

Nationalizing the race is a strategy that makes particular sense in Emilia-Romagna, a wealthy region governed by the Democratic Party, where unemployment has shrunk, health care services are admired and the quality of life is high.

“The region has always been governed by the left, also governed well,” said Claudio Casari, a 64-year-old carpenter who cheered Mr. Salvini as his “captain” outside a marine museum in Cesenatico.

But he said that a general Italian malaise had led young people to leave the country and the region, and that Italy needed a strong leader like Mr. Salvini to restore faith. “He brings hope to Italy,” Mr. Casari said.

Mr. Salvini’s many detractors argued that he used his time in government to draw attention to himself and increase his political support with publicity stunts rather than help get Italy out of its slump.

On Tuesday, Mr. Salvini streamed video of himself buzzing the doorbell of a Tunisian family in a ***working class*** section of Bologna and asking the person who answered the intercom if their son dealt drugs, as locals asserted. The Tunisian ambassador protested that the incident “was a deplorable provocation” that “stigmatized the whole Tunisian community in Italy.”

But national leaders of the Democratic Party are loath to make their case on the ground in Emilia-Romagna, and have largely steered clear of the region to keep the race local and play down the consequences if they lose.

Enthusiasm there has largely come from the Sardines, a liberal grass-roots movement created to stop Mr. Salvini.

The Sardines packed Bologna’s main square with tens of thousands of people on Sunday night and plan to close out the race with a rally in the beach club where Mr. Salvini spent most of the summer. They have repeatedly taken credit for infusing the candidacy of the region’s incumbent governor, Stefano Bonaccini, with life.

Mr. Bonaccini has himself urged voters to recall that Mr. Salvini is not on the ballot and that Ms. Borgonzoni, who [*picked fights with France over Leonardo da Vinci*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/18/world/europe/italy-five-star.html?searchResultPosition=2) paintings as a Ministry of Culture under secretary and who struggled to name Emilia-Romagna’s bordering regions in a radio interview, was the “ghost candidate.”

“After Jan. 26, Salvini will leave,” Mr. Bonaccini, who has not included his party’s symbol in campaign posters, has repeatedly said. “But Borgonzoni will stay in the region.”

Instead of delving into local issues, Mr. Salvini, who often dressed in the uniforms of Italy’s law enforcement during his time in power, has fully immersed himself in the corduroy pants and jackets, sweaters and suede shoes associated with the liberal intellectuals and Communists who long held sway here.

He sings the folk song “Romagna Mia” at events. He waxes poetic about tortellini and elevated Parmesan cheese to a moral value.

But for Mr. Salvini, the substance of the remarks is often Matteo Salvini. He has developed a knack for victimization, a tactic in Italian politics perfected by former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who Mr. Salvini has fully eclipsed as the central player of Italy’s right.

In the interview, Mr. Salvini clearly relished the attacks of his opponents.

“Surely it doesn’t scare me, or do me harm,” he said, adding: “When there are protests against the League and Salvini, it only makes me happy. Because the regular Italian chooses — either Salvini or that other stuff there.”

Most recently, Mr. Salvini has identified Italy’s judicial system as his preferred foil in an effort to motivate voters.

Specifically, Mr. Salvini talks about the efforts of Sicilian magistrates to prosecute him for “abduction,” related to his refusal as interior minister to let a Coast Guard ship full of rescued migrants dock in Italy.

By trying him, he told the cheering crowd in Cesenatico, “they will put the entire Italian people on trial.”

On Tuesday, he kicked off a “FastForSalvini” campaign, in which he urged his supporters to show solidarity with him in a daylong hunger strike. He began it with a cup of ginseng and vitamins.

More broadly, Mr. Salvini has managed to remain the object of obsession for Italy’s varying political parties and media. His Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok posts reliably generate articles in the country’s politically obsessed, and clubby, media.

At the marine museum in Cesenatico, when Italian reporters pleaded with him for a sound bite, he used the moment to decide what the day’s subject of conversation would be.

“I haven’t even read the papers today,” Mr. Salvini, a little glassy-eyed, said as he popped some mints into his mouth. He opened up Il Corriere Della Sera newspaper on his cellphone and took a minute to scan through while the reporters waited silently.

A reporter of the state broadcaster RAI gave his microphone to a local Salvini supporter who stood next to him.

“Let’s do it on the trial and the road deaths,” Mr. Salvini said, pausing to collect his thoughts. “And go.”

Then, they asked about the trial and the road deaths.

PHOTOS: Matteo Salvini, the leader of the far-right League party, poses for selfies with a supporter in Faenza, Italy. Elly Schlein, left, fears a Salvini victory would mark a “nationalist turn” for the country. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIANNI CIPRIANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Kicked Out of China, and Other Real-Life Costs of a Geopolitical Meltdown***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60C8-T3G1-DXY4-X0SG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION; sunday

**Length:** 1924 words

**Byline:** Ian Johnson

**Highlight:** When countries clash, here’s what happens to those of us caught in the middle.

**Body**

When countries clash, here’s what happens to those of us caught in the middle.

LONDON — Soon after I was informed in mid-March that my journalist visa for China had been canceled, I faced a dilemma: what to do with my collection of wooden staffs used in a style of Chinese martial arts that I had been practicing for nearly 10 years.

Should I give them back to my master, an affable 40-year-old bus driver and inheritor of the practice, who had made it his life’s work to revive the stick fighting that had once been so common in Beijing’s ***working-class*** neighborhoods? Or should I have the movers ship them to London, where I would now be living?

The staffs weren’t expensive and I could buy them at martial arts shops in any major city around the world. On the other hand, my teacher didn’t really need them: He had a storeroom full of sticks that he used to teach anyone interested for free.

Yet mine were priceless to me. Made of white ash, many were darkened with the sweat and oil from other people’s hands, especially my sparring partner, a carpenter who had spent countless hours in a park helping me learn the steps to the different fighting poses. I felt that the staffs belonged there, in Beijing. But they also were part of me and I wanted them, even if I wouldn’t have anyone to practice with anymore.

In the big picture my dilemma sounds like a ridiculously petty problem: Compared with the daily circus of the Trump administration, the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, even the dispute between China and the United States seems like another one of those international spats that matter little outside the navel-gazing world of China-watchers.

If this dispute does matter beyond that, it surely is on the abstract stage of geopolitics, where people [*move aircraft carriers*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html), [*plot sanctions*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html) and wield diplomatic ties like chits on a board game.

But [*the meltdown in China-United States relations*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html) has real-life implications as well. Taken individually, stories of severed friendships and strained family ties seem insignificant — certainly they do when you talk to a true believer who thinks that the United States’ policy toward China is necessary to make the world safe for democracy. Yet cumulatively these small wounds change how all of us experience the world, forming a collective trauma over the loss of an optimistic era dating back several decades, when the world seemed to be opening up, however imperfectly.

Not to sound maudlin, but people like me built our lives around a premise: that the world was interconnected and that it was a worthwhile calling to devote one’s life to making other cultures a tiny bit more intelligible. And also that even if dedicating oneself to this life wasn’t going to be easy or necessarily well-paid (unless one wanted to hawk dodgy Chinese securities), it would be meaningful and was in some way safe: The world wasn’t about to return to old-style blocs, where people from one camp couldn’t enter the other’s side. This was a world of standardized visas, regular flights and some sort of career prospects, whether in business, journalism, academics or cultural exchanges.

For me, it was an invitation to study Chinese starting in my sophomore year of college and work at the school newspaper. Later, I went to Beijing and wrote a senior thesis about North American journalism in China because I wanted to understand the best way to report on the country. I got a master’s degree in Chinese studies to help prepare me to become a correspondent in China, and went to Taiwan to improve my Chinese.

None of this meant I was entitled to a job as a correspondent, but along the way people almost always nodded and said that I was choosing a smart career path. China was an evermore important country in the world, business ties were increasing and we would always need to know about this growing giant.

But like many people who have devoted themselves to learning about another place, immersing myself in all things Chinese became more than a clever career choice: It became my calling. Yes, China had political oppression and air pollution and a million other problems, yet I came to love it — from the culture and the people to its can-do spirit and embrace of innovation.

My bucket list of places to visit before leaving — the expat’s eternal calculation — never got shorter. In fact, it grew longer each year.

The more I stayed in China, the more I learned and the more I wanted to see: more holy mountains, more breathtaking landscapes, more places where Chinese myths had their roots, more homes of famous artists or writers, more friends in different cities.

After a while that idea came to seem idiotic: What was the point of living in a country that was just a checklist of things to be done and then abandoned? That wasn’t living; that was dying.

The years added up, and one day I realized that I’d spent more of my life in China than any other place on the planet — more than the 15 years in my country of birth, Canada, the dozen in the United States, where I moved during high school and became a citizen, or the decade in Germany.

China wasn’t an easy country to call home. It is the original land of genetic determinism; you cannot really become Chinese unless you look a certain way. You can be sixth-generation Chinese-American, speak only “ni hao ma” and know little more about the place than General Tso’s Chicken, but to China (and to many Americans in the United States) you’re Chinese.

Conversely, even though I had lived there for so long, learned the language and so on, I would never become Chinese. On a practical level, it’s almost legally impossible to settle down and become a citizen: There is no real equivalent to a green card nor, therefore, a real immigrant culture. And yet it was a place that I had loved from my first visit in 1984 and that I still loved when I left earlier this year.

The yearning to belong works the other way around, too. Many Chinese people went to the United States to study and came to love that country. Many built their lives around settling in America while also being able to jet back to China for family holidays. They started to pay attention to American politics, they put up with discrimination, and one day they realized that their children hadn’t just been born in the United States but had grown up there. In some way, they were American, even if they still had Chinese passports.

For all of us, the Covid-19 pandemic has made transcontinental living more difficult. But the real damage is longer term: The worsening of ties between countries means that today people are viewed suspiciously for things that previously were lauded.

Chinese who went to the United States to study — once seen as a great boon to America — are now often treated as saboteurs or spies. The Trump administration has visited petty humiliations and slights upon many foreigners, insisting on calling the new coronavirus the “[*Chinese virus”*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html) or [*suspending the work visas of hundreds of thousands of non-Americans*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html) in the name of controlling the pandemic.

I cannot excuse China’s behavior in recent years — the [*internment camps for Uighurs*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html), the incessant[*crackdown on free speech*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html), the territorial grabs in the South China Sea — but the Chinese Communist Party has always made its ambitions and methods clear. What it is doing isn’t shocking if you’ve paid attention to the way it obtained power and has held it over the past seven decades.

What has changed are the strategies and tactics that the United States now deploys to deal with China. Starting in the 1970s, a bipartisan policy of engagement was pursued, with the idea that it would help bind China to the international order.

Some critics of China claim that engagement was always a naïve dream and, as evidence, point to the fact that China [*hasn’t become more liberal*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html). But most realists knew that democratization was at best a distant objective; the main idea was that [*pragmatic engagement*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html) would be more productive than blind confrontation.

Yet blind confrontation is now the order of the day. And just as people who understood China had predicted, the result has been zero. America’s trade dispute has yielded no change in China’s behavior and no grand deal benefiting American producers. No Uighurs have been let out of camps. Hong Kong is less free. And Western reporters’ access to information about China has been kneecapped, thanks to the expulsion of foreign reporters.

These expulsions were the direct result of American policy. In March, the Trump administration in effect [*expelled some 60 Chinese journalists from the United States*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html), arguing — disingenuously, I think — that the move was retaliation for the mistreatment of foreign reporters in China.

The numbers might seem small. In addition to myself, only about a dozen other journalists [*were kicked out of China*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html) then. The expulsion order concerned holders of American passports whose visas were due to be renewed in 2020 and were sponsored by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post.

But in practice it gutted the American press corps in China. That’s because only these media organizations, especially the Times and the Journal, had the staff and the budget to mount ambitious investigative reporting on sensitive issues there, such as the treatment of the Uighurs, the finances of senior leaders or the rise of digital surveillance.

The few reporters who remain will hardly have the resources for such projects, meaning that outsiders’ understanding of China will be increasingly limited to daily news.

For the ideologues in the White House this outcome doesn’t matter: Taking a hard-line approach against China today is just [*unavoidable realpolitik*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html).

The main goal, however, has nothing to do with standing up to China; it’s about turning China into a tool to help President Trump get re-elected in the fall. And if his tough talk hurts the Times, the Journal and the Post, then so much the better. Mr. Trump’s real objective is to dupe American voters into thinking that China is responsible for the coronavirus and, by extension, for the economic depression the pandemic has caused.

That’s why my agony over being expelled from China is so acute. I could accept leaving if China really were 1930s Germany and the world were heading toward a necessary showdown. But China is not Nazi Germany, despite [*what some have claimed*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html).

Yes, many of its policies are antithetical to the values of open societies, yet the country still has many people with whom outsiders can engage: independent filmmakers, writers, intellectuals, even government officials. Some form of engagement will continue, but it’s hard to see most of the study-abroad programs, academic exchanges, tourism or, of course, investigative journalism returning in the near future.

For months I couldn’t decide what to do with my fighting sticks. Finally, last week I wrote to my teacher asking for his advice.

He told me to keep them, saying we shared something called “yuan” — fate, or an affinity.

“Please take them to a park in London and practice with them there,” he said. “And think of us.”

Ian Johnson (@iandenisjohnson) is the author most recently of “The Souls of China: The Return of Religion After Mao.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/06/asia/south-china-sea-aircraft-carriers-intl-hnk-scli/index.html).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael Houtz FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2020

**End of Document**



[***'Nobody Likes Him': Clinton's Shot at Sanders Rattles Democrats***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y20-YFY1-JBG3-63JH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer and Sydney Ember

**Body**

Mrs. Clinton's sharp criticism of her former rival in an upcoming documentary series ricocheted across the Democratic Party on Tuesday, threatening to reopen the barely healed wounds of 2016.

WASHINGTON -- For three years, Hillary Clinton has watched the Democratic Party search for a path forward in the Trump era.

She's watched as liberals and moderates clashed on how best to fight President Trump and a White House that was almost hers. She's watched as some voters questioned the ''electability'' of the six women running for president, doubts that she once faced. She's watched as Senator Bernie Sanders has risen, after his withering opposition to her in the 2016 presidential primary, to become the dominant liberal force in the 2020 race.

And she'd largely refrained from weighing in -- until Tuesday morning, when The Hollywood Reporter published an interview with Mrs. Clinton promoting a new documentary about her that will premiere on Saturday at the Sundance Film Festival. In the documentary, she rips into Mr. Sanders and declines to say if she would endorse him and campaign on his behalf if he were to win the Democratic nomination.

''Nobody likes him, nobody wants to work with him, he got nothing done. He was a career politician,'' she said. ''It's all just baloney and I feel so bad that people got sucked into it.'' Asked by The Reporter recently if that assessment still held, she replied, ''Yes, it does.''

Her remarks ricocheted across the Democratic Party on Tuesday, threatening to reopen the barely healed wounds of the 2016 primary, a race that quickly turned from a near-coronation of Mrs. Clinton as the party's first female nominee into a bitter battle that exposed a deep ideological rift among Democrats.

That split over what direction the party should take is now a major issue in the current primary, with Mr. Sanders arguing for the full-throated leftist agenda and others counseling moderation. At the same time, he is engaged in a standoff with his liberal ally in the 2020 race, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, that has divided some on the left, over her accusation that he told her in 2018 that a woman could not win the presidency.

Mr. Sanders has denied that remark. Mrs. Clinton, for her part, seized on it and said it was ''part of a pattern,'' noting that he said in 2016 that Mrs. Clinton was unqualified to be president.

Some Democrats fear that Mrs. Clinton is adding fuel to the tensions within the party, whose leaders have spent years trying to overcome the lingering hostilities of the 2016 campaign, hoping to unify Democrats around the singular mission of defeating Mr. Trump.

''I just don't think it's appropriate for Democrats to be criticizing other Democrats, especially with personal attacks like that,'' said Gilberto Hinojosa, the chairman of the Texas Democratic Party, who supported both of Mrs. Clinton's primary bids. ''I understand why there can be bitterness out there. I believe we just need to leave that behind us.''

Representatives of both Mr. Sanders and Mrs. Clinton moved quickly to try to quell the furor on Tuesday. Fresh off recent battles with not only Ms. Warren but also former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., Mr. Sanders's campaign was eager to avoid another fight that would distract from his closing message less than two weeks before the Iowa presidential caucuses. Mr. Sanders apologized on Monday to Mr. Biden after a Sanders campaign surrogate wrote an opinion article accusing the former vice president of having ''a big corruption problem.''

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday in Washington, Mr. Sanders said: ''Secretary Clinton is entitled to her point of view. My job today is to focus on the impeachment trial.''

When asked for his response to Mrs. Clinton's assertion that no one liked him, he joked that ''on a good day, my wife likes me, so let's clear the air on that one.''

Mrs. Clinton tried to clarify her remarks on Tuesday evening. ''I thought everyone wanted my authentic, unvarnished views!'' she wrote on Twitter. ''But to be serious, the number one priority for our country and world is retiring Trump, and, as I always have, I will do whatever I can to support our nominee.''

Those who have spoken to Mrs. Clinton recently confirm that she has every intention of supporting the Democratic nominee -- even if Mr. Sanders ends up winning the primary. Still, even some longtime allies were shocked that she voiced such criticisms of Mr. Sanders in an election year, so close to the start of primary voting.

They were far less surprised by the content of her remarks.

Mr. Sanders's denial in his dispute with Ms. Warren over whether he had told her a woman could not defeat Mr. Trump infuriated Mrs. Clinton, according to people close to her. Mr. Sanders's subsequent refusal to chastise his supporters for attacking Ms. Warren and her team online only added to her concern.

''It's not only him, it's the culture around him. It's his leadership team. It's his prominent supporters. It's his online Bernie Bros,'' Mrs. Clinton told The Reporter. ''It should be worrisome that he has permitted this culture -- not only permitted, seems to really be very much supporting it.''

People close to Mrs. Clinton say she has grown worried that attacks from Mr. Sanders's campaign could hurt the future Democratic nominee in much the same way that she believes they did lasting damage to her. She worries he will not drop out of the race even if it becomes clear he cannot win the nomination, a situation that could exacerbate divisions in the party.

Mrs. Clinton also does not believe Mr. Sanders could beat Mr. Trump, telling friends for months that he has never sustained harsh attacks from fellow Democrats on his record and self-described democratic socialism.

Since Mr. Sanders endorsed Mrs. Clinton in July 2016, the acrimony between the two camps has lingered. Mrs. Clinton and her former aides maintain that his endorsement came too late and was too lukewarm to truly unify the party. Some supporters of Mr. Sanders still argue that the Democratic National Committee ''rigged'' the rules to help her secure the nomination.

Unlike nearly all of the other two dozen Democratic candidates this primary cycle, Mr. Sanders did not call Mrs. Clinton before he entered the race.

Jane Kleeb, the Nebraska Democratic Party chairwoman, said that she understood Mrs. Clinton's concerns but that voicing frustrations was unproductive for the party.

''She has obviously a very different vantage than any of us ever will. She worked her entire career and she was taken down by forces out of her control,'' said Ms. Kleeb, who backed Mr. Sanders in the 2016 primary but recalled crying as she listened to Mrs. Clinton's audiobook about her campaign. ''I understand why she's frustrated with Senator Sanders but I also think this is time to go after Trump.''

Though Mrs. Clinton's presidential defeat still weighs heavily on her, friends say she is busy with a variety of other projects, traveling to accept awards and honorary degrees. An avid theatergoer, she attends Broadway shows and has been spotted at several concerts, including Fleetwood Mac, Earth Wind and Fire and Billy Joel. She spends a lot of time with her three grandchildren and, this fall, released a book profiling ''gutsy women'' with her daughter, Chelsea.

Still, at times, Mrs. Clinton's pique about 2016 has come out.

In December, she participated in a two-and-a-half-hour interview with the radio host Howard Stern, during which she argued that Mr. Sanders ''hurt'' her during the 2016 campaign.

Among some in Mr. Sanders's campaign, there was hope that Mrs. Clinton's remarks would lead to a bump in fund-raising.

On Twitter, the hashtag #ILikeBernie became a top trending topic. Many supporters pounced on Mrs. Clinton's remarks, arguing that she remained out of touch with the ***working-class*** Americans who back Mr. Sanders.

''No apologies, no backing down, the scorn and hatred that all of official Washington D.C. and the Democratic Party has for him and his supporters is his closing case,'' Will Menaker, a host of the progressive podcast Chapo Trap House, wrote on Twitter on Tuesday. ''They are corrupt and evil, they hate him and they hate you because you are not.''

Alexandra Rojas, the executive director of the progressive group Justice Democrats, called Mrs. Clinton's statement ''unacceptable, out of touch and dangerous.''

Though some of his supporters and staff members have been itching for confrontation, Mr. Sanders has rejected recent traps to get him to relitigate 2016. Last week, after Mr. Trump tried to goad Mr. Sanders by saying the Democratic Party was rigging the 2020 election against him again, he refused to bite and instead issued a statement attacking Mr. Trump.

Yet the furor over Mrs. Clinton's remarks is unlikely to die down anytime soon, as she continues promoting the new documentary, ''Hillary,'' which is set to be released on Hulu a few days after Super Tuesday.

''She obviously has deeply held feelings about what happened in 2016 and is hellbent on stopping Sanders now,'' said David Axelrod, who served as a top strategist on Barack Obama's primary bid against Mrs. Clinton in 2008. ''If the goal of Democrats is to win, I'm not sure that interventions like this are likely to help unify and mobilize all elements of the party in the fall. She, of all people, should know that.''

Lisa Lerer reported from Washington, and Sydney Ember from Des Moines. Matt Stevens contributed reporting from New York.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/21/us/politics/hillary-clinton-bernie-sanders.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/21/us/politics/hillary-clinton-bernie-sanders.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Hillary Clinton and Senator Bernie Sanders campaigned together after the 2016 primaries, but some acrimony has lingered. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19)

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2020

**End of Document**



[***How Many Lines Can a Politician Cross? Kentucky Governor Is a Cautionary Tale***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XFR-FC61-DXY4-X1WW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Campbell Robertson, Rick Rojas and Jonathan Martin

**Highlight:** Even with President Trump’s support, Matt Bevin’s poor showing in Kentucky served notice that unpopular candidates from a dominant party can struggle to survive.

**Body**

Even with President Trump’s support, Matt Bevin’s poor showing in Kentucky served notice that unpopular candidates from a dominant party can struggle to survive.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Donna Jimenez, a registered Republican, voted for Matt Bevin when he successfully ran for governor of Kentucky in 2015, heartened by his support for foster care and adoption. But a lot can happen in four years.

“The name-calling, the behavior,” said Ms. Jimenez, a 52-year-old former teacher, referring to his repeated, denigrating attacks on educators. “That’s not someone I’d want to represent Kentucky.”

Mr. Bevin entered Election Day on Tuesday with many advantages: As a G.O.P. incumbent in an increasingly red state, as an ally of President Trump (who spoke at [*a rally*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html) for Mr. Bevin the night before) and as a conservative whose views on abortion, guns and coal resonated with many in the state. Yet he ran into hardened opposition from voters like Ms. Jimenez who decided he had crossed the line too many times in his conduct and comments in office.

Mr. Bevin is now running roughly [*5,000 votes behind*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html) the Democratic candidate, Andy Beshear, and has refused to concede while asking for a statewide recanvassing of votes.The political backlash against Mr. Bevin stands in sharp contrast to the oft-repeated argument by Mr. Trump that he could say or do anything and his supporters would never abandon him. The vote results in Kentucky and a handful of other states suggest that the president’s theory does not apply to other Republicans — and raises questions about whether some of the moderate and [*suburban voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html) who turned against Mr. Bevin on Tuesday might also desert Mr. Trump in 2020 if offered an acceptable alternative.

Mr. Bevin’s supporters and detractors alike attributed his problems at the ballot box to his particular limitations as a politician, rather than any larger rejection of Republicans. All other statewide Republican candidates in Kentucky easily prevailed on Tuesday. But Mr. Trump’s ability to vault his preferred Republican candidates to victory in red states is not boundless, coming up short when it comes to particularly unpopular candidates, like Roy Moore in Alabama, and the Kentucky results seemed to affirm that there are limits to what you can do and say and still be elected.

In the current hyperpartisan era, Mr. Bevin’s close identification with Mr. Trump might have seemed like a winning strategy, given that Mr. Trump was staring down impeachment and urging his supporters to send a message by backing the governor.

But the anger of many Kentuckians about Mr. Bevin’s rolling back of government benefits like public pensions and Medicaid, and the startlingly abrasive way he went about it, proved to be a force even stronger than the tidal pull of red-versus-blue politics. Teachers, [*Republican legislators*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html), even [*members of his own administration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html) said they had been bullied and insulted by Mr. Bevin, and thousands of fed-up educators across the state went to work for his defeat.

“This race is about a governor who has brought a bad agenda to the people of Kentucky, and while he has done that, he has mocked our people, he’s called them names, he’s disrespected them, he’s locked them out of the Capitol building,” said Rocky J. Adkins, the Democratic state House leader and runner-up in the Democratic primary to Mr. Beshear. “I think after a while when you slap people around long enough and you knock down people, you kick them long enough, they’re going to find a time to get even.”

The intensely close vote in such a conservative state demonstrated the limits of attempting to [*nationalize state elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html), highlighted the anti-Trump intensity of urban and suburban voters and heartened moderate Democrats eyeing 2020 who were delighted to see a pragmatic candidate unseat a disliked Republican incumbent.

Taken together with the Democrats’ capture of the Virginia state legislature, the Kentucky results indicate that liberal and moderate voters are as energized now as they were in last year’s midterm elections.

But just as 2018 demonstrated that Republicans can still make gains in conservative states, no matter how poor the national political environment, Tuesday also captured the limitations Democrats face in red states when they are not running against flawed opponents. In Mississippi, Democrats fielded their most promising nominee for governor in 16 years, Attorney General Jim Hood, but could not come within five points of defeating Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves, who had faced a contested primary.

These results make the last campaign of 2019, the Louisiana governor’s race a week from Saturday, even more symbolically important: It is a test of whether a relatively popular Democrat, Gov. John Bel Edwards, can be re-elected against a little-known Republican businessman, Eddie Rispone, in a pro-Trump state. The president appeared with Mr. Rispone on Wednesday in Louisiana, but it was the results Tuesday from across the state line, in Mississippi, that seemed ominous for Democrats.

Mr. Hood was well-funded, received help from national Democratic groups and hoped to defeat the button-down Mr. Reeves with a down-home style and old-fashioned populism, including a promise to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

But Mr. Hood was unable to win over ***working-class*** white voters, including many who voted for him in his previous races for attorney general.

“All this partisanship, you know, is something that hopefully will change,” a dismayed Mr. Hood told supporters on Tuesday night, speaking in unusually personal terms. “It has gotten to such an extent that people that you know and go to church with don’t vote for you, you know. And something’s wrong with that.”

Mr. Reeves was not universally adored within his own party. Despite being a heavily favored front-runner, he was forced into a primary runoff in August after a strong showing by a former state Supreme Court justice. Mr. Reeves had made several enemies in the powerful lieutenant governor’s office, and some Republican officials were simply turned off by what they saw as his highhanded style.

But any shortcomings were not, in the end, deal breakers. Mr. Reeves made the case that he and his fellow Republicans had been good stewards of Mississippi’s economy, and deserved credit for [*improvements in standardized test scores*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html) of the state’s grade-school students.

And, of course, Mr. Reeves had Mr. Trump.

Last Friday, the president came to Tupelo, in the heart of northeast Mississippi and home to Mr. Hood — an anti-abortion, pro-gun Democrat who had kept the race close with ads that emphasized his country bona fides (truck, hunting dog, guns). White voters in the region had been splitting their tickets, to Mr. Hood’s advantage, for years.

But Mr. Trump was there to bring them fully into the Republican fold, and, in between railing against impeachment, he called Mr. Hood a “liberal Democrat” who supported Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

The combination of the president issuing a which-side-are-you-on plea and the presence of an uncontroversial, though not beloved Republican on the ballot made it all but impossible for Democrats to narrow the gap.

“I just think it’s numbers,” said Hampton Glover, 56, a tax attorney from Meridian, Miss., who was at Mr. Hood’s party on Tuesday. “It’s Republicans voting for their nominee. It’s as simple as that.”

Increasingly, it seems that the only time it is not that simple in Republican-dominated states is under extraordinary circumstances. Doug Jones is a Democratic senator from Alabama because Mr. Moore’s conduct with underage girls proved too much for voters there. Conservative-leaning Kansas now has a Democratic governor, Laura Kelly, after Republicans nominated Kris Kobach, a hard-liner who turned off suburbanites. In Louisiana, Mr. Edwards is running as an incumbent because enough people were turned off by his Republican opponent in 2015: David Vitter, who had been caught in a prostitution scandal. And now Mr. Bevin risks the same fate.

At the Republican election night party at a hotel in Louisville, the winning candidates walked up to a roomful of cheers, one by one. Agriculture commissioner, treasurer, auditor. Republicans won control of the secretary of state’s office. Daniel Cameron became the state’s first Republican attorney general to be elected in more than 70 years — and [*its first black attorney general*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html).

That the G.O.P. held on to supermajorities in the state legislature last year, even after thousands of teachers walked out to protest budget cuts and changes to their pensions — protests that Mr. Bevin had [*described as “ignorant”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html) and [*leading to child abuse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/politics/trump-lexington-rally.html) — had convinced many Republicans that the party had little to worry about. And generally they were right, with the exception of the governor himself.

“We targeted specifically Matt Bevin,” said Nema Brewer, who helped start a group, KY 120 United, to support public educators. “We’ve been focused on this mission for a year and half.”

Ms. Brewer said her group had grown to 40,000 politically motivated members, nearly all of them women. And she said that if you look at counties where the group was strong — like Scott in the Lexington suburbs and Carter in the eastern mountains — you will find counties that Mr. Bevin won in 2015 and lost this time.

“You cut the head off the snake,” she said.

For months before the election, many Kentucky voters talked of feeling politically homeless: They did not like Mr. Bevin, but they found it hard to vote for a candidate like Mr. Beshear, who supports abortion rights. Some of these voters ended up punishing Mr. Bevin by opposing both major party nominees: John Hicks, the Libertarian nominee, received over 28,000 votes, more than five times the size of Mr. Beshear’s statewide margin.

The Beshear campaign was not oblivious to the partisan math and, for the most part, spoke accordingly.

“There is nothing partisan about our kitchen table agenda,” Jacqueline Coleman, the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, declared after she took the stage on Tuesday night.

On the stump, Mr. Beshear focused relentlessly on public education and health care — which in many rural areas are the twin economic pillars — and talked of “our Kentucky values,” apolitical things like respect and neighborliness. Emphasizing Mr. Beshear’s childhood in western Kentucky, his campaign also reminded voters that Mr. Bevin is a wealthy businessman who moved into the state from the northeast. “It’s time to send him back to New Hampshire,” Mr. Beshear’s father, former Gov. Steve Beshear, told voters on Monday.

And this, in a state that is otherwise comfortably conservative, might have made a difference.

“I’m more likely to vote Republican,” said Ann-Jeanette Dale, 57, a retired elementary school librarian, who on Tuesday was wearing both her red teacher solidarity shirt and her “I Voted” sticker. That is, she said, until Mr. Bevin — what he did, how he talked, who he was — broke old habits.

“A lot of people,” she said, “see him as an outsider.”

Richard Fausset and Ellen Ann Fentress contributed reporting.

Richard Fausset and Ellen Ann Fentress contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Trump supporters flocked to a rally for Gov. Matt Bevin of Kentucky, above left, but he trails in the still-undecided race. Tate Reeves, above right, easily defeated a Democrat in Mississippi. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LUKE SHARRETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; EMILY KASK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2020

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[***The City That Fired Its Whole Police Department***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60BF-G7S1-JBG3-64C8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Joseph Goldstein and Kevin Armstrong

**Body**

As protesters across the country call for police departments to be defunded and dismantled, Camden's experience offers some lessons.

CAMDEN, N.J. -- As officials across the United States face demands to transform policing, many have turned to a small New Jersey city that did what some activists are calling for elsewhere: dismantled its police force and built a new one that stresses a less confrontational approach toward residents who are mostly Black and Latino.

The Camden Police Department's efforts to reduce its use of force have made it one of the most compelling turnaround stories in U.S. law enforcement. The changes have led to a stark reduction in the number of excessive-force complaints against the police and have helped drive down the murder rate in what was once one of America's most dangerous cities.

''If you're looking to be a high-speed operator, we're probably not the right department,'' said the current chief, Joseph Wysocki, referring to the type of officer he does not want to attract. ''If you're looking to be a guardian figure in your neighborhood, this is for you.''

Still, even as many other communities look to Camden as a template for reform, it is far from a neat model.

The disbanding of its old force seven years ago was prompted not by a desire to rethink policing, but by dire finances, a public safety crisis and a political power play meant to break the police officers' union. It took the drastic steps of firing all of the officers to allow the city to start fresh and overcome resistance.

At the start, and even today, the Camden department has followed many traditional policing practices. For example, it has embraced surveillance technology, including so-called predictive policing that relies on algorithms that can help develop patrol patterns. The technology is based on information like friendships, social media activity and past reports of crime that critics contend can reinforce racial biases.

With parts of the city awash in drugs, the reconstituted force conducted a crackdown, which helped reduce violent crime. But it also issued many tickets for small infractions, the very approach that opponents of aggressive policing call unnecessarily punitive.

That seemed to alienate residents the police were trying to win over. But as the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum several years ago, the department came to embrace a softer strategy that activists would like to see adopted elsewhere.

The department also revamped the way it trains officers. It emphasizes defusing tense encounters, handing out fewer tickets for minor offenses and requiring officers to intervene if they see colleagues mistreating people.

Police officials talk about the ''sanctity of life'' as the overarching thread connecting many of the changes.

Many people in Camden -- a poor city of about 74,000 residents across the Delaware River from Philadelphia -- said that overall, the changes had significantly improved their interactions with officers. They viewed the force as fairer, less menacing and more effective than in the past.

''For the most part, it did work out,'' said Lary Steele, 41, a lifelong resident who works at Camden Tool, a supplier of industrial equipment. ''The old cops used to grab us and whip our butt. A lot of the new guys are really nice.''

Zaire Harris, 18, a recent graduate of Camden High School, said that officers were ''respectful and just want us to be peaceful with each other.''

Still, there is tension. Some residents described encounters that felt arbitrary and like harassment, echoing the concerns of residents in cities across the country: a jaywalking stop that escalated into a physical confrontation; a young woman who felt demeaned when an officer asked if she was a prostitute.

''They have issues engaging with the community,'' said the Rev. Levi Combs III, 34, the pastor at First Refuge Progressive Baptist Church. ''They're unable to see things other than black and white.''

In a city where more than 90 percent of the residents are Black or Latino, slightly more than half of the police force's 400 officers are people of color. And, as is true in other cities, many Camden officers live in suburbs beyond the poor and ***working-class*** neighborhoods they patrol.

''They don't know how to approach African-Americans or Hispanics because they don't come from that culture,'' Mr. Combs said.

The killing of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis has touched off a searing national conversation about police brutality and racism and has inspired protests calling for the abolishment or shrinking of police forces.

In New York City, the police commissioner disbanded dozens of plainclothes teams known for their aggressive tactics, and the city adopted a budget that reduced funding for the police.

In Albuquerque, N.M. a plan is underway to reduce the role of the police in calls involving homelessness, addiction and mental health problems. In Minneapolis, the City Council has pledged to dismantle the police department and to seek ''a transformative new model'' for public safety.

A spokesman for the Camden Police, Dan Keashen, said he had fielded more than 100 inquiries from police agencies and politicians across the country in recent weeks.

''A lot of it has been about our use-of-force policy,'' he said. ''And we've also gotten inquiries with regards to how do you go about standing down one department and building a new one.''

For Camden, it took a financial emergency.

The city, a former industrial powerhouse long known as the headquarters of the Campbell Soup Company, had endured decades of steady decline and could not afford its police department.

In 2011, around the time Camden was declared America's poorest city, half the force was laid off. The number of murders soared. A political deal was eventually cut with the support of Chris Christie, the Republican governor at the time: The police department would disband and the county would create a new municipal force.

Camden ceded significant control over policing to the county government in an area where most residents are white. The police chief at the time, J. Scott Thomson, a longtime Camden officer, would remain in charge.

The deal was intended to break the police union, and the new force, known as the Camden County Police Department, paid officers less and hired more of them. In the end, about two-thirds of the officers who had been laid off were rehired.

The department embraced community policing, instructing officers to talk with residents at every opportunity. But aggressive foot patrols led to a surge in the enforcement of the lowest-level offenses, like riding a bike without a light.

Some residents complained about heavy-handed treatment, but others supported the new strategy. The number of murders eventually started to fall, and children who had been kept indoors ventured outside.

Still, after the high-profile police killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and Eric Garner in New York, the police adopted a softer approach.

While officers in many jurisdictions have generally been encouraged to write plenty of tickets, in Camden they risk being reprimanded for imposing hardships on people who are too poor to pay fines.

Camden officers are also taught how to defuse charged situations that can arise when a person is having a mental health crisis.

''Before we would draw our line in the sand, hold our ground, and if you crossed that line that was it,'' said Capt. Zsakheim James.

Now, Captain James said, officers are trained to do the ''tactical mambo -- they take a step forward, you take a step back.''

The department's emphasis on saving lives is reflected in a ''scoop and go'' policy that requires officers to drive gunshot victims to a hospital in their police cruiser if waiting for an ambulance would cause a delay.

Supervisors review body camera footage not only when things go wrong, but to help officers improve their behavior.

''We look at it like a professional athlete watches game tape so they can get better,'' said Capt. Kevin Lutz, who oversees training.

Excessive-force complaints have plummeted, from 65 in 2014, to three in 2019.

And the city has grown safer: The number of homicides committed with firearms fell to 18 last year, from 52 in 2013.

Mr. Thomson, the former police chief, said the changes were possible because he was effectively handed a blank canvas.

''I no longer had the challenge of changing culture,'' he said, ''but I had the opportunity of building one.''

On a recent evening, while their counterparts in other cities were deployed to protests, two Camden officers -- a rookie and a 10-year veteran, both of them raised in Camden -- walked a street in the city's north end.

As they neared a playground that was closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, the officers heard children's voices and a basketball bouncing. One of them, Saladin Webb, encouraged a boy to take a shot.

The child did, and missed. Then he asked Officer Webb if he could keep playing. ''I know we're not allowed to be here, but can we stay?'' the boy said.

''Just stay safe,'' Officer Webb replied.

''Black Lives Matter!'' one of the children called out as the officers turned to leave.

''No doubt,'' Officer Webb said.

In interviews, many Camden officers credited better relations with city residents to efforts to interact with them day in and day out. Officers are often seen at neighborhood barbecues, working the grill. The department will send out a ''game truck,'' essentially a video arcade on wheels, as well as ice-cream trucks.

''We're employing barbecues in troubled areas and stopping to throw that football with these kids,'' said Officer Vidal Rivera, who also grew up in Camden. ''It's about establishing that rapport.''

Still, Preston Brown, who coaches football and basketball at Woodrow Wilson High School, said that some of his players regarded the police with suspicion and had complained about being racially profiled.

''A lot of young people don't trust the police,'' Mr. Brown said.

Shortly after Mr. Floyd's killing, the owner of a Camden beauty salon, Yolanda Deaver, decided to hold a march. She promoted it on Instagram by writing that ''the racist Police are killing our Black men.''

A police officer contacted her, asking if officers could take part.

Just before the march was to begin, two black S.U.V.s pulled up.

Chief Wysocki got out, along with the mayor and a congressman. The chief wound up holding a banner that said ''STANDING IN SOLIDARITY'' as he marched.

To some residents, it appeared that the police had organized the march. But Ms. Deaver said she appreciated the police chief's support.

The image of the police chief joining protesters ricocheted across the internet and contrasted with clashes between officers and protesters the same day across the river in Philadelphia.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/12/nyregion/camden-police.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/12/nyregion/camden-police.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Camden, N.J., was one of the country's riskiest cities until it disbanded and rebuilt its police force. (A1)

Clockwise from top left: Sharim Anaya, 34, with her 10-year-old daughter, says she does not think the Camden police have changed much despite the reforms. Lt. Gabriel Rodriguez, 37, a Camden native, says officers have followed him when he is in civilian clothes. Edwin Ramos, 30, with his wife, Katrina Ramos, 28, believes that officers who don't live in Camden treat it as a ''war zone.'' Sgt. Dekel Levy, left, and Sgt. Kevin Wilkes on a neighborhood patrol.

Officers Joshua Nieves, left, and Saladin Webb let boys continue playing at a closed playground. ''Just stay safe,'' Officer Webb said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20)

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**End of Document**



[***Trouble At Home For Detroit Museum***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60NT-9RF1-JBG3-61NN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Graham Bowley

**Body**

Critics say the museum is not doing enough to relate to the predominantly Black city in which it's located or to the people of color on its staff.

The Detroit Institute of Arts had just avoided selling off parts of its collection to help pay the debts of the city that owned it.

It had a new, independent ownership structure, new revenue streams and a new standing as a museum that tried to replace the foreboding demeanor of many art institutions with a more welcoming, visitor-centered experience.

And it had a new director, Salvador Salort-Pons, who had come from its ranks, a charismatic curator and Spanish-born scholar of Velázquez, who seemed to understand its struggles and its future and who took office to a rousing ovation at a board meeting in 2015.

But five years later, at a time when museum leaders across the country are being challenged on whether their institutions are systemically racist, few are confronting as many thorny issues as Mr. Salort-Pons.

Current and former staff have called for his resignation, complaining he has developed a corrosive, authoritarian manner while retaining a certain obtuseness on matters of race in a city that is predominantly Black.

Staff morale was so low in 2017 that nearly half of the museum staff told surveyors that they did not believe it was a work culture where they could thrive, citing disrespect and a sense their opinions were ignored.

And there are concerns that he has flouted ethics rules. A complaint from staff about how he has handled works of art owned by his father-in-law has been filed with state and federal regulators, and a law firm hired by the museum is reviewing the matter.

Nonetheless, Mr. Salort-Pons, 50, retains the unwavering support of the museum board, as well as that of some Black leaders from Detroit who suggest his critics are unfair and overlooking the many steps he has taken to reach out to their community.

''Most of us are well aware that his recent predecessors never set one foot into neighborhoods in which Salort-Pons has routinely visited,'' Marsha Music, a Detroit-based writer wrote in a published post.

But the crisis the director faces is a real and significant one for a museum charged with managing a truly world-class collection of art while balancing its commitments to the city in which it sits and to three counties that now provide the bulk of its financing.

''There has been discontent,'' said Jeffrey Abt, professor emeritus at Wayne State University who has written about the history of the institute. ''I can see how it is potentially perilous.''

''On one side are the unhappy staff members who are objecting to Salvador's administration,'' he added. ''On the other side are the friends outside the museum he has made over the years who think that, here, they have someone who is championing their cause.''

The level to which the 135-year-old museum relates to Detroit has long been an issue. For decades, the institute, housed in an austere, formal, classical structure, was perceived by many as a bastion of the city's elite -- a home for Old World art in a place run mainly by a wealthy white old guard.

But beginning in the early 2000s, under Mr. Salort-Pons's predecessor, the museum worked to appeal to a broader, more diverse audience.

It became one of the first museums in America to establish galleries dedicated to African-American art. Its visitor-centered methodology sought detailed feedback and cooperation from community groups. Two Black women were hired as curators to great fanfare in 2016.

One might have imagined, then, that in recent weeks, as questions about racism and race have roiled America's art institutions, a museum in Detroit that had already begun to reckon with its place in the community would have been in a position to provide some counsel on the way forward.

Instead, according to Mr. Salort-Pons's critics, it has been found wanting.

The museum's Center for African-American Art has been pushed down the institute's hierarchy so that it now reports to the head of the modern and contemporary art department, a move that the critics say downplays its importance. The two Black curators hired in 2016 left after what they described as being undermined and silenced.

''He is not American, so he does not get what diversity, equity and inclusion means,'' said Susan Larsen, former director of publishing and collections information. ''I would not say he is racist. But he does not seem to understand the nuances of racial issues that are needed in a museum director today.''

Mr. Salort-Pons has acknowledged that, given his background, he needs to do more to broaden his understanding of race in America. In an email to staff last month, he wrote: ''I believe that we can create and foster a workplace that embodies fairness, inclusion, curiosity and respect.''

In defending his efforts, he has pointed to his appearances at venues such as the Detroit Fine Arts Breakfast Club, which has strong connections to the African-American community.

The museum under his leadership held a show on Black art and civil rights unrest from 1967 and another on works created by African-Americans that are owned by Detroit area collectors. In a first for the museum, he paid more than $1 million for a work by a Black artist, ''Bird,'' by David Hammons.

''When I have my programs, Salvador and his wife often show up for all these events,'' said Valerie Mercer, senior curator of African-American art.

But Mr. Salort-Pons's critics say that whatever outreach efforts he has made, some employees feel they are not listened to, or worse. ''As a person of color, I have experienced censorship of Black voices by Salvador at the D.I.A.,'' said Andrea Montiel de Shuman, who quit as a digital experience designer in June.

Nor have people of color been hired in numbers that reflect that the museum's home is a city that is nearly 80 percent Black.

The staff of 371 is 38 percent Black; three of its 11 curators are Black; 12 of its 48 board members are African-American. Of Mr. Salort-Pons's nine-person senior leadership team, one member is Black.

The museum said it did not have any earlier statistics of staff demographics that might help measure the success of its diversity efforts. But Reginald M. Turner, one of the board members who is Black, said of Mr. Salort-Pons: ''He has hired a number of persons of color since he has been in the role.''

Bill Harris, a writer and emeritus professor of English at Wayne State University, said he visited the institute as a young boy even though he didn't feel welcome. ''It has evolved from that, but it's still a white institution,'' he said.

Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, which has been a generous benefactor, said Mr. Salort-Pons can succeed, but only with the board's support, and that he needs to overhaul the museum to better reflect Detroit. ''He can only do this job if he is willing the shake the very foundations of that museum,'' he said. ''If he does not have the courage to do that, he should not be the director.''

Mr. Salort-Pons's critics say that even in situations where the museum has taken on topical issues, like the exhibition that looked at civil unrest in Detroit during 1967, the approach has been sometimes safe and somewhat muted. The images may have been provocative, but staff members said he pushed back when they wanted language to mention issues like white supremacy or police brutality. Mr. Salort-Pons said he does not recollect this.

''There is reluctance to have a deeper conversation about issues that might be controversial,'' said Teri John, former executive director of learning and audience engagement. ''When you are the premier art institution in the Blackest community in the country, that is probably a problem.''

Melba Joyce Boyd, a professor in American Studies at Wayne State University, said that she respects much of what Mr. Salort-Pons has done but because of its location and audience, she said the institute has special responsibilities.

''The D.I.A. should be the number one place for African-Americans in the whole country,'' she said. ''Detroit should be taking a lead on a lot of these issues.''

Mr. Salort-Pons defends his efforts by pointing out that he must focus on serving the art interests of voters in three surrounding counties who came to the museum's rescue in 2012 when they agreed to pay extra taxes to support the institute. Their money now underwrites about two-thirds of the museum's budget and the counties are a mix of demographics, affluent and ***working-class***, both white and people of color.

The fact that the tax increase was approved by voters again in March is proof he has got things right, Mr. Salort-Pons said.

''While we live in the city of Detroit, we serve the region,'' he said in an interview. ''I am accountable to those counties for the money that they give. We have to come up with programs that are relevant to those communities.''

Mr. Salort-Pons is far from alone as a museum director being challenged on racial matters. The death of George Floyd and the protests that followed have led museum staffs around the country to challenge the status quo. But the criticism of his tenure in Detroit has gone well beyond that.

There has been a separate whistle-blower complaint from some staff members about the director's use of the museum to display two paintings owned by his father-in-law. The complaint, filed last month and disputed by Mr. Salort-Pons, says exhibiting the works possibly increased their value and he may have broken ethics rules by not recusing himself from the decision to display them.

A broader criticism has been that he has neglected the visitor-centered approach to exhibitions that put Detroit on the map as a leader in museum methodology in the early 2000s. Built on storytelling and feedback from community groups, the approach emphasized ''interpretation'' and accessibility. Exhibitions used narrative and historical context to connect with visitors.

''We used the fact that works of art -- whether it's an altarpiece by Giovanni Bellini or a pair of moccasins by an unknown Native-American artist -- were created to fulfill a human purpose,'' said Graham Beal, who was the museum's director between 1999 and 2015.

Thousands of labels in its 60,000-piece collection were rewritten for a nonexpert audience and limited to 150 words, eliminating jargon.

''We did it to help people find personal connection with works of art, bringing people to the museum and developing a relationship to them,'' said Annmarie Erickson, the institute's former chief operating officer. ''That was not an easy task in a big traditional fine arts museum.''

But several of the architects of that effort have left, and critics say its principles are being undermined because Mr. Salort-Pons doesn't understand it or is more inclined to the formal, traditional way of showing art.

One of the practitioners, Ms. Montiel de Shuman, complained in a public essay about an exhibit of a Gauguin painting, ''Spirit of the Dead Watching,'' that shows a young Tahitian girl, 13, lying naked. Although the label referred to colonialism and ''racial and sexual power imbalances," she said the exhibit should have carried a warning for schoolchildren and ''did not address that the artist sexually abused her.''

For his part, the director insists that because of complexity and expense the visitor centered methodology can't be applied to everything. But he said he is fully committed to the approach: A new show, ''Artemisia Gentileschi and Italian Women Artists Around 1600,'' will feature all the techniques of evaluation and interpretation.

''There are ways to measure relevance, and one of the most straightforward is museum attendance, which has been increasing since the passage of the millage in 2012,'' Mr. Salort-Pons said in recent comments posted on the museum's website.

Some of that attendance has been built on popular exhibitions like one on baseball cards and another about ''Star Wars.'' These too were accessible.

But critics dismiss those shows as entertainment, pandering, not education, not a sophisticated approach that seeks to demystify heady and possibly obtuse objects of world-class art so that they can speak more easily to those who visit.

Yao-Fen You, a former curator who is now a senior curator at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, was one of the supporters of the visitor-centered approach until she left in 2018.

''When you care so much about a place, to see it have leadership that does not care for it in the best way, it's heartbreaking,'' she said. ''It's not up to the challenge at all.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/24/arts/design/detroit-institute-of-arts.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/24/arts/design/detroit-institute-of-arts.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top left, Salvador Salort-Pons in 2015, when he was named director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, top right. Above left, Andrea Montiel de Shuman, who resigned as a digital experience designer in June. She said, ''As a person of color, I have experienced censorship of Black voices by Salvador at the D.I.A.'' Above right, Yao-Fen You, a former curator at the museum. Below, Reginald M. Turner, a museum board member. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARLOS OSORIO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BRIAN FRASER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C6)

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Notes From The Newsroom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61NS-J0M1-DXY4-X04P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 3, 2021 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section TP; Column 0; SpecialSections; Pg. 4

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**Body**

TK

Last New Year's Eve, bushfires swept across the southeastern coast of Australia, trapping people on beaches as the sky turned from blood-red to pitch black. When I left a vacation in a nearby coastal town to report on what had happened -- 33 people would die, and thousands of homes and more than one billion animals would be lost that fire season -- it was impossible to imagine 2020 had anything worse in store. By April, though, when the fire season had finally ended, the world was in the midst of a pandemic.

In my reporting, many told me they hoped that the fires, in their sheer scale and disruption, would be a global wake up call, convincing people of the consequences of climate change. Now, they seem like an ominous start to a year of so much destruction.

Fog of War

The beginning of this pandemic was a fiasco of misinformation, a perfect example of the fog of war that envelops outbreaks of new pathogens. It was a mix of panicky confusion in Wuhan hospitals, lies from local health officials and erroneous guesses by health agencies, experts and journalists, me included. The Jan. 8 story was the second The Times did about the virus.

The first, on Jan. 6, described China grappling with a mystery pneumonia that, according to local health officials, had hospitalized a few dozen people with ties to a local market. It had killed no one and did not appear to spread from person to person, Wuhan health officials said. Here in the U.S., that led to speculation: it was the return of SARS in a milder form; it was contaminated vapes; China's epidemic of African swine fever had jumped to humans.

The Jan. 8 article was pegged to the news that Chinese state media said scientists had concluded the pneumonias were caused by a previously unknown coronavirus. I filed a few paragraphs to Sui-Lee, the other reporter on the article, including the information that there had been no deaths and no human-to-human transmission. She asked why I thought that. I sent her the American C.D.C.'s latest travel alert for China. It said there had been 59 cases with no deaths and ''no reports of spread from person to person.''

In retrospect, neither Sui-Lee nor I, nor the C.D.C. nor the W.H.O. knew that, as of Dec. 31, Wuhan's mayor had ordered a coverup. He had the market closed and eight doctors trying to raise the alarm arrested. So all the information from that time is dicey. Even now, timelines from that period disagree on basic facts.

The gravity of the situation wasn't confirmed until Jan. 20, when Dr. Zhong Nanshan, sometimes called ''China's Fauci,'' said on state TV that Wuhan had a disaster on its hands. The city was locked down on Jan. 23.

The First U.S. Outbreak

The end of February and beginning of March was a series of chaotic days in Washington State, when we were chasing details and explanations for the discovery of each new infection.

A main area of focus that emerged was a nursing facility called Life Care Center in Kirkland, in the Seattle suburbs. Officials were reporting that potentially dozens of people were sick there.

I received a copy of a document detailing the state's 13-step strategy for controlling infectious diseases. Among the steps were shutting down businesses and quarantining people in their homes.

We struggled with how best to write about that checklist. We didn't want to write a story that would seem alarmist. Would the state really take those draconian measures? We explained the possibilities and uncertainties with care.

Three days after we published the story, Washington's governor issued an order shutting down many businesses. Ten days later, the next mandate came: Everyone needed to stay at home.

TK

Tech companies -- notably Twitter, Facebook and YouTube -- began appending more labels to posts on their platforms to signal that the facts in the posts were disputed or lacked context. We saw many of them get added to posts from President Trump and his allies when they claimed victory in the days after the election. In spite of these efforts, though, reporting showed that such labels do little to curb the posts' reach.

More and more, I am convinced that labels and redirecting users to other ''authoritative sources'' are simply Band-Aids on the problem of viral misinformation. What has not changed is what drives these social networks at their core: algorithms that sort people's feeds and prioritize attention above all, including over good quality information.

'The Great Depression With Minivans'

If we pause and think about how future generations will understand this year, it is easy to imagine a kid in school absorbed in, perhaps astonished by, the images of so many in need. Over the summer, I drove from Memphis to Cleveland and places in between to document the crisis of food insecurity unleashed by the pandemic. One morning, I sat in a car with a grandfather and his rambunctious grandchildren. We were in the parking lot of a high school in the ***working-class*** Cleveland suburb of Parma, waiting to receive canned soup and tuna and children's books.

When he called the calamity ''the Great Depression with minivans,'' I remembered my grandmother telling stories of the economic deprivations of the 1930s. The pandemic, viewed through the lens of hunger, has reshaped our understanding of who is needy in America and exposed the fragility of the middle class.

This was evident in all the expensive cars -- Lexuses, even -- driven by people who had just lost jobs that paid enough to support a middle-class lifestyle, but not enough to build a safety of savings.

On the Ground in Minneapolis

It's easy from the outside to make a lot of assumptions about the images of social unrest on television screens or social media. But it's actually devilishly complicated, something that becomes quite apparent when you're on the ground.

On the first night I arrived in Minneapolis for the protests a few days after George Floyd was killed, I caught a glimpse of a BMW parking on a side street. Out stepped a few young white people -- seemingly college age -- and a crowbar fell from one of their bags. It was telling to me to see that in a protest over Black rights, the broken windows and burned buildings that so many people say skew the narrative can't be laid at the feet of the people fighting for their liberation. In these demonstrations, many people show up for many reasons. And I tried my best as a reporter to discern the nuances for readers where I could, but also to keep the focus not on the sensational, rather on the pressing issues that the country needs to grapple with.

TK

The protests after George Floyd was killed by the police grew so fast, and to so many cities, that we were regularly publishing articles on our live briefing, leaning on a small team of reporters as well as local news articles and videos shared on social media. At about 10 p.m. Eastern on May 28, the updates sent by our reporter outside a Minneapolis police station were concerning in their brevity:

''Seems some may have broken into precinct''''Officers putting out a little fire inside the barrier''''People are throwing things back at the police.''

I told that reporter to leave the area for his safety. I woke up my boss -- an extremely rare event -- to let him know. And another trusted reporter, who was out of harm's way, helped me document the burning of a police station just two and a half miles from where Floyd was killed. I signed off at 3:47 a.m.

TK

Daniel Lewis Lee's death by lethal injection on July 14 at the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute, Ind., ended a 17-year-hiatus in federal executions. After the Supreme Court rejected a legal challenge to the Justice Department's use of a single drug, pentobarbital, to carry out executions, the administration executed 10 inmates in six months. That's more than all the states combined in 2020.

In its final weeks, Mr. Trump's Department of Justice intends to execute more prisoners in 2021 before Joe Biden is in the White House. If Mr. Biden maintains his opposition to the death penalty, those inmates will likely be the last federal inmates to be put to death for at least as long as Mr. Biden remains in office.

TK

Major League Baseball staged its shortest season since 1878: just 60 games, all against regional opponents, with no tickets sold and several new rules. Some changes were hard to enforce -- no spitting, really? -- but others fundamentally altered the game as we'd known it in an effort to keep players healthy and limit their time at the ballpark. There were seven-inning games for doubleheaders, an automatic runner on second base at the start of extra innings, the designated hitter in use for all games -- and no minor league season at all.

While early outbreaks within the Miami Marlins' and St. Louis Cardinals' rosters forced several postponements, the league staged all but two scheduled games in the regular season. The Los Angeles Dodgers captured their first championship since 1988 with a six-game victory over the Tampa Bay Rays. At the very end, Justin Turner, the Dodgers' longtime third baseman, was abruptly pulled from the final innings of the clinching game after testing positive for Covid-19 -- and then, defying protocols, he joined teammates on the field to celebrate.

A Moderate and a Pioneer

This was news we all knew was coming, because speculation about former Vice President Joe Biden's running mate pick had gone on for weeks. With his promise to select a woman, and sustained pressure from Black political operatives to choose a Black woman, Kamala Harris had long been seen as the front runner. Like Mr. Biden, she is a moderate with broad appeal in swing states and was seen as a highly competent governing partner for Mr. Biden.

But, of course, this was no routine pick. With the selection of Ms. Harris, Mr. Biden made her the first woman of color on a major party ticket. And Ms. Harris also represented a slew of other firsts: the first child of an Asian immigrant, the first graduate of a historically Black college, the first member of a Black sorority and the first Californian in decades. In the moment, I found myself thinking of the women who saw themselves in Ms. Harris, and viewed her ascension as something they never expected to see in their lifetimes.

A President's Pose

The week after President Trump was hospitalized for Covid-19 was the most intense week of reporting of the beat. Because he ultimately recovered quickly, it's easy to forget how momentous it felt when the president of the United States himself was struggling to breathe because he had contracted a virus he had spent months playing down.

Mr. Trump was very eager to show off that he was in perfect, if not better, physical shape, than he had been when he entered the hospital, beginning with that dramatic helicopter ride after his discharge from Walter Reed. His medical team appeared to be more intent on complying with those wishes than giving us any real information about his health status.

So we were on the lookout for any public signs that showed his strength. In his first public speech, he kept it to just about 15 minutes, much shorter than a typical appearance. And he had bandages visible on his hands, likely from where he had an IV. He immediately started working out of the Oval Office again, rather than quarantining in the residence --even though he often works in the residence for half the day.

Within weeks, however, he succeeded in turning the entire scary episode into a blip, a one-liner about his recovery in his campaign stump speech.

Half an Hour Before Deadline

Election Day always involves enormous planning; results come quickly and on deadline. This year there was a twist: Results came slowly and on deadline -- four days later.

As always, plans were made early. The print team mocked-up a front page, roughed out the design for an Election section, workshopped alternative headlines.

And we waited for a result as the days passed, on edge for the big moment.

That moment arrived when the Associated Press called the election for Biden at 11:30 a.m. Saturday ­-- a half an hour before deadline for the first edition of the Sunday paper, called the Bulldog.

Thankfully, our press-room managers can sometimes bend time.

Reinforcements quickly joined our usual Saturday crew in a Google Hangout, where we've gathered since leaving the office. With 12 pages to redo and no time to spare, the conversation took on a surgical air. Editors discarded outdated stories, brainstormed on headlines, tweaked designs and fact-checked for each other.

At 12:43, barely over an hour after the news broke, the weekend print manager, Jerry Gray, sent word out: ''We are in for the Bulldog.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/02/world/lat-notes-context.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/02/world/lat-notes-context.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A patient arrived at a hospital in Wuhan, China, in January. Officials hid evidence of an alarming new virus that was linked to a market there. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HECTOR RETAMAL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (TP4)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW ABBOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CALLA KESSLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP5)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY KYLE GRILLOT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP6)

PHOTO (TP7)

Two-thirds of residents at Life Care Center in Kirkland, Wash., had the coronavirus, and for a time, suburban Seattle was the American epicenter. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GRANT HINDSLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP8)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES) (TP9)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK J. TERRILL/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (TP10)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY LIBRADO ROMERO/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP10)

Vehicles lined up outside a food bank in San Antonio on May 15. Soon, the number of nationwide unemployment claims would reach 40 million. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP12)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES) (TP13)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN COOPER, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) (TP14)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP15)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE DESMOND/WBFO, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) (TP18)

People gathered where George Floyd was killed in police custody on May 25. Cities across the country would soon see similar demonstrations. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALYSSA SCHUKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP19)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA MOHIN) (TP20)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA RASHAAD McFADDEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP22)

Kamala Harris, the daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, became the first woman of color to be on a major-party ticket. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/ THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP23)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY REBECCA RILLOS) (TP24)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP25)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY VLADIMIR VORONIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (TP26)

Home from the hospital, the president saluted from a balcony. Of the virus, he said: ''Don't let it dominate your lives. Get out there. Be careful.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP27)

PHOTOS (TP28)

PHOTO (TP29)

PHOTO (POOL PHOTO BY MARK LENNIHAN) (TP30)

Celebrations, like in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant section above, erupted all over the U.S. on Nov. 7, after Joseph R. Biden Jr. was declared the winner. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (TP31)

**Load-Date:** January 3, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Could This City Hold the Key to the Future of Policing in America?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60BF-FHW1-JBG3-6404-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1915 words

**Byline:** Joseph Goldstein and Kevin Armstrong

**Highlight:** As protesters across the country call for police departments to be defunded and dismantled, Camden’s experience offers some lessons.

**Body**

As protesters across the country call for police departments to be defunded and dismantled, Camden’s experience offers some lessons.

CAMDEN, N.J. — As officials across the United States face demands to transform policing, many have turned to a small New Jersey city that did what some activists are calling for elsewhere: dismantled its police force and built a new one that stresses a less confrontational approach toward residents who are mostly Black and Latino.

The Camden Police Department’s efforts to reduce its use of force have made it one of the most compelling turnaround stories in U.S. law enforcement. The changes have led to a stark reduction in the number of excessive-force complaints against the police and have helped drive down the murder rate in what was once one of America’s most dangerous cities.

“If you’re looking to be a high-speed operator, we’re probably not the right department,” said the current chief, Joseph Wysocki, referring to the type of officer he does not want to attract. “If you’re looking to be a guardian figure in your neighborhood, this is for you.”

Still, even as many other communities look to Camden as a template for reform, it is far from a neat model.

The disbanding of its old force seven years ago was prompted not by a desire to rethink policing, but by dire finances, a public safety crisis and a political power play meant to break the police officers’ union. It took the drastic steps of firing all of the officers to allow the city to start fresh and overcome resistance.

At the start, and even today, the Camden department has followed many traditional policing practices. For example, it has [*embraced surveillance technology*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech), including so-called predictive policing that relies on algorithms that can help develop patrol patterns. The technology is based on information like friendships, social media activity and past reports of crime that critics contend can reinforce racial biases.

With parts of the city awash in drugs, the reconstituted force conducted a crackdown, which helped reduce violent crime. But it also issued many tickets for small infractions, the very approach that opponents of aggressive policing call unnecessarily punitive.

That seemed to alienate residents the police were trying to win over. But as the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum several years ago, the department came to embrace a softer strategy that activists would like to see adopted elsewhere.

The department also revamped the way it trains officers. It emphasizes defusing tense encounters, handing out fewer tickets for minor offenses and requiring officers to intervene if they see colleagues mistreating people.

Police officials talk about the “sanctity of life” as the overarching thread connecting many of the changes.

Many people in Camden — a poor city of about 74,000 residents across the Delaware River from Philadelphia — said that overall, the changes had significantly improved their interactions with officers. They viewed the force as fairer, less menacing and more effective than in the past.

“For the most part, it did work out,” said Lary Steele, 41, a lifelong resident who works at Camden Tool, a supplier of industrial equipment. “The old cops used to grab us and whip our butt. A lot of the new guys are really nice.”

Zaire Harris, 18, a recent graduate of Camden High School, said that officers were “respectful and just want us to be peaceful with each other.”

Still, there is tension. Some residents described encounters that felt arbitrary and like harassment, echoing the concerns of residents in cities across the country: a jaywalking stop that escalated into a physical confrontation; a young woman who felt demeaned when an officer asked if she was a prostitute.

“They have issues engaging with the community,” said the Rev. Levi Combs III, 34, the pastor at First Refuge Progressive Baptist Church. “They’re unable to see things other than black and white.”

In a city where more than 90 percent of the residents are Black or Latino, slightly more than half of the police force’s 400 officers are people of color. And, as is true in other cities, many Camden officers live in suburbs beyond the poor and ***working-class*** neighborhoods they patrol.

“They don’t know how to approach African-Americans or Hispanics because they don’t come from that culture,” Mr. Combs said.

The killing of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis has touched off a searing national conversation about police brutality and racism and has inspired protests calling for the abolishment or shrinking of police forces.

In New York City, the police commissioner [*disbanded dozens*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech) of plainclothes teams known for their aggressive tactics, and the city adopted a budget that reduced funding for the police.

In Albuquerque, N.M. a [*plan is*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech)underway to reduce the role of the police in calls involving homelessness, addiction and mental health problems. In Minneapolis, the City Council [*has pledged to dismantle*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech) the police department and to seek “[*a transformative new model*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech)” for public safety.

A spokesman for the Camden Police, Dan Keashen, said he had fielded more than 100 inquiries from police agencies and politicians across the country in recent weeks.

“A lot of it has been about our use-of-force policy,” he said. “And we’ve also gotten inquiries with regards to how do you go about standing down one department and building a new one.”

For Camden, it took a financial emergency.

The city, a former industrial powerhouse long known as the headquarters of the Campbell Soup Company, had endured decades of steady decline and could not afford its police department.

In 2011, around the time Camden was declared America’s poorest city, half the force was laid off. The number of murders soared. A political deal was eventually cut with the support of Chris Christie, the Republican governor at the time: The police department would disband and the county would create a new municipal force.

Camden ceded significant control over policing to the county government in an area where most residents are white. The police chief at the time, J. Scott Thomson, a longtime Camden officer, would remain in charge.

The deal was intended to break the police union, and the new force, known as the Camden County Police Department, paid officers less and hired more of them. In the end, about two-thirds of the officers who had been laid off were rehired.

The department embraced community policing, instructing officers to talk with residents at every opportunity. But aggressive foot patrols led to a surge in[*the enforcement of the lowest-level offenses*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech), like riding a bike without a light.

Some residents complained about heavy-handed treatment, but others supported the new strategy. The number of murders eventually started to fall, and children who had been kept indoors ventured outside.

Still, after the high-profile police killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and Eric Garner in New York, the police adopted a softer approach.

While officers in many jurisdictions have generally been encouraged to write plenty of tickets, in Camden they risk being reprimanded for imposing hardships on people who are too poor to pay fines.

Camden officers are also taught how to defuse charged situations that can arise when a person is having a mental health crisis.

“Before we would draw our line in the sand, hold our ground, and if you crossed that line that was it,” said Capt. Zsakheim James.

Now, Captain James said, officers are trained to do the “tactical mambo — they take a step forward, you take a step back.”

The department’s emphasis on saving lives is reflected in a “scoop and go” policy that requires officers to drive gunshot victims to a hospital in their police cruiser if waiting for an ambulance would cause a delay.

Supervisors review body camera footage not only when things go wrong, but to help officers improve their behavior.

“We look at it like a professional athlete watches game tape so they can get better,” said Capt. Kevin Lutz, who oversees training.

Excessive-force complaints have plummeted, from 65 in 2014, to three in 2019.

And the city has grown safer: The number of homicides committed with firearms fell to 18 last year, from 52 in 2013.

Mr. Thomson, the former police chief, said the changes were possible because he was effectively handed a blank canvas.

“I no longer had the challenge of changing culture,” he said, “but I had the opportunity of building one.”

On a recent evening, while their counterparts in other cities were deployed to protests, two Camden officers — a rookie and a 10-year veteran, both of them raised in Camden — walked a street in the city’s north end.

As they neared a playground that was closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, the officers heard children’s voices and a basketball bouncing. One of them, Saladin Webb, encouraged a boy to take a shot.

The child did, and missed. Then he asked Officer Webb if he could keep playing. “I know we’re not allowed to be here, but can we stay?” the boy said.

“Just stay safe,” Officer Webb replied.

“Black Lives Matter!” one of the children called out as the officers turned to leave.

“No doubt,” Officer Webb said.

In interviews, many Camden officers credited better relations with city residents to efforts to interact with them day in and day out. Officers are often seen at neighborhood barbecues, working the grill. The department will send out a “game truck,” essentially a video arcade on wheels, as well as ice-cream trucks.

“We’re employing barbecues in troubled areas and stopping to throw that football with these kids,” said Officer Vidal Rivera, who also grew up in Camden. “It’s about establishing that rapport.”

Still, Preston Brown, who coaches football and basketball at Woodrow Wilson High School, said that some of his players regarded the police with suspicion and had complained about being racially profiled.

“A lot of young people don’t trust the police,” Mr. Brown said.

Shortly after Mr. Floyd’s killing, the owner of a Camden beauty salon, Yolanda Deaver, decided to hold a march. She promoted it on Instagram by writing that “the racist Police are killing our Black men.”

A police officer contacted her, asking if officers could take part.

Just before the march was to begin, two black S.U.V.s pulled up.

Chief Wysocki got out, along with the mayor and a congressman. The chief wound up [*holding a banner*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech) that said “STANDING IN SOLIDARITY’’ as he marched.

To some residents, it appeared that the police had organized the march. But Ms. Deaver said she appreciated the police chief’s support.

The image of the police chief joining protesters ricocheted across the internet and contrasted with[*clashes*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech) between officers and protesters [*the same day*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-07-10/the-ex-cop-at-the-center-of-controversy-over-crime-prediction-tech) across the river in Philadelphia.

PHOTOS: Camden, N.J., was one of the country’s riskiest cities until it disbanded and rebuilt its police force. (A1); Clockwise from top left: Sharim Anaya, 34, with her 10-year-old daughter, says she does not think the Camden police have changed much despite the reforms. Lt. Gabriel Rodriguez, 37, a Camden native, says officers have followed him when he is in civilian clothes. Edwin Ramos, 30, with his wife, Katrina Ramos, 28, believes that officers who don’t live in Camden treat it as a “war zone.” Sgt. Dekel Levy, left, and Sgt. Kevin Wilkes on a neighborhood patrol.; Officers Joshua Nieves, left, and Saladin Webb let boys continue playing at a closed playground. “Just stay safe,” Officer Webb said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Stream These 15 Great Titles Before They Leave Netflix in July***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6083-R5R1-JBG3-63T9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 11, 2020 Saturday 13:48 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 2001 words

**Byline:** Jason Bailey

**Highlight:** Movie theaters are still closed. But your TV abides. Check out these movies before they leave, some as soon as the holiday weekend.

**Body**

Movie theaters are still closed. But your TV abides. Check out these movies before they leave, some as soon as the holiday weekend.

As quarantine stretches into summer, Netflix will bid farewell to two Scarlett Johansson-fronted sci-fi efforts, a pre-“Star Wars” team-up by Oscar Isaac and Domhnall Gleeson, two indies starring Brie Larson and three marvelous dramatic comedies from female filmmakers of note. And those are just a few of the titles we recommend watching before they slip away at the end of July. (Dates indicate the final day a title is available.)

‘Blue Valentine’ (July 4)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

When this marital drama from Derek Cianfrance hit theaters in 2010, its production was already the stuff of legend: Its stars, Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams, attached to the project for nearly a decade, first shot the scenes in which their characters meet and falling in love, then spent a month living together before shooting the later scenes of marital dysfunction. It sounds like a gimmick, but the extended acting exercise pays off handsomely; the offhand naturalism and lived-in discord of those scenes is striking and occasionally heartbreaking, while Cianfrance’s intermingling of the rough times with their earlier courtship creates a devastating portrait of love won and lost.

‘Under the Skin’ (July 11)

[*Stream it here*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316).

Scarlett Johansson forges one of her trickiest performances — simultaneously enigmatic, haunted, and sensitive — as an alien life form trawling Scotland for unsuspecting male victims in this mind-melting science fiction drama from the British director Jonathan Glazer. It sounds like an art house riff on soft-core sci-fi sleaze like “Species,” but Glazer is interested in more than sex; he creates a disturbing mixture of cinéma vérité and body horror, using nonactors and hidden cameras to capture Johansson’s interactions and seductions, to unsettling effect. It is, to be sure, not a mass entertainment. But those who can tune to its peculiar wavelength will find it enthralling.

‘Locke’ (July 11)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

In 2013, Tom Hardy took on an acting challenge even tougher than playing Bane or Venom: He stepped into the driver’s seat of a mobile, one-man movie. He plays a construction foreman making a 90-minute drive from his home in Birmingham to a hospital in London, where a colleague with whom he had a one-night stand is giving birth to his child; the writer and director Steven Knight plays out that drive in real time as the character uses his car phone to make a series of telephone calls in which his carefully balanced life unravels. What could have been a dull, stagy gimmick is instead a thrillingly intimate character drama, elevated by Hardy’s finest (and most subtle) screen work to date.

‘The Spectacular Now’ (July 11)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

The staid conventions of the high school movie — reckless romance, nonstop partying, cheerful hedonism — are rendered with atypical sensitivity in James Ponsoldt’s 2013 adaptation of the young adult novel by Tim Tharp. Miles Teller is (deceptively) charming in the leading role as a popular senior whose good-time demeanor hides a troubling case of alcoholism. Shailene Woodley is delightful as the brainy and beautiful classmate whom he first sees as a rebound relationship before realizing the emotional damage he’s capable of inflicting. Comparisons abound to “Say Anything,” and that’s understandable; both films share an open heart and a keen ear for the rhythms of teen-speak. But “The Spectacular Now” goes deeper and darker, examining the impulses of these difficult characters while allowing for the possibility of light at the end of their journey.

‘Room’ (July 18)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

Brie Larson (who co-stars in “The Spectacular Now”) won the Oscar for best actress for her astonishing work in this adaptation by Lenny Abrahamson of the Emma Donoghue novel. She stars as Joy, who lives in captivity with her 5-year-old son — a child conceived with her there after she was kidnapped as a teen. Abrahamson sensitively details their daily routines and rituals as Joy quietly and patiently plans an escape. Those scenes are harrowing (and heartbreaking), but “Room” doesn’t settle for easy answers. The film’s second half asks hard questions about trauma and recovery, allowing Larson and her co-star Jacob Tremblay to add additional layers to their complex, bravura performances.

‘Obvious Child’ (July 18)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

This indie hit from Gillian Robespierre stars Jenny Slate as a Brooklyn stand-up comedian whose one-night stand with a nice guy (Jake Lacy) results in an unplanned pregnancy. She chooses to terminate it — not the typical narrative arc of a light dramatic comedy — and on one level, “Obvious Child” plays as film criticism, questioning the assumptions and motives of earlier comedies like “Juno” and “Knocked Up.” But on another level, it is delightful entertainment, boosted by Slate’s considerable charisma, by her sprung chemistry with Lacy and by Robespierre’s wry, insightful screenplay, which allows its messy protagonist the kind of complicated agency too rarely granted to women onscreen.

‘Laggies’ (July 18)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

When the director Lynn Shelton [*died unexpectedly*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316) in May, much was written about her humanistic, empathetic style; she treated all of her characters with warmth and respect, no matter how poor their decisions might have been. Those qualities are on full display in this dramatic comedy from 2014 featuring Keira Knightley as a young woman on the verge of responsible adulthood who takes a quick detour into arrested development. Chloë Grace Moretz is the teenage girl who becomes her unlikely, short-term B.F.F., and Sam Rockwell is the single dad who, in an unfortunate entanglement, falls for Knightley.

‘A Most Violent Year’ (July 18)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

The writer and director J.C. Chandor sought to replicate the style and feel of Sidney Lumet’s New York movies — even down to casting Oscar Isaac, a latter-day Pacino, in the leading role — with this 2014 crime drama. Isaac stars as the owner of a heating oil company battling truck hijackers, Teamsters, a particularly curious assistant district attorney (David Oyelowo) and a wife with Lady Macbeth inclinations (Jessica Chastain). Chandor gets the look of early-80s Gotham right, but this isn’t just “Joker”-style cosplay. “A Most Violent Year” reaches for the moral ambiguity of the films it is aping, using its period settings and costumes as support, rather than substitution, for the complex characters within them.

‘Inglourious Basterds’ (July 21)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

Quentin Tarantino kicked off his cycle of grindhouse-influenced alternate histories with this 2008 war adventure. Set at the end of World War II, the film’s Oscar-winning screenplay, written by Tarantino, juggles several stories of escapees, renegades and war criminals, culminating in an ambitious attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. The opportunities for disaster — or, at the very least, insensitivity — with this material are multifold, but Tarantino does not step wrong. He gets a big assist from Christoph Waltz, also an Oscar winner for his unforgettable performance as a gleefully villainous SS colonel.

‘Mississippi Grind’ (July 25)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

Four years before “Captain Marvel,” the writing and directing team of Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck collaborated on this (to put it mildly) smaller-scale effort, a “California Split”-style indie drama about the sticky friendship between two inveterate gamblers. Ryan Reynolds and Ben Mendelsohn are the odd-couple leads, and they’re well matched; keying off each other’s (respectively) high energy and low-key naturalism, they meet somewhere in the middle. The story, of bad streaks offset by the promise of an eventual big win, is nothing new. The draw here is the atmosphere Boden and Fleck create and the ease with which Reynolds and Mendelsohn luxuriate in it, creating characters that shouldn’t draw your sympathy but do.

‘Ex Machina’ (July 25)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

Oscar Isaac again, this time donning a bushy beard and tech-bro glasses. Part-affable, part-menacing, he plays a Silicon Valley millionaire who invites an office contest winner (Domhnall Gleeson) to his isolated home to share with him some astonishingly realistic robot technology — in particular, a fascinating female model named Ava (Alicia Vikander). Written and directed by Alex Garland (“Annihilation,” “Devs”), this is a throwback to an earlier era of science fiction, propelled by thoughtful examinations of morality and identity.

‘Her’ (July 28)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

Cut from a similar low-fi sci-fi cloth, this 2013 Spike Jonze film, which won an Oscar for best original screenplay, imagines a future in which a smartphone’s Siri-style personal assistant system proves so supportive, helpful and (yes) seductive that one could just … fall in love with it. That’s the conundrum faced by Theodore Twombly (Joaquin Phoenix), an introverted greeting card writer who rebounds from a painful divorce by intensifying his relationship with the “Samantha” operating system (voiced by Scarlett Johansson). A lesser filmmaker might twist the premise into a broad, dopey comedy. But Jonze goes further, exploring how Theodore’s depression and social dysfunction made the inexplicable connection seem not only safe but logical.

‘The Incredibles 2’ (July 29)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

This 2018 Pixar sequel from Brad Bird — one of the last Disney titles making the exodus to Disney Plus — was a long time in coming. The 2004 original, concerning the trials and tribulations of a family of superheroes, was both a genuinely inventive animated feature and an early entry in the comic book movie cycle. Bird meets the challenge of following it up in a period of superhero ubiquity by focusing more on the familial dynamic and by introducing a memorable pair of villains, entertainingly voiced by Bob Odenkirk and Catherine Keener. It may not equal the original (few animated films have), but it’s crisply entertaining.

‘The Edge of Seventeen’ (July 31)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

Nadine Franklin (Hailee Steinfeld) is a fairly typical teen — cynical, bitter, intelligent and smart-mouthed while also plagued with self-doubt, awkwardness and self-destructiveness. The first-time director Kelly Fremon Craig ells the story of how Nadine hits bottom (the high school version of it, anyway) and struggles mightily to bounce back with the help of a teacher with the patience of a saint (Woody Harrelson), and a best friend who has made things … complicated (Haley Lu Richardson). Steinfeld plays Nadine to the hilt, crafting a portrait of teenage ennui and social anxiety that’s as recognizable as it is uproarious.

‘Searching for Sugar Man’ (July 31)

[*Stream it here.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)

His professional name was Rodriguez, and he recorded two albums under that moniker in 1970 and 1971, soulful works with style and sensitivity that nevertheless didn’t connect with the listeners of his time. Discouraged, he quit music and spent decades as a member of Detroit’s ***working class***, unaware that his albums had been discovered and championed by an army of enthusiastic fans in South Africa. This Academy Award winner for best documentary, by Malik Bendjelloul, is both profile and mystery, telling Rodriguez’s fascinating story while investigating his disappearance. Warmhearted and affirming, it’s a feature-length testament to the uniting power of popular song.

Other notable titles leaving this month:

“[*The Iron Lady*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 5)

“[*Solo: A Star Wars Story*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 8)

“[*Enemy*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 11)

“[*Kevin Hart: Let Me Explain*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 12)

“[*Bolt*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 21)

“[*Ant-Man and the Wasp*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 28)

“[*Back to the Future*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Can’t Hardly Wait*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Hancock*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Hitch*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Jarhead*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Salt*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Stuart Little*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*The Pianist*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*The Pursuit of Happyness*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Twister*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

“[*Willy Wonka &amp; the Chocolate Factory*](https://www.netflix.com/title/70122316)” (July 31)

PHOTO: Scarlett Johansson in “Under the Skin,” directed by Jonathan Glazer. (PHOTOGRAPH BY A24 FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Has the Detroit Institute of Arts Lost Touch With Its Home Town?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60NN-29R1-JBG3-60B8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 2177 words

**Byline:** Graham Bowley

**Highlight:** Critics say the museum is not doing enough to relate to the predominantly Black city in which it’s located or to the people of color on its staff.

**Body**

Critics say the museum is not doing enough to relate to the predominantly Black city in which it’s located or to the people of color on its staff.

The Detroit Institute of Arts had just avoided selling off parts of its collection to help pay the debts of the city that owned it.

It had a new, independent ownership structure, new revenue streams and a new standing as a museum that tried to replace the foreboding demeanor of many art institutions with a more welcoming, visitor-centered experience.

And it had a new director, [*Salvador Salort-Pons*](https://www.dia.org/directors-biography), who had come from its ranks, a charismatic curator and Spanish-born scholar of Velázquez, who seemed to understand its struggles and its future and who took office to a rousing ovation at a board meeting in 2015.

But five years later, at a time when museum leaders across the country are being challenged on whether their institutions are systemically racist, few are confronting as many thorny issues as Mr. Salort-Pons.

Current and former staff have called for his resignation, complaining he has developed a corrosive, authoritarian manner while retaining a certain obtuseness on matters of race in a city that is predominantly Black.

Staff morale was so low in 2017 that nearly half of the museum staff told surveyors that they did not believe it was a work culture where they could thrive, citing disrespect and a sense their opinions were ignored.

And there are concerns that he has flouted ethics rules. [*A complaint*](https://www.dia.org/directors-biography) from staff about how he has handled works of art owned by his father-in-law has been filed with state and federal regulators, and a law firm hired by the museum is reviewing the matter.

Nonetheless, Mr. Salort-Pons, 50, retains the unwavering support of the museum board, as well as that of some Black leaders from Detroit who suggest his critics are unfair and overlooking the many steps he has taken to reach out to their community.

“Most of us are well aware that his recent predecessors never set one foot into neighborhoods in which Salort-Pons has routinely visited,” Marsha Music, a Detroit-based writer [*wrote*](https://www.dia.org/directors-biography) in a published post.

But the crisis the director faces is a real and significant one for a museum charged with managing a truly world-class collection of art while balancing its commitments to the city in which it sits and to three counties that now provide the bulk of its financing.

“There has been discontent,” said Jeffrey Abt, professor emeritus at Wayne State University who has written about the history of the institute. “I can see how it is potentially perilous.”

“On one side are the unhappy staff members who are objecting to Salvador’s administration,” he added. “On the other side are the friends outside the museum he has made over the years who think that, here, they have someone who is championing their cause.”

The level to which the 135-year-old museum relates to Detroit has long been an issue. For decades, the institute, housed in an austere, formal, classical structure, was perceived by many as a bastion of the city’s elite — a home for Old World art in a place run mainly by a wealthy white old guard.

But beginning in the early 2000s, under Mr. Salort-Pons’s predecessor, the museum worked to appeal to a broader, more diverse audience.

It became one of the first museums in America to establish galleries dedicated to African-American art. Its visitor-centered methodology sought detailed feedback and cooperation from community groups. Two Black women were hired as curators to great fanfare in 2016.

One might have imagined, then, that in recent weeks, as questions about racism and race have roiled America’s art institutions, a museum in Detroit that had already begun to reckon with its place in the community would have been in a position to provide some counsel on the way forward.

Instead, according to Mr. Salort-Pons’s critics, it has been found wanting.

The museum’s Center for African-American Art has been pushed down the institute’s hierarchy so that it now reports to the head of the modern and contemporary art department, a move that the critics say downplays its importance. The two Black curators hired in 2016 left after what they described as being undermined and silenced.

“He is not American, so he does not get what diversity, equity and inclusion means,” said Susan Larsen, former director of publishing and collections information. “I would not say he is racist. But he does not seem to understand the nuances of racial issues that are needed in a museum director today.”

Mr. Salort-Pons has acknowledged that, given his background, he needs to do more to broaden his understanding of race in America. In an email to staff last month, he wrote: “I believe that we can create and foster a workplace that embodies fairness, inclusion, curiosity and respect.”

In defending his efforts, he has pointed to his appearances at venues such as the Detroit Fine Arts Breakfast Club, which has strong connections to the African-American community.

The museum under his leadership held a show on Black art and civil rights unrest from 1967 and another on works created by African-Americans that are owned by Detroit area collectors. In a first for the museum, he paid more than $1 million for a work by a Black artist, “Bird,” by David Hammons.

“When I have my programs, Salvador and his wife often show up for all these events,” said Valerie Mercer, senior curator of African-American art.

But Mr. Salort-Pons’s critics say that whatever outreach efforts he has made, some employees feel they are not listened to, or worse. “As a person of color, I have experienced censorship of Black voices by Salvador at the D.I.A.,” said Andrea Montiel de Shuman, who quit as a digital experience designer in June.

Nor have people of color been hired in numbers that reflect that the museum’s home is a city that is nearly 80 percent Black.

The staff of 371 is 38 percent Black; three of its 11 curators are Black; 12 of its 48 board members are African-American. Of Mr. Salort-Pons’s nine-person senior leadership team, one member is Black.

The museum said it did not have any earlier statistics of staff demographics that might help measure the success of its diversity efforts. But Reginald M. Turner, one of the board members who is Black, said of Mr. Salort-Pons: “He has hired a number of persons of color since he has been in the role.”

Bill Harris, a writer and emeritus professor of English at Wayne State University, said he visited the institute as a young boy even though he didn’t feel welcome. “It has evolved from that, but it’s still a white institution,” he said.

Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, which has been a generous benefactor, said Mr. Salort-Pons can succeed, but only with the board’s support, and that he needs to overhaul the museum to better reflect Detroit. “He can only do this job if he is willing the shake the very foundations of that museum,” he said. “If he does not have the courage to do that, he should not be the director.”

Mr. Salort-Pons’s critics say that even in situations where the museum has taken on topical issues, like the exhibition that looked at civil unrest in Detroit during 1967, the approach has been sometimes safe and somewhat muted. The images may have been provocative, but staff members said he pushed back when they wanted language to mention issues like white supremacy or police brutality. Mr. Salort-Pons said he does not recollect this.

“There is reluctance to have a deeper conversation about issues that might be controversial,” said Teri John, former executive director of learning and audience engagement. “When you are the premier art institution in the Blackest community in the country, that is probably a problem.”

Melba Joyce Boyd, a professor in American Studies at Wayne State University, said that she respects much of what Mr. Salort-Pons has done but because of its location and audience, she said the institute has special responsibilities.

“The D.I.A. should be the number one place for African-Americans in the whole country,” she said. “Detroit should be taking a lead on a lot of these issues.”

Mr. Salort-Pons defends his efforts by pointing out that he must focus on serving the art interests of voters in three surrounding counties who came to the museum’s rescue in 2012 when [*they agreed to pay*](https://www.dia.org/directors-biography) extra taxes to support the institute. Their money now underwrites about two-thirds of the museum’s budget and the counties are a mix of demographics, affluent and ***working-class***, both white and people of color.

The fact that the tax increase was approved by voters again in March is proof he has got things right, Mr. Salort-Pons said.

“While we live in the city of Detroit, we serve the region,” he said in an interview. “I am accountable to those counties for the money that they give. We have to come up with programs that are relevant to those communities.”

Mr. Salort-Pons is far from alone as a museum director being challenged on racial matters. The death of George Floyd and the protests that followed have led museum staffs around the country to challenge the status quo. But the criticism of his tenure in Detroit has gone well beyond that.

There has been a separate whistle-blower complaint from some staff members about the director’s use of the museum to display two paintings owned by his father-in-law. The complaint, filed last month and disputed by Mr. Salort-Pons, says exhibiting the works possibly increased their value and he may have broken ethics rules by not recusing himself from the decision to display them.

A broader criticism has been that he has neglected the visitor-centered approach to exhibitions that put Detroit on the map as a leader in museum methodology in the early 2000s. Built on storytelling and feedback from community groups, the approach emphasized “interpretation” and accessibility. Exhibitions used narrative and historical context to connect with visitors.

“We used the fact that works of art — whether it’s an altarpiece by Giovanni Bellini or a pair of moccasins by an unknown Native-American artist — were created to fulfill a human purpose,” said Graham Beal, who was the museum’s director between 1999 and 2015.

Thousands of labels in its 60,000-piece collection were rewritten for a nonexpert audience and limited to 150 words, eliminating jargon.

“We did it to help people find personal connection with works of art, bringing people to the museum and developing a relationship to them,” said Annmarie Erickson, the institute’s former chief operating officer. “That was not an easy task in a big traditional fine arts museum.”

But several of the architects of that effort have left, and critics say its principles are being undermined because Mr. Salort-Pons doesn’t understand it or is more inclined to the formal, traditional way of showing art.

One of the practitioners, Ms. Montiel de Shuman, complained [*in a public essay*](https://www.dia.org/directors-biography) about an exhibit of [*a Gauguin painting*](https://www.dia.org/directors-biography), “Spirit of the Dead Watching,” that shows a young Tahitian girl, 13, lying naked. Although the label referred to colonialism and “racial and sexual power imbalances," she said the exhibit should have carried a warning for schoolchildren and “did not address that the artist sexually abused her.”

For his part, the director insists that because of complexity and expense the visitor centered methodology can’t be applied to everything. But he said he is fully committed to the approach: A new show, “Artemisia Gentileschi and Italian Women Artists Around 1600,” will feature all the techniques of evaluation and interpretation.

“There are ways to measure relevance, and one of the most straightforward is museum attendance, which has been increasing since the passage of the millage in 2012,” Mr. Salort-Pons said in recent comments posted on the museum’s website.

Some of that attendance has been built on popular exhibitions like one on baseball cards and another about “Star Wars.” These too were accessible.

But critics dismiss those shows as entertainment, pandering, not education, not a sophisticated approach that seeks to demystify heady and possibly obtuse objects of world-class art so that they can speak more easily to those who visit.

Yao-Fen You, a former curator who is now a senior curator at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, was one of the supporters of the visitor-centered approach until she left in 2018.

“When you care so much about a place, to see it have leadership that does not care for it in the best way, it’s heartbreaking,” she said. “It’s not up to the challenge at all.”

PHOTOS: Top left, Salvador Salort-Pons in 2015, when he was named director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, top right. Above left, Andrea Montiel de Shuman, who resigned as a digital experience designer in June. She said, “As a person of color, I have experienced censorship of Black voices by Salvador at the D.I.A.” Above right, Yao-Fen You, a former curator at the museum. Below, Reginald M. Turner, a museum board member. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARLOS OSORIO/ASSOCIATED PRESS; BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; BRIAN FRASER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C6)

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Stream Them Before They're Gone***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60BF-G7S1-JBG3-6454-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 12, 2020 Sunday

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; House & Home/Style Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 2016 words

**Byline:** By Jason Bailey

**Body**

Movie theaters are still closed. But your TV abides. Check out these movies before they leave, some as soon as the holiday weekend.

As quarantine stretches into summer, Netflix will bid farewell to two Scarlett Johansson-fronted sci-fi efforts, a pre-''Star Wars'' team-up by Oscar Isaac and Domhnall Gleeson, two indies starring Brie Larson and three marvelous dramatic comedies from female filmmakers of note. And those are just a few of the titles we recommend watching before they slip away at the end of July. (Dates indicate the final day a title is available.)

'Blue Valentine' (July 4)

Stream it here.

When this marital drama from Derek Cianfrance hit theaters in 2010, its production was already the stuff of legend: Its stars, Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams, attached to the project for nearly a decade, first shot the scenes in which their characters meet and falling in love, then spent a month living together before shooting the later scenes of marital dysfunction. It sounds like a gimmick, but the extended acting exercise pays off handsomely; the offhand naturalism and lived-in discord of those scenes is striking and occasionally heartbreaking, while Cianfrance's intermingling of the rough times with their earlier courtship creates a devastating portrait of love won and lost.

'Under the Skin' (July 11)

Stream it here.

Scarlett Johansson forges one of her trickiest performances -- simultaneously enigmatic, haunted, and sensitive -- as an alien life form trawling Scotland for unsuspecting male victims in this mind-melting science fiction drama from the British director Jonathan Glazer. It sounds like an art house riff on soft-core sci-fi sleaze like ''Species,'' but Glazer is interested in more than sex; he creates a disturbing mixture of cinéma vérité and body horror, using nonactors and hidden cameras to capture Johansson's interactions and seductions, to unsettling effect. It is, to be sure, not a mass entertainment. But those who can tune to its peculiar wavelength will find it enthralling.

'Locke' (July 11)

Stream it here.

In 2013, Tom Hardy took on an acting challenge even tougher than playing Bane or Venom: He stepped into the driver's seat of a mobile, one-man movie. He plays a construction foreman making a 90-minute drive from his home in Birmingham to a hospital in London, where a colleague with whom he had a one-night stand is giving birth to his child; the writer and director Steven Knight plays out that drive in real time as the character uses his car phone to make a series of telephone calls in which his carefully balanced life unravels. What could have been a dull, stagy gimmick is instead a thrillingly intimate character drama, elevated by Hardy's finest (and most subtle) screen work to date.

'The Spectacular Now' (July 11)

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The staid conventions of the high school movie -- reckless romance, nonstop partying, cheerful hedonism -- are rendered with atypical sensitivity in James Ponsoldt's 2013 adaptation of the young adult novel by Tim Tharp. Miles Teller is (deceptively) charming in the leading role as a popular senior whose good-time demeanor hides a troubling case of alcoholism. Shailene Woodley is delightful as the brainy and beautiful classmate whom he first sees as a rebound relationship before realizing the emotional damage he's capable of inflicting. Comparisons abound to ''Say Anything,'' and that's understandable; both films share an open heart and a keen ear for the rhythms of teen-speak. But ''The Spectacular Now'' goes deeper and darker, examining the impulses of these difficult characters while allowing for the possibility of light at the end of their journey.

'Room' (July 18)

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Brie Larson (who co-stars in ''The Spectacular Now'') won the Oscar for best actress for her astonishing work in this adaptation by Lenny Abrahamson of the Emma Donoghue novel. She stars as Joy, who lives in captivity with her 5-year-old son -- a child conceived with her there after she was kidnapped as a teen. Abrahamson sensitively details their daily routines and rituals as Joy quietly and patiently plans an escape. Those scenes are harrowing (and heartbreaking), but ''Room'' doesn't settle for easy answers. The film's second half asks hard questions about trauma and recovery, allowing Larson and her co-star Jacob Tremblay to add additional layers to their complex, bravura performances.

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This indie hit from Gillian Robespierre stars Jenny Slate as a Brooklyn stand-up comedian whose one-night stand with a nice guy (Jake Lacy) results in an unplanned pregnancy. She chooses to terminate it -- not the typical narrative arc of a light dramatic comedy -- and on one level, ''Obvious Child'' plays as film criticism, questioning the assumptions and motives of earlier comedies like ''Juno'' and ''Knocked Up.'' But on another level, it is delightful entertainment, boosted by Slate's considerable charisma, by her sprung chemistry with Lacy and by Robespierre's wry, insightful screenplay, which allows its messy protagonist the kind of complicated agency too rarely granted to women onscreen.

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Quentin Tarantino kicked off his cycle of grindhouse-influenced alternate histories with this 2008 war adventure. Set at the end of World War II, the film's Oscar-winning screenplay, written by Tarantino, juggles several stories of escapees, renegades and war criminals, culminating in an ambitious attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. The opportunities for disaster -- or, at the very least, insensitivity -- with this material are multifold, but Tarantino does not step wrong. He gets a big assist from Christoph Waltz, also an Oscar winner for his unforgettable performance as a gleefully villainous SS colonel.

'Mississippi Grind' (July 25)

Stream it here.

Four years before ''Captain Marvel,'' the writing and directing team of Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck collaborated on this (to put it mildly) smaller-scale effort, a ''California Split''-style indie drama about the sticky friendship between two inveterate gamblers. Ryan Reynolds and Ben Mendelsohn are the odd-couple leads, and they're well matched; keying off each other's (respectively) high energy and low-key naturalism, they meet somewhere in the middle. The story, of bad streaks offset by the promise of an eventual big win, is nothing new. The draw here is the atmosphere Boden and Fleck create and the ease with which Reynolds and Mendelsohn luxuriate in it, creating characters that shouldn't draw your sympathy but do.

'Ex Machina' (July 25)

Stream it here.

Oscar Isaac again, this time donning a bushy beard and tech-bro glasses. Part-affable, part-menacing, he plays a Silicon Valley millionaire who invites an office contest winner (Domhnall Gleeson) to his isolated home to share with him some astonishingly realistic robot technology -- in particular, a fascinating female model named Ava (Alicia Vikander). Written and directed by Alex Garland (''Annihilation,'' ''Devs''), this is a throwback to an earlier era of science fiction, propelled by thoughtful examinations of morality and identity.

'Her' (July 28)

Stream it here.

Cut from a similar low-fi sci-fi cloth, this 2013 Spike Jonze film, which won an Oscar for best original screenplay, imagines a future in which a smartphone's Siri-style personal assistant system proves so supportive, helpful and (yes) seductive that one could just ... fall in love with it. That's the conundrum faced by Theodore Twombly (Joaquin Phoenix), an introverted greeting card writer who rebounds from a painful divorce by intensifying his relationship with the ''Samantha'' operating system (voiced by Scarlett Johansson). A lesser filmmaker might twist the premise into a broad, dopey comedy. But Jonze goes further, exploring how Theodore's depression and social dysfunction made the inexplicable connection seem not only safe but logical.

'The Incredibles 2' (July 29)

Stream it here.

This 2018 Pixar sequel from Brad Bird -- one of the last Disney titles making the exodus to Disney Plus -- was a long time in coming. The 2004 original, concerning the trials and tribulations of a family of superheroes, was both a genuinely inventive animated feature and an early entry in the comic book movie cycle. Bird meets the challenge of following it up in a period of superhero ubiquity by focusing more on the familial dynamic and by introducing a memorable pair of villains, entertainingly voiced by Bob Odenkirk and Catherine Keener. It may not equal the original (few animated films have), but it's crisply entertaining.

'The Edge of Seventeen' (July 31)

Stream it here.

Nadine Franklin (Hailee Steinfeld) is a fairly typical teen -- cynical, bitter, intelligent and smart-mouthed while also plagued with self-doubt, awkwardness and self-destructiveness. The first-time director Kelly Fremon Craig ells the story of how Nadine hits bottom (the high school version of it, anyway) and struggles mightily to bounce back with the help of a teacher with the patience of a saint (Woody Harrelson), and a best friend who has made things ... complicated (Haley Lu Richardson). Steinfeld plays Nadine to the hilt, crafting a portrait of teenage ennui and social anxiety that's as recognizable as it is uproarious.

'Searching for Sugar Man' (July 31)

Stream it here.

His professional name was Rodriguez, and he recorded two albums under that moniker in 1970 and 1971, soulful works with style and sensitivity that nevertheless didn't connect with the listeners of his time. Discouraged, he quit music and spent decades as a member of Detroit's ***working class***, unaware that his albums had been discovered and championed by an army of enthusiastic fans in South Africa. This Academy Award winner for best documentary, by Malik Bendjelloul, is both profile and mystery, telling Rodriguez's fascinating story while investigating his disappearance. Warmhearted and affirming, it's a feature-length testament to the uniting power of popular song.

Other notable titles leaving this month:

''The Iron Lady'' (July 5)

''Solo: A Star Wars Story'' (July 8)

''Enemy'' (July 11)

''Kevin Hart: Let Me Explain'' (July 12)

''Bolt'' (July 21)

''Ant-Man and the Wasp'' (July 28)

''Back to the Future'' (July 31)

''Can't Hardly Wait'' (July 31)

''E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial'' (July 31)

''Hancock'' (July 31)

''Hitch'' (July 31)

''Jarhead'' (July 31)

''Salt'' (July 31)

''Stuart Little'' (July 31)

''The Pianist'' (July 31)

''The Pursuit of Happyness'' (July 31)

''Twister'' (July 31)

''Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory'' (July 31)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/movies/leaving-netflix-july.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/movies/leaving-netflix-july.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Scarlett Johansson in ''Under the Skin,'' directed by Jonathan Glazer. (PHOTOGRAPH BY A24 FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2020

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[***A Novelist Is Praised And Pelted***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y14-RKT1-JBG3-650C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 17, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 1618 words

**Byline:** By Alexandra Alter

**Body**

Jeanine Cummins depicts a mother and son's gut-wrenching journey in ''American Dirt,'' even as she acknowledges ''I don't know if I'm the right person to tell this story.''

During one of many harrowing moments in Jeanine Cummins's new novel, ''American Dirt,'' the protagonist, a bookstore owner named Lydia, has a jarring realization.

Lydia and her 8-year-old son, Luca, are fleeing from their home in Acapulco, Mexico, after hit men from a drug cartel killed 16 members of their family. Traumatized and desperate, Lydia hatches a risky escape plan: She and Luca will disguise themselves as migrants and attempt to cross the border into Arizona. As she researches what they will need to survive the journey, it dawns on Lydia that she and Luca aren't pretending. They ''are actual migrants.''

''All her life she's pitied those poor people,'' Cummins writes. ''She's wondered with the sort of detached fascination of the comfortable elite, how dire the conditions of their lives must be wherever they come from, that this is the better option.''

The character's insight is a deliberate provocation by the author, who wants readers to reckon with the humanitarian cost of America's broken immigration policies.

''It's a story that I think is at too comfortable a remove from the citizens of this country right now,'' Cummins, 45, said in an interview on a frigid, snowy day last month. ''This really is a tragedy of our making on our southern border. We are absolutely responsible for all of these deaths. This blood is on our hands.''

Whether or not it succeeds in reshaping readers' views, ''American Dirt'' -- which chronicles Lydia and Luca's grueling and treacherous journey of more than 1,000 miles -- seems poised to become one of this year's biggest breakout works of fiction.

The novel, which comes out on Jan. 21 with a hefty first printing of half a million copies, set off a bidding war between nine publishers and sold to Flatiron Books in a seven-figure deal. It received ecstatic advance reviews from Publishers Weekly and Kirkus, which called it ''intensely suspenseful and deeply humane.'' Blockbuster authors like Stephen King and John Grisham have heaped praise on the book, and Cummins received support from prominent Mexican-American and Latina authors, including Erika Sánchez, Reyna Grande and Julia Alvarez, who predicted the book would ''change hearts and transform policies.''

Sandra Cisneros, the author of the best-selling novel ''The House on Mango Street,'' said she hoped that ''American Dirt'' could help highlight the obstacles migrants face, particularly for American readers who might otherwise be indifferent to the subject.

''It's written in a form that will engage people, not just the choir, but people who might think differently,'' Cisneros said. ''We're always looking for the great American story, and this is the great story of the Americas, at a time in which borders are blurred.''

''American Dirt'' has also generated criticism. Some authors have questioned whether Cummins, who grew up in Maryland in a ***working-class*** family and identifies as white and Latina, succeeded in her effort to write from the perspective of Mexican migrants and accurately convey their experiences.

In a withering review on the site Tropics of Meta, the poet and writer Myriam Gurba wrote that ''American Dirt'' was full of clichés and stereotypes about Mexico, depicting it as a lawless, violent country overrun by drug cartels and corruption.

''This is like a Trumpian fantasy of what Mexico is, and we don't need any more Trumpian fantasies,'' Gurba said in an interview. ''It's even more noxious because it's masquerading as a piece of progressive literature.''

The Mexican-American writer and translator David Bowles echoed those views and called ''American Dirt'' ''appropriating'' and ''inaccurate.'' ''At a time when Mexico and the Mexican-American community are reviled in this country as they haven't been in decades, to elevate this inauthentic book written by someone outside our community is to slap our collective face,'' he said in an email.

Gurba and other writers of Mexican heritage have also criticized Cummins for drawing on works about Mexico and migrants by other authors, including Sonia Nazario and Luis Alberto Urrea. In a note at the end of ''American Dirt,'' Cummins acknowledges her debt to those writers and others whose work shaped her understanding of Mexico and the issues that migrants face.

Cummins researched the novel during trips to Mexico and by conducting interviews on both sides of the border. She spoke with people whose families had been torn apart by deportations, lawyers who work with unaccompanied minors, migrants in shelters in Tijuana and human-rights activists documenting abuses.

Still, she concedes that she is an imperfect messenger for a story about migrants. As a nonimmigrant, she was reluctant at first to write an entire novel from the perspective of Mexican migrants, for fear of getting it wrong, or appearing to be opportunistically seizing on a humanitarian crisis. It still nags at her, even as the publication day approaches.

''I don't know if I'm the right person to tell this story,'' Cummins said during an interview at her home overlooking the Hudson River in Rockland County, N.Y., where she lives with her husband, a flooring contractor, and their two daughters. In her author's note, Cummins, whose paternal grandmother came from Puerto Rico, describes her fear that her ''privilege would make me blind to certain truths'' and says she wished that someone ''slightly browner than me would write it.'' But she insists that writers from all backgrounds should not shy away from a subject that has become so central, and polarizing, in American politics and culture.

''I do think that the conversation about cultural appropriation is incredibly important, but I also think that there is a danger sometimes of going too far toward silencing people,'' she said. ''Everyone should be engaged in telling these stories, with tremendous care and sensitivity.''

Fiction in particular, Cummins said, has the potential to broaden and deepen readers' understanding of an issue that many Americans are only peripherally engaged with, if at all.

''We are telling these stories in our culture very superficially,'' she said. ''There's the narrative from the right, which is that these people are like an invading mob of criminals, and then from the left, the narrative is, 'Oh, these poor people, these impoverished people, they need our help, we must save them.' And there's this huge gap in the middle where their humanity should be.''

Cummins was born in Rota, Spain, where her father was stationed in the Navy, and grew up in Gaithersburg, Md. She studied English and communications at Towson University, then spent two years in Belfast, Ireland, where she worked as a bartender and wrote ''terrible poetry.'' After moving back to the United States, she found work in the paperback sales department at Penguin.

While she was working there, she published her first book, ''A Rip in Heaven,'' about a tragedy that struck her family in 1991, when her brother and two female cousins were attacked on a bridge in St. Louis by a group of men. The men raped her cousins and forced them off the bridge, killing them. Her brother, Tom, was also forced to jump off but survived. Years later, he asked Cummins to write a book with him. He backed out of the project, leaving Cummins, who was 16 when her cousins were killed, as the sole author.

Researching and writing about the crimes was daunting, Cummins said -- ''There were a lot of details I didn't want to know'' -- but it brought some relief and helped her learn how to write about trauma in a way that didn't feel gratuitous or sensational. Those themes, and a desire to ''take stories away from the perpetrators and give them to the survivors,'' shaped her next two books, the novels ''The Outside Boy'' and ''The Crooked Branch.''

She began researching a novel about immigration seven years ago, envisioning it with a diverse cast of characters: border patrol agents, American citizens living near the southern border, families that had been separated by deportation and undocumented migrants. But the narrative never cohered, and Cummins couldn't escape the feeling that she was avoiding the crux of the story.

Then, shortly before the 2016 presidential election, she experienced another family tragedy when her father died suddenly from a heart attack. She spent months in mourning, unable to write. One day, she pulled out her laptop and wrote the opening of ''American Dirt,'' a scene where Luca and Lydia narrowly survive the gunfire that kills Luca's father, a journalist who wrote about drug cartels, and 15 other relatives. She finished a draft in less than a year, and sold the novel in the spring of 2018.

In the time Cummins spent researching and writing, the humanitarian crisis on the southern border only grew more dire, and the political debate became even more charged. As she prepares to promote ''American Dirt'' on a cross-country book tour, with appearances in 40 cities in 26 states, Cummins is trying to avoid talking about the story in ways that might seem partisan, and to steer clear of terms like ''illegal'' and ''undocumented.''

''All fiction, all good fiction, can potentially dismantle some of the problematic language that serves often as barriers to meaningful conversation,'' she said. ''We don't have to choose a label for Lydia and Luca. They're people.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/13/books/jeanine-cummins-american-dirt.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/13/books/jeanine-cummins-american-dirt.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Jeanine Cummins said fiction could help readers better understand uncomfortable issues. (C19)

''American Dirt'' is a border-crossing novel from Jeanine Cummins, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HEATHER STEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C24)

**Load-Date:** January 19, 2020

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[***Why I'm a Liberal Immigration Restrictionist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y14-RKT1-JBG3-652K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1658 words

**Byline:** By Jerry Kammer

**Body**

Immigration can invigorate the country. But when it is poorly managed, it can cause social division -- just as it's doing right now.

In 2001, when I was the new Washington correspondent for The Arizona Republic, I attended the annual awards dinner of the National Immigration Forum. The forum is a left-right coalition that lobbies for unauthorized immigrants and expansive immigration policies. Its board has included officials of the National Council of La Raza, the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Immigration Lawyers Association, as well as the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Restaurant Association and the American Nursery and Landscape Association.

After dinner, the group's executive director, Frank Sharry, made a pitch to business allies who wanted Congress to allow them unfettered access to foreign workers. ''You guys in business get all the workers you want, whenever you want them,'' he proposed. ''No bureaucracy.''

''Sold!'' yelled John Gay, a lobbyist for the American Hotel and Lodging Association. Mr. Sharry quickly added that the deal must include advocacy for ''three little, tiny pieces of paper: a green card, a union card and a voter registration card'' for unauthorized immigrants.

For me, a reporter who had long covered immigration in the Southwest and Mexico, the exchange was a revelation about the politics of immigration in Washington. Business lobbyists like Mr. Gay -- conservatives who seek loose labor markets so employers can keep wages down -- align themselves with liberal activists like Frank Sharry to pursue policies that serve their groups.

Who, I wondered, was lobbying for the American workers competing with the new arrivals? The answer, I learned, was no one. As the former labor secretary Robert Reich once put it, ''There's no National Association of Working Poor.''

This mismatch of political influence, combined with the social and fiscal consequences of a wave of low-skilled immigrants, led me to believe that immigration should be restricted so that its power to invigorate our country is not eclipsed by its potential to harm workers. I think immigration, like capitalism itself, should be regulated in the national interest, not shaped to serve the free-market libertarianism of the right or the post-national humanitarianism of the left.

That's why I call myself a liberal restrictionist.

I have long considered myself a moderate liberal, in part because Democrats have always been the allies of working people. For many decades, liberals were outspoken in their alarm about illegal immigration.

In 1970, Senator Walter Mondale warned that ''we have a massive poverty population coming into the country'' from Mexico. In 1983 a New York Times editorial argued that while the country needed immigrants, ''what it does not need is such an uncontrollable flood of illegal migrants that it tries public patience.'' In 1994, Barbara Jordan, the civil rights icon chosen by President Bill Clinton to direct the Federal Commission on Immigration Reform, told Congress, ''As a nation of immigrants committed to the rule of law, this country must set limits on who can enter.'' In 2003, Hillary Clinton declared that she was ''adamantly against illegal immigration.''

But by the time Mrs. Clinton was running for president in 2016, she was courting the Latino vote, pledging not to deport unauthorized immigrants who did not have criminal records.

Now many liberal Democrats, including those who call for the abolition of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, seek to erase the distinction between legal and illegal immigration. Under the banner of inclusiveness, equality, human rights, racial reconciliation and reparations for American interventions in the third world, those liberals demand sanctuary for those who make it past the Border Patrol or overstay a visa. Few speak openly of open borders, but that is essentially what they are calling for.

Over the years, righteous outrage against restrictionists has been fueled by some truly odious people. Lance Morrow of Time magazine described the problem in 1980: ''Ku Klux Klansmen have paraded around Florida lately, dispensing their old nativist bile and giving a bad name to an argument ('America for Americans,' the picket signs say) that has more thoughtful and respectable proponents.''

Today, President Trump has brought such outrage into the mainstream with the repugnant charge that unauthorized immigrants ''infest our country.'' But Mr. Trump does not deserve all the blame for our dysfunction. The immigration debate has been warped by tribal passions on the left as well.

What the left misses is that as Mr. Trump pursues his draconian efforts to stem the tide, many Americans think he is fighting the good fight. They may be dismayed at his manic nastiness and his proclivity for crude insult. But they admire his willingness to wage what they see as a patriotic battle to defend common people.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the prominent liberal historian, believed that immigration restrictions were essential. He wrote in ''The Disuniting of America'' that while ''any curtailment of immigration offends something in the American soul,'' it was also true that ''uncontrolled immigration is an impossibility.''

President Ronald Reagan in 1986 proclaimed that he and Congress had fulfilled that duty. He signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, combining an amnesty with a program to stop future illegal immigration by requiring employers to verify that their new hires were legal.

The amnesty was delivered. Work-site enforcement was not. Illegal immigration exploded. From 1990 to 2007, the unauthorized population grew at an annual average of 500,000. It reached a peak of 12.2 million in 2007, before falling to its present level of about 11 million.

In 2004, as the national immigration reporter for the San Diego-based Copley newspaper chain, I returned to Arizona to report on Proposition 200, a statewide ballot initiative to deny public services to unauthorized immigrants. Public anxiety had grown in tandem with the state's illegal immigrant population, which had jumped to 480,000 in 2005 from an estimated 88,000 in 1990.

In Phoenix I spoke with Donna Neill, a volunteer organizer in a ***working-class*** neighborhood and the driving force in the construction of a park that was used primarily by immigrant children. Nevertheless, she supported Proposition 200.

She pointed to crowded classrooms, apartments where two or three families crammed into a space meant for one and home additions in violation of housing codes that went unenforced. ''We're losing the simple things that make a society a society, but no one wants to step forward because they're afraid of crossing some line and being called a racist,'' said Ms. Neill.

Despite a publicity campaign that branded the proposition as racist, it was approved by a large margin. Exit polls showed that 47 percent of Latino voters had supported it. ''People think they're driving down wages and taking jobs,'' John Garcia, a professor of political science at the University of Arizona, told me. (Such concerns would later be overshadowed by Latinos' anger at a state law that targeted illegal immigration and by the neighborhood ''sweeps'' orchestrated by Sheriff Joe Arpaio.)

In 2008, I left the newspaper industry. But the immigration story still tugged at me. I was fascinated by its human, political and moral complexity. I also wanted to push back against the campaign by activist groups to label restrictionism as inherently racist. A year later, I became a researcher and writer for the Center for Immigration Studies, which seeks restrictions on immigration.

I disagree with some of the center's hard-line positions. I favor a generous welcome for those who were brought here illegally as children and support comprehensive reform that would reprise the 1986 amnesty-plus-enforcement compromise. But restrictionists are right to insist that any new reform must guarantee work-site controls. They also make valid points in pushing for a system of legal immigration like the one developed by Canada, which favors people with education and skills.

No one understood the moral ambiguity of the immigration debate better than the historian and immigration scholar John Higham. Higham was a liberal contrarian who observed that while restrictionists ''claimed to be the hard-boiled realists,'' their realism ''was seldom free of prejudice or hysteria.'' On the other side, ''anti-restrictionists tended to gloss over the dilemmas that immigration imposed.''

Higham urged adoption of the 1986 immigration legislation and was dismayed when it wasn't enforced. In the Higham archives at Johns Hopkins University, where he taught for many years, I found a letter in which he identified himself as ''a mild restrictionist.''

I like that label. It suggests the conciliatory spirit that our country so badly needs. As the political divide around immigration intensified in the years before his death in 2003, Higham worried about the prospects for such a spirit. ''Are we experiencing, basically, an increasing indifference of people to one another, both within and between ethnic groups?'' he wrote. ''If so, immigration may prove to be just an aspect of a wider social fragmentation.''

Higham, it seems, anticipated the tempest now upon us.

Jerry Kammer, who shared a Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 2006, is a senior research fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies and writing a book about the politics of immigration.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/16/opinion/immigration-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/16/opinion/immigration-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael George Haddad FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 19, 2020

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[***Key States Up for Grabs As Trump-Biden Battle Extends Late Into Night***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:616Y-WCD1-JBG3-63SW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin

**Body**

Vote-counting was moving relatively slowly in some battleground states because of the scale of the turnout, a backlog of absentee ballots received by mail and scattered problems with processing the vote.

The 2020 presidential race remained shrouded in uncertainty deep into the night on Tuesday, as Joseph R. Biden Jr. failed to achieve any early breakthroughs that would have made him a strong favorite in the race and President Trump clung to a lead in a number of Southern states that Democrats had hoped to flip into their column.

Mr. Trump dashed Democrats' hopes of picking up both Florida and Ohio, two swing states that have tilted to the right in recent years, and that Mr. Trump carried four years ago. He also turned back a challenge from Mr. Biden in Iowa, a smaller state where Mr. Biden made a late effort to pick up its six Electoral College votes.

Mr. Trump did not have a clear upper hand, but the prolonged suspense was, at least at the start, something of a victory for the president, who was at risk of being eliminated from contention if one of the big, historically Republican states of the Southeast had defected to Mr. Biden. That was still a possibility in North Carolina or Georgia, where the vote tally was closely divided.

In Georgia, there appeared to be a large number of uncounted ballots in the Atlanta metro area, and those votes were expected to tilt solidly to Mr. Biden, the Democratic nominee. And in a number of the state's rural counties, Mr. Biden was slightly outperforming the margins posted by Stacey Abrams, a Democrat who lost a race for governor there two years ago by about 55,000 votes.

Vote-counting was moving relatively slowly in some battleground states on Tuesday night because of the scale of the turnout, a backlog of absentee ballots received by mail and scattered problems with processing the vote. And each state handled the counting and releasing of their ballots differently.

Ohio, for example, released the results of all of its mail ballots after the polls closed -- making the state seem to tilt toward Mr. Biden until more Election Day votes were cast. Similarly, Michigan released its day-of votes in the first hours after polls closed, making it seem that Mr. Trump enjoyed a wide advantage in a hotly contested state.

The night unfolded after one of the most extraordinary election cycles in the nation's history, as Americans overcame their fears of the coronavirus, long lines at the polls and the vexing challenges of a transformed voting system to bring the race to a conclusion, with the fate of Mr. Trump's tumultuous White House reign hanging in the balance.

Turnout was expected to easily break the record of 139 million votes set in 2016, and the percentage of eligible Americans who voted might be the highest in more than a century. More than 100 million early votes had already been cast before Election Day dawned, a record.

For all the angst about a potential breakdown in voting procedures in advance of Election Day, there were no prominent reports of technological failures or chaos at the polls, nor was there any evidence of significant civil unrest midway through the evening. There was still the potential for considerable uncertainty in the slower-counting states, and Mr. Trump threatened in the days before the election to wage a bitter legal battle in several of them in an effort to impede the results. But none of the numerous doomsday scenarios on the logistics of voting seemed to come to pass.

Mr. Biden appeared better positioned in the West, where he staked out an early advantage in Arizona, where most of the votes were cast by mail. The race there was expected to tighten, though, based on Election Day voting.

Mr. Biden, the former vice president, was outperforming Hillary Clinton in a number of the country's large metropolitan areas, but Mr. Trump was reprising or enlarging his margins in many rural areas. With far less support going to third-party candidates this year, Mr. Biden was effectively picking up many of those votes in urban areas while Mr. Trump was adding them to his margins in less populated areas.

Addressing supporters in his home state of Delaware after midnight, Mr. Biden projected optimism but asked voters for patience. He pointed to Pennsylvania and Michigan, among other battlegrounds, as slow-counting states he expected to win.

''As I've said all along, it's not my place or Donald Trump's place to declare who's won this election,'' Mr. Biden said. ''That's the decision of the American people. But I'm optimistic about this outcome.''

Mr. Biden added: ''It ain't over till every vote is counted.''

In the battle for the Senate, too, many of the most hotly contested races were not close to reaching a point of resolution. Democrats gained a seat they were widely expected to win in Colorado, as former Gov. John Hickenlooper defeated Senator Cory Gardner, a first-term Republican. But Republicans made up for that setback in Alabama, where Senator Doug Jones, a Democrat elected in a 2017 special election, lost the seat to Tommy Tuberville, the former football coach.

While it was too early to say which party would control the chamber in January, Democrats faced early disappointment in two solidly red states where they had fielded well-funded challengers in a bid to stretch the campaign map. Senator Lindsey Graham, the Republican chairman of the Judiciary Committee, easily defeated Jaime Harrison, a Democrat who broke state and national fund-raising records with his underdog campaign. Likewise, Representative Roger Marshall of Kansas defended an open seat that Democrats contested aggressively, recruiting a former Republican state legislator, Barbara Bollier, to run as the challenger.

Still, at least half a dozen races with the potential to tip the chamber remained undetermined, including in presidential swing states like Arizona, North Carolina and Michigan.

The absence of a decisive shift toward Mr. Biden in the conservative-leaning states that reported their votes earliest raised the prospect of a drawn-out wait for clarity in the Northern battlegrounds, where both parties expected him to run stronger.

In several of the largest swing states on the map, including Michigan and Pennsylvania, local officials were strictly limited in their ability to process ballots cast before Election Day, making it unlikely that they would be called for either candidate by the end of Tuesday night.

Still, the possibility of a romping victory by Mr. Biden appeared far slimmer than it did going into Election Day, based on a mountain of public polling data that showed him to be a clear front-runner across virtually the entire map.

Mr. Biden, 77, appeared to be underperforming with Latino voters, especially in the critical battleground of Florida, where he led Mr. Trump by only single digits in the group, according to exit polls. Mrs. Clinton won Latinos in the state by a wider margin four years ago; Mr. Trump's improvement appeared to reflect the success of his insistent anti-socialist message in South Florida, where Cuban-Americans and other immigrant communities are wary of far-left policies.

In a band of Southern states, including North Carolina and Georgia, early returns showed Mr. Biden doing well in metropolitan areas but struggling in rural areas.

As states began to be called there were no early surprises. Mr. Biden picked up states throughout the Northeast as well as Virginia and Illinois, and the reliable Democratic prizes of New York and California, according to The Associated Press. Mr. Trump won in parts of the South, as well as conservative-leaning Indiana and West Virginia and states in the Northern Plains.

Mr. Biden carried New Hampshire, a small state Mrs. Clinton won by a tiny margin four years ago. Mr. Trump had tried to seize the mercurial Northeastern state this time, but fell well short of doing so.

The onset of the coronavirus pandemic in the winter recast the election as a referendum on Mr. Trump's leadership in a crisis, restricted the activities of candidates up and down the ballot and upended the voting habits of tens of millions of Americans.

To the end, Mr. Trump insisted that the pandemic was quickly dissipating, despite mountains of evidence that the virus was spreading more rapidly than ever throughout the country. He blamed Democrats and the news media for overhyping the threat from the virus, and never formulated a factual rebuttal to Mr. Biden's charge that his passivity and ineptitude had led to thousands of needless deaths.

Mr. Trump campaigned vigorously across battleground states in the final days, hoping that a robust turnout from late-voting Republicans and rural white people would help him overcome the advantages Mr. Biden had built across a diverse coalition, especially with white suburban women.

Mr. Biden, who held a steady lead in the polls throughout the general election, maintained a more modest pace with smaller gatherings that showcased his emphasis on public safety in a health crisis. He spent the final days of the race denouncing Mr. Trump's failure to control the pandemic and his public attacks on scientists in his own administration.

Mr. Biden's candidacy had the potential to create a history-making moment for his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, who is of Indian and Jamaican descent; she was seeking to become the first woman on a winning presidential ticket. And Mr. Biden would be only the second Catholic president, along with John F. Kennedy.

According to recent polls, Mr. Biden appeared to have succeeded in making himself a kind of safe harbor for a wide array of voters unhappy with Mr. Trump, including women, white voters with college degrees, people of color, young people and seniors. But Mr. Biden's coalition was more impressive for its breadth than its depth, and despite its size and diversity, most voters supporting him appeared more excited to reject Mr. Trump than to install Mr. Biden in his place.

Mr. Trump, by contrast, was relying on a far narrower base of support: rural and less educated white voters, and especially men, who continued to embrace his message of hard-edge nationalism and cultural grievance even as the economic downturn deprived Mr. Trump of the chance to campaign on several years of comfortable growth.

Even as they have suffered through the pandemic, most ***working-class*** white voters saw Mr. Trump as a trustworthy pugilist who would take their side against any adversary -- whether China or Mexico, the national news media or Black Lives Matter protesters, or the Democratic Party.

Even aside from the pandemic, the 2020 campaign unfolded against a backdrop of national tumult unequaled in recent history, including the House's vote to impeach the president less than a year ago, a remarkable wave of racial justice protests in the spring, spasms of civil unrest throughout the summer, the death of a Supreme Court justice in September, and the hospitalization of the president in October.

As a result, Election Day arrived with the nation on edge, confused in some places about new voting systems and court battles over the electoral process, and worried about flare-ups of violence in the aftermath of a disputed result.

Mr. Trump, 74, encouraged those fears, and the underlying social divisions that fostered them: On the eve of the election, he made a baseless claim that a court decision on Pennsylvania's ballot-counting procedures would lead to street violence. No American presidential race in half a century or more has featured the same scale of civil unrest and uncertainty about the legitimacy of the political process, and no modern campaign has been so defined by an incumbent president who seemed to relish both factors the way Mr. Trump has.

''I'm still anxiety ridden,'' said Kayla Wells, 24, a mortgage banker, as she emerged from a polling station in Cleveland on Tuesday. She said she had woken up with knots in her stomach. Ms. Wells said she had cast her ballot for Mr. Biden.

But as she exited the polls, set up in the lofty atrium of a sports arena because of the pandemic, she said she hardly felt much better. ''The world is on edge,'' Ms. Wells said, adding that no matter who won the election, she would still be a Black woman living in a divided America. ''I feel like I've got to get home, drink some tea and watch TLC.''

Republicans answered a surge in mail voting partly by bringing numerous lawsuits aimed at restricting access to the polls, asking courts to limit steps taken in various places to make voting easier during the pandemic.

The legal skirmishes continued into Election Day, breaking out in Philadelphia soon after the polls opened. The Trump campaign pressed complaints that city election workers were not giving their observers -- known as poll monitors -- enough access to ballot counting areas.

Much of the uncertainty hanging over the election arose from the inconsistent or patchwork array of state-level policies hurriedly put in place to enable voting amid a public health disaster. In a number of states, like Pennsylvania and Michigan, local Republican officials blocked Democrats' efforts to make it easier to count ballots cast before Election Day, raising the possibility of a drawn-out count in some of the most important battlegrounds.

Democrats feared that in some cases a Supreme Court now dominated by conservative justices could ultimately limit vote-counting in a way that would aid Mr. Trump.

Recent opinion surveys found that Mr. Biden had a strong advantage among people who had already voted. For Mr. Trump, catching up would depend on turning out voters in large numbers on Election Day and winning them by a sizable margin.

The race was the most expensive presidential campaign ever, and Mr. Trump's much-lauded messaging apparatus was quickly eclipsed by a behemoth Biden operation that caught and far surpassed the Trump campaign in fund-raising. In the final month of the campaign, Mr. Biden's spending surged, giving him a more than two-to-one advantage on the airwaves and online, according to Advertising Analytics, an ad tracking firm.

Sarah Mervosh contributed reporting from Cleveland, Nick Corasaniti from Philadelphia and Giovanni Russonello from New York.Sarah Mervosh contributed reporting from Cleveland, Nick Corasaniti from Philadelphia, and Reid J. Epstein from Madison, Wis.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/04/us/politics/election-trump-biden-recap.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/04/us/politics/election-trump-biden-recap.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Urging turnout in Milwaukee. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

The nave of Washington National Cathedral was open Tuesday for an Election Day prayer vigil. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR ALFIKY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

A polling station in Manhattan. The early results were unsurprising in states like New York. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15)

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**Body**

Chioggia, Italy

Near Venice, an ancient town offers history, architecture and more, and creates an escape valve for overtourism

Built on a cluster of islands in the Venetian lagoon, with centuries-old buildings rising from the canals in all their decadent glory, Chioggia is called ''piccola Venezia,'' or little Venice. Locals beg to disagree: If anything, they say, it's nearby Venice that should be described as Chioggia's larger doppelgÃ¤nger, and it's true, Chioggia is older. Venice is so worried about being overwhelmed once again after the pandemic that it is planning to resort to surveillance cameras and cellphone data to control the crowds; visiting other culturally rich places like Chioggia can help relieve the pressure. Today, Chioggia is popular with Italian and German visitors, drawn both by the architectural beauties in the historic center and the family-friendly beaches of its mainland suburb, Sottomarina. The city, which has preserved a rough maritime vibe, can serve as an ideal base for bicycle tours. It is also known for its radicchio. During a time of increased awareness of overtourism, this miniature Venice is a delightful alternative for travelers looking for a lesser-known destination. -- Anna Momigliano

Chimanimani National Park, Mozambique

A new park in a struggling country offers ancient rock paintings and a refuge for local species

Even at a time when many of the world's countries were under extreme duress, the case of Mozambique was severe enough to catch the attention of the United Nations: In March, Secretary General AntÃ³nio Guterres called upon the international community to help the African country as it faced the triple threat of climate change, Covid and conflict. It's not the first time that Mozambique has faced such crisis -- its civil war of more than 15 years resulted in a million lives lost and a huge loss for its wildlife, too. But the country showed its resilience. In 2008, the Gorongosa National Park launched a vast program to repopulate a reserve decimated by poaching, accompanied by grass-roots efforts like training local women as game wardens. In May, another spectacular national park was unveiled: Chimanimani, along the border with Zimbabwe. The park has priceless ancient rock paintings; secluded sacred mountains including the country's highest peak, Mount Binga; and natural habitats for the plants, birds and wildlife like the southern-ground hornbill, miniature squeaker frog and Agama kirkii lizard. -- Ondine Cohane

Queens, New York

The world a la carte and available at the price of a subway ride

Queens wants you to show up hungry. ''There's probably nowhere else in the world where you can sample the home cooking of more than 150 different countries within such a compact space,'' says the restaurant critic Robert Sietsma, who covers the borough's restaurants for Eater.com. And at a time when long-haul travel is still uncertain, a dim-sum lunch at Nan Xiang Xiao Long Bao in Flushing is as quick and delicious a ticket to China as some nostril-clearing shrimp aguachile at the new Mariscos El Submarino in Jackson Heights is a trip to Mexico. ''The Queens restaurant industry was slammed by Covid-19, but now it's recovering because we're a borough of family-centered communities where the restaurants take care of their own,'' says Jonathan Forgash, a chef and borough resident who founded Queens Together, a nonprofit, in March 2020. -- Alexander Lobrano

Northumberland, England

Dark skies, pristine beaches and a 1,900-year anniversary on a coastline with newly opened trails

Britain's diverse coastline, from the cliffs of Dover to the boardwalks of Brighton, will soon have a unifying element: the 2,800-mile England Coast Path. Developed in part by the governmental organization Natural England, the path aims to increase public access to the coast while also restoring landscapes, improving community connection and promoting sustainable travel. Trail segments that have opened include a 44-mile stretch in the northeast, from the River Tyne to the Northumberland coast, which is the epitome of rugged England: misty dunes, rocky headlands, wild beaches. At night, look up. The Northumberland International Dark Sky Park has some of the lowest light pollution in the country and features one of the largest areas of protected night sky in Europe. Gaze at galaxies sprayed across the sky at Kielder Observatory, and then venture to the ancient past as Hadrian's Wall is celebrating its 1,900th anniversary with a yearlong festival. -- AnneLise Sorensen

Zihuatanejo, Mexico

A grass-roots approach to conservation on the Pacific Coast protects marine wildlife and revives a local village

This laid-back beach town -- neighbor of Ixtapa, the resort destination on the Pacific Coast -- and communities around it have spawned grass-roots environmental projects that travelers can support. The conservation nonprofit Whales of Guerrero has helped train fishermen as whale-watching guides, and Campamento Tortuguero Ayotlcalli offers opportunities to join turtle nest patrols and release hatchlings. The guitar duo Rodrigo y Gabriela, Rodrigo SÃ¡nchez and Gabriela Quintero, are involved with local vegan initiatives; Mr. SÃ¡nchez runs his own plant-based restaurant, La RaÃ­z de la Tierra. Check into Playa Viva, 30 miles south. The solar-powered regenerative resort has helped revive the adjoining village of Juluchuca by providing education and employment in conservation, tourism and agriculture. It recently joined a new regional project to protect the watershed of the Juluchuca River, which begins in the mountainous interior where guests can take A.T.V. excursions to explore the headwaters at an off-grid coffee and cacao plantation. -- Elaine Glusac

IberÃ¡ Park, Argentina

Rewilding 2 million acres of grassland and wetlands offers a home to dozens of endangered species

Twenty years ago, this reserve in Argentina's northern Corrientes region wasn't so much a park as it was tiny parcels of wilderness surrounded by cattle ranches. That's when the Rewilding Argentina foundation, created by the North Face co-founder Douglas Tompkins and now funded by tourism and a consortium of philanthropists around the world, stepped in and began buying land. Today, IberÃ¡ Park is one of the largest in Argentina, close to 2 million acres of protected grasslands, lagoons, islands and wetlands -- and a sanctuary for huge populations of animals. The foundation has saved dozens of species from extinction here, notably jaguars, giant anteaters and giant river otters, and has become a refuge for marsh deer, maned wolves, rheas, grassland birds and the aptly named -- and endangered -- strange-tailed tyrants. Tourism and infrastructure are strictly managed, and staying in one of the park's campgrounds directly supports the foundation, continuing the cycle of conservation. -- Danielle Pergament

Alentejo Wine Region, Portugal

Sustainable winemaking isn't just on-trend -- it's survival for a region where water is in short supply

Alentejo has most of the elements required for wine production: sun, soil, native grape varieties and a centuries-old winemaking legacy. What does it lack? Rain. Global warming has increasingly threatened this arid region known for warm and full-bodied reds, so in 2015, the area created the Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program. By prioritizing water conservation, with measures like developing cover crops for water retention and creating ponds to collect rainwater, the program has helped wineries reduce their average water consumption by 20 percent; some that were using 14 liters of water to produce 1 liter of wine have decreased their needs to 6 liters of water. While upcoming projects include an online calculator for members to measure their carbon and water footprints, the program in 2020 created a certification process to further verify that wineries are following green initiatives. These wineries include Herdade de Coelheiros, a verdant estate with a walnut orchard, a cork forest and a herd of sheep -- an organic solution for weed control. -- AnneLise Sorensen

The Lucayan Archipelago, The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos

A new model for shark conservation saves creatures that are needed for the health of the seas

Consider -- without fear -- the shark. In the last 50 years, global populations have declined by more than 70 percent. Industrial-scale fishing hauls them in by accident. Some cultures have an appetite for them. And yet sharks, one researcher has said, are the ''white blood cells'' of the seas, cleaning sick, dying and dead animals from the waters. The good news is that efforts are underway to support sharks -- even in the turquoise waters off some of the most popular tourist destinations in the Caribbean. In 2011, the Bahamas established the Bahamas Shark Sanctuary, the first of its kind in the Atlantic Ocean. Now it's calling itself the ''shark diving capital of the world.'' During the pandemic, Turks and Caicos -- which, along with the Bahamas, forms part of the Lucayan Archipelago, an important shark habitat -- began its own shark preservation effort, with help from the Caribbean Shark Coalition. Researchers have been tagging sharks in the waters off the tiny islands, gathering data that will assist Turks and Caicos, which has already prohibited most shark fishing, to establish further protections. -- Nina Burleigh

Evia, Greece

Community support for a ravaged island is helping locals survive environmental disaster

The Other Human food pantry was established more than 10 years ago, serving Athens, Thessaloniki and the island of Evia in the wake of Greece's financial crisis. As the country recovers from last year's wildfires and floods, The Other Human has expanded to help those who lost their livelihoods, and welcomes travelers to get involved. At weekly food drives held in Evia's capital, Chalkida, meals are cooked and eaten together to establish a sense of community. Volunteers are invited to help cook, pack hampers with food and essentials, and contribute funds to rebuild schools and aid locals with essential bills. Lost in the fires were homes, businesses, olive groves and one third of Evia's beloved pine forest, which generations had relied upon for resin and honey. Increasing tourism is vital for the economic recovery of this island a short trip from Athens. In addition to community projects, visitors will find a hilltop acropolis and other archaeological sites in Eretria, mineral-rich thermal springs in Edipsos and showstopper sunsets, with the Aegean Sea as a backdrop. -- Caterina Hrysomallis

Cobscook Shores, Maine

A new park for nature lovers conserves a rugged coast and eases crowds in other areas

''Vacationland,'' as Maine calls itself, thrives on the allure of its craggy coast and woodlands, and attracted more than 3 million visitors in the first nine months of 2021 to coastal Acadia National Park alone. Navigate 95 miles northeast near Lubec to find a new park that aims to ease overtourism: Cobscook Shores. Comprising 15 blocks of land spread primarily across three Down East peninsulas, Cobscook offers undeveloped beaches, coves and bluffs that can be reached by hiking trails and biking paths, as well as channels to be explored by paddlers. Just five backcountry campsites offer opportunities to stay overnight in the reserve, but there are more sites at nearby Cobscook Bay State Park, and the Inn on the Wharf in Lubec offers accommodations in a renovated sardine factory. The philanthropist Gilbert Butler, a conservationist who has invested in preserving natural areas from the Adirondacks to Patagonia, created the 780-acre Cobscook Shores, amplified by thousands of surrounding acres managed by state and federal entities and private conservation groups. -- Elaine Glusac

Hoonah, Alaska

A community, largely Indigenous, finds a way to deal with cruise crowds

Once dependent on fishing and logging, Hoonah, about 20 miles south of Glacier Bay on the Inside Passage, now relies on cruise tourism, not just for its livelihood but also for its cultural continuity. The community, which is half Huna Tlingit, is counting on a robust return to sustainable tourism in 2022, having recently introduced a second ship dock at its cruise port, Icy Strait Point, a half-mile from the original to prevent overcrowding. Additionally, the Native-owned Huna Totem Corporation, which runs tourism operations for the town on behalf of its 760 residents, built a gondola system to shuttle passengers in eight-person aerial cabins, which can handle 5,600 riders an hour, eliminating up to 100 exhaust-emitting buses. Bear- and whale-watching excursions underscore the community's reverence for nature, and by next April, the gondola system will reach the top of Huna Mountain, with its hiking trails and views of Chichagof Island and the Tongass National Forest. Locals credit visitors' interest in Native culture with the revival of the Indigenous language and local art. -- Elaine Glusac

Cleveland, Ohio

A restaurant with a mission of social justice turns dinner into a means of uplift

Dinner isn't usually part of the prisoner re-entry system, but at EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute in Cleveland's Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood, the mission is larger than braised artichokes and Burgundy snails: The aim is to teach former prisoners a new trade. Founded by Brandon Chrostowski, a classically trained chef, EDWINS includes a fine-dining French restaurant, bakery, butcher and event space, all open to the public. The campus has a test kitchen, apartments and basketball courts, and EDWINS continues to buy and refurbish buildings in the underserved neighborhood (a culinary class is available on closed-circuit tablets in prisons throughout the country). The institute helps former inmates get a place to live rent-free (relocation fees are paid in part by the Cleveland Browns football team), a driver's license, legal counseling and health care. ''It's not just about a wonderful restaurant, it's not just about re-entry,'' said Councilman Blaine Griffin of Cleveland. ''This is social entrepreneurship at its best.'' -- Danielle Pergament

Courmayeur, Italy

Striking a balance between tourism and conservation in a town where famed glaciers are at risk

This charming town at the foot of Mont Blanc, in a historically French-speaking region of Italy, has long made an effort to strike a balance between tourism and conservation. Decades before overtourism became alarming, Courmayeur began limiting access in the summer to its two high valleys, Val Veny and Val Ferret, with a fixed number of private cars and a separate quota for those with reservations at one of the local inns, known for their polenta concia -- creamy polenta with local fontina cheese. Some days, private cars are banned altogether, and in the winter both valleys become ski slopes. The cable car that carries visitors to Mont Blanc, a breathtaking experience, uses energy from renewable sources. But it takes more than a village to stop the global warming threatening Mont Blanc and its many glaciers. One of them, Planpincieux, has been declared in danger of collapse. Authorities are closely monitoring the situation, so visitors should follow warnings to avoid some routes -- or the entire area -- when risk is deemed too high. -- Anna Momigliano

Red River Delta, Vietnam

Celebrating age-old traditions in a country's less-visited region

Once travel begins to normalize, tourists will undoubtedly flock to Vietnam's world-famous beaches and dynamic megacities. But head north to the traditional villages of the Red River Delta, and you can immerse yourself in centuries-old cultural practices and a way of life that is at risk of disappearing. Since ancient times, villagers along the Cau River in northern Vietnam have sung Quan há», a call-and-response folk music style performed by alternating all-female and all-male duets from neighboring villages that was recognized as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage practice in 2009. In the decade since, 49 ancient villages in Báº¯c Ninh and Báº¯c Giang provinces have taken measures to safeguard the cultural heritage of Quan há» -- which includes countless rituals celebrating culinary traditions -- and to address rural-urban migration through cultural tourism. Hanoi-based tour operators like Vietnamstay and Khoa Viet Travel offer travelers a chance to explore the villages' Buddhist temples, craft communes, Ly Dynasty pagodas and waterways while helping to preserve the past. -- Charly Wilder

South Africa

Endangered wildlife, an underwater forest and a struggling UNESCO site support jobs and education

After nearly two years of restricted travel and the recent detection of the Omicron coronavirus variant, South Africa's many outstanding wildlife reserves and conservation projects are badly in need of support. Lockdowns caused a 96 percent drop in visits to South Africa's national parks, jeopardizing the efforts of places like iSimangaliso Wetland Park, an 800,000-acre UNESCO World Heritage site on the country's eastern coast. Home to elephants, leopards, lions, rhinos and whales, iSimangaliso also supports more than 12,000 jobs and an environmental education program involving 150 schools. Visitors can keep it classic and track the ''Big Five'' -- elephants, rhinos, buffalo, lions and leopards -- on safari at some of the country's approximately 500 private game reserves, like Kariega and Manyeleti. Or they can go a step further and volunteer to monitor biodiversity with the Endangered Wildlife Trust at Medike Nature Reserve in the Soutpansberg Mountains, or help save the dazzling aquatic life and octopus teachers that inhabit the Great African Seaforest, the planet's only forest of giant bamboo kelp. -- Charly Wilder

Uttarakhand, India

A tourism initiative empowers local women and gives travelers an intimate introduction to life in remote villages

In northern India, along the Tibetan border, the Himalayas soar to 25,000 feet and paths wander by misty waterfalls, ancient temples and through rhododendron forests. But those paths can be deadly, especially to local men who drink too much and tumble to their deaths. In 2009, Poonam Rawat-Hahne, a social justice activist with ties to the region, learned of the tragedy of those left behind. Ms. Rawat-Hahne was inspired to start a nonprofit called the Bachan Charitable Trust, which has a sustainable-travel arm called Fernweh Fair Travel that's based on a simple idea: Train widows and survivors of domestic violence to offer homestays, cook for visitors and be guides. Fernweh brings a maximum of eight groups of no more than 10 people a year to villages like Gopeshwar, Mandal and Chopta, where travelers can do yoga, take cooking lessons and hike among the wild orchids of the nearby Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary. Visitors stay in cabins, village homes and, soon, a new eco-retreat in Koteshwar. Funds support environmental and educational programs in at least nine villages; a group buying just one meal from a widow will support her for months. ''This is not mass tourism,'' Ms. Rawat-Hahne says. ''This is empowerment.'' -- Tim Neville

Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada

A traditional fishing community turns to tourism and finds new life

In 1992, Newfoundland's moratorium on cod fishing decimated fishing villages along the region's Atlantic coast, including Fogo Island, a granite outpost of stilt-supported fishing shacks and saltbox cottages. But the arrival of the angular and arresting Fogo Island Inn in 2013 changed the island's fortunes, as intended by its founder, the Fogo native Zita Cobb. Nine years later, the population has stabilized and more than 70 new businesses have opened, along with a dozen food producers. Now there are lodging alternatives to the inn (where rates start at over 2,500 Canadian dollars, or about $2,000, a night), including vacation homes with names like Aunt Glady's from The Old Salt Box Co., and cottages from Escape by the Sea. In summer, after summiting bald Brimstone Head, one of the island's highest points, or watching birds or icebergs, fuel up at Scoff, run by former cooks at the inn, or Bangbelly CafÃ©. The strong arts-and-crafts scene, including galleries such as Fogo Clay Studio, attests to the power of tourism to sustain a community. -- Elaine Glusac

The Great Highway, San Francisco

A throughway becomes a must-go destination, pointing the way for post-pandemic urbanism

Most pandemic-related shutdowns were disruptive reactions to a disease-dominated world, but many people across the U.S. welcomed one exception: prohibiting car traffic on city streets. In San Francisco, the street shutdowns included a two-mile stretch on the city's far western edge known as the Great Highway. The throughway became a destination, a beach-front promenade flanking the raw expanse of Ocean Beach, and a community center -- friends met up for walks, local children learned to ride bikes, and everything ''popped up,'' from street art to protests and trick-or-treating. But opponents took issue, with claims of increased traffic, limited access for older people and the disabled, and general inconvenience. In an uneasy compromise, city officials reopened the highway to traffic Monday to Friday. Still, on weekends, the Great Highway has become a unique destination -- in a city full of them -- to take in San Francisco's wild Pacific Ocean coastline by foot, bike, skates or scooter, sample food trucks and explore local cafes, restaurants, record stores, bookstores and more. It's also a telling microcosm of the ways in which our cities, and our values, shifted during the pandemic. -- Lauren Sloss

Kyoto, Japan

Tourism in service of traditional architecture with a precarious future

Tucked between pachinko parlors and convenience stores, Kyoto's machiya -- traditional wooden townhouses, long and narrow, and often hiding courtyard gardens just beyond their latticed fronts -- have been vanishing since World War II. The city has worked hard to preserve the structures: A machiya development fund was created in 2005, and the buildings were twice put on a watch list by the World Monuments Fund. To encourage their conservation, the buildings are also taxed at a lower rate than modern high-rises. But those efforts may now fall short. Teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, Kyoto is in cost-cutting -- and revenue-raising -- overdrive. After tourism dropped by 88 percent in 2020, some traditional neighborhoods may be threatened by commercial development. Tourism can help. Some investors have converted machiya into guesthouses, boutiques and high-end restaurants. When visitors, and their dollars, come to these properties, they send a message: The history of machiya matters to Kyoto. -- Debra Kamin

El Yunque National Forest, Puerto Rico

Local efforts revive a hard-hit reserve where government aid has been slow to arrive

Puerto Rico's El Yunque National Forest is the only rainforest within the U.S. Forest Service's holdings. Named by the Indigenous Taino tribe, it offers one of the most diverse ecosystems in the network, with wildlife including the famed Coqui frog, the island's unofficial symbol. Hit by the back-to-back hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, El Yunque is still recovering from the impact, and funding for everything from infrastructure to conservation has been slow to arrive. But local organizations like the nonprofit Love in Motion haven't been waiting. Its initiatives include rebuilding the Picachos and Angelito trails (you can also swim in the natural pool along the latter); the sister organization Local Guest arranges low-impact itineraries like bird watching and hiking while community building. Stay in a locally owned property like Dos Aguas, which has been in the same family since the 1950s (currently available only as a full house rental because of Covid) or the Rainforest Inn, with a botanical garden and solar-powered electricity. -- Ondine Cohane

Sierra Leone

Eco-tourism offers the chance to make an impact on a destination battered by conflict and epidemic

In the 1980s, the sandy, palm-fringed beaches of this West African country used to attract high-flying tourists from Europe and beyond. But visitors disappeared when civil war broke out in the 1990s, and today -- after nearly 20 years of peace and nearly six years after an Ebola outbreak ended -- most have yet to return. But this small nation has an enormous amount to offer adventurous visitors, and authorities hope that tourism will be a more sustainable resource than diamonds or gold. Visitors who make the trip can spend the night in a jungly eco-lodge at the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary (your stay supports the sanctuary's work); enjoy a cold beer and fresh lobster on the beaches of the Western Peninsula; learn about a painful chapter in history on a tour of the ruined slave fort on Bunce Island; and make the three- or four-day expedition to the top of 6,381-foot Mount Bintumani, the country's highest peak. -- Paige McClanahan

Slovenia

Where high-end dining is fed by the produce of local farms

Slovenia wants to cook for you, because the June 2020 launch of the first Michelin guide devoted to its restaurants was a source of national pride. It validated the way this central European country of just over 2 million people has been putting environmentally responsible travel and its good food and wines at the heart of its identity as a desirable destination for travelers since it became independent 30 years ago. ''From the very beginning, we knew our food was special and would become a major reason to visit our country,'' says Ana Ros, the chef at Hiso Franko, Slovenia's most famous restaurant and the only one with two Michelin stars. Slovenian cooking is a delicious reflection of the country's location at a culinary crossroads between Mediterranean, Germanic and Slavic countries, but the real reason its food is so good is that it's made with produce from the country's small farms. Some of them, like Govc, are part of a farm-stay network the Slovenian government launched in 1992. -- Alexander Lobrano

El Hierro, Spain

Using wind and water to create power on a tiny outpost that is leading the way

A few hundred miles off the coast of Morocco, flung out in the middle of the Atlantic, is El Hierro, the most remote -- and, some say, the most charming -- of the Canary Islands. It's also a pint-size leader in renewable energy. In 2014, El Hierro opened Gorona del Viento, a power plant that uses a system of reservoirs and wind to supply the island's electricity (wind provides power while pumping water into reservoirs; hydraulic turbines take over when the wind dies down; diesel supplies a fallback when both those sources are lacking). Recently, Gorona del Viento was able to supply the island's 11,000 inhabitants with 100 percent renewable energy for 25 consecutive days. As the infrastructure of El Hierro plants one foot in the future, the island's cultural identity keeps the other rooted in the past. El Hierro's historic language, Silbo HerreÃ±o, is one of the last whistling languages in the world. When the island's elders noticed that the HerreÃ±o whistle was dying out, the cultural association on El Hierro began offering free classes after school, at weekend markets and to the island's shepherds (who traditionally communicate by whistling). -- Danielle Pergament

Summerland Peninsula, Australia

The largest colony of the world's smallest penguin shows how putting the environment first can succeed

Every evening on Phillip Island, a throng of tiny penguins emerges from the surf, waddling up toward nests that dot Summerland Beach. The penguin parade, as it's known, is a sight that has garnered attention since the 1920s, when visitors began flocking to this island in southeastern Australia for a chance to see the world's smallest penguin breed (adults average just 13 inches tall) up close as they head home after a day of fishing. For a time, the crowds that gathered for the nightly ritual caused problems for the penguin colony, as did the cars, pets and construction that accompanied a nearby neighborhood, Summerland Estates. Today, however, this piece of land is a remarkable ecological success story. In 1985, the state government implemented a plan to buy every piece of property on the peninsula and return the land to its natural state -- and to its original inhabitants, the tiny penguins. The process was completed in 2010, and the penguin population now sits at around 35,000 breeding-aged birds, up from 12,000 in the 1980s. In 2019, a new $58 million visitor center opened to the public; it includes educational elements and a restaurant where you can sit and watch what is now the largest colony of the world's smallest penguin. -- Besha Rodell

Dana Biosphere Reserve, Jordan

Sustaining traditional livelihoods through village restoration in a desert landscape

Perched on a cliff overlooking the central valley of Jordan's largest nature reserve stand the quaint Ottoman-era stone houses of Dana Village. Once abandoned by the Ata-ta tribe, the settlement is being brought back to life through an ecotourism project that aims to preserve the area's biodiversity by empowering local communities. Many of the 15th-century houses have been converted into eco-lodges with terraced gardens and orchards, creating an oasis above the desert plains below. Along the village's cobbled streets, local women sell handcrafted jewelry and homemade jams produced from fruits grown in their orchards. Dana Village marks the start of the nine-mile Wadi Dana hiking trail that spans the reserve and its flora and fauna. The reserve is home to 833 plant species and several endangered bird species, including the Syrian Serin, the Lesser Kestrel and the Blandford's Fox, as well as archaeological ruins from the Byzantine, Nabatean and Roman periods, including the ancient copper mines in Wadi Faynan. -- Ceylan Yeginsu

Gouda, The Netherlands

A Dutch treat for cheese lovers and those wanting to get beyond Amsterdam

In 2019, the Dutch tourism board made the surprising announcement it would stop promoting travel to the Netherlands. Because of overtourism, it would also shift to encouraging visitors to consider the country beyond Amsterdam and to travel more sustainably. A charming example of a Dutch destination that ticks these boxes is Gouda, a small historic city in the south. Internationally renowned for its namesake cheese, which has been produced there since 1184 and is one of the world's 10 most popular cheeses, Gouda is an ideal base for a car-free visit to the Netherlands. An extensive system of well-marked bicycle routes (with charging stations for e-bikes) makes it easy to explore the city and surrounding region. The new 25-room Weeshuis Gouda hotel occupies a beautifully renovated 16th-century orphanage. Visit the new Gouda Cheese Experience, which opened in June 2020 in a butter-yellow former 19th-century military barracks, for a tasting of artisanal aged cheeses. -- Alexander Lobrano

Thy, Denmark

Winds of change at the edge of the North Sea, where renewable energy is part of the attraction

If Denmark has a final frontier, it's Thy. Silent dunes, tangled forests and near-mythic gales make this region in northwest Jutland about as far away from Copenhagen as you can get. Thy is an epicenter for wind energy -- around 50 percent of Denmark's electricity in 2020 was powered by wind and solar -- and those interested in learning more about wind turbines and renewable initiatives can visit the Ã˜sterild test facility's visitor center. The wind also shaped Thy's coastline, where the wryly named Cold Hawaii surf community rides the curving shore's distinctive swells. Not to be missed is the sprawling Thy National Park, rippling with dunes, meadows, marshes and lakes, big and small, and its new visitor center in NÃ¸rre VÃ¸rupor, uniquely designed to gently fold into the sandy landscape. The Thy wilderness is also folded into food and drink: Enjoy beer spiced with bog myrtle from Thisted Bryghus, fresh catch from the fish auction at Medvind and the ''National Park platter'' at Stenbjerg Kro. -- AnneLise Sorensen

The Red Sea Mountain Trail, Egypt

Rugged highlands, narrow gorges and generations of Bedouin culture are revealed in a region visited on foot

For centuries, pastoral nomads in Egypt's Eastern Desert traversed this arid region by a network of pathways over granite ranges, across barren valleys and through colorful canyons. Now the Ma'aza tribe has revived the ancient footpaths to create the long-distance Red Sea Mountain Trail. The 100-mile trail opened a few months before the pandemic shut the world down, and now its founders are hoping to organize the first through hike later this year. Meanwhile, the Ma'aza tribe offers day hikes through separate sections of this astonishing wilderness, hemmed between the Nile River and the Red Sea. All hikes are led by Bedouins. On the trek to Jebel Abul Hassan, hikers find themselves in a magical narrowing gorge flanked by pink and black granite walls. The hike up the sheer slopes of Wadi El Gattar reveals stone hermit cells built by early Christians fleeing the Romans, and primitive rock art from long before then. It's the ultimate sustainable tourism project: the water drawn from wells, the flat bread baked in campfires, and the Bedouin legends, traditions and knowledge of the terrain preserved for future generations. -- Patrick Scott

Little Calumet River, Chicago

African American history and restored marshlands on a new marine trail in a less-touristed neighborhood

In the Calumet region of Southeast Chicago, interest in the area's nearly two centuries of African American heritage is flourishing alongside a new marine trail. Established by the urban conservation organization Openlands and community partners, the seven-mile African American Heritage Water Trail aims to tell the story of the Little Calumet River and those connected to it throughout history, like freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad who found shelter at Ton Farm, owned by Dutch immigrants. Paddle by canoe or kayak to the trail's other key sites, including Chicago's Finest Marina, one of the oldest Black-owned marinas in the area, and the Major Taylor Trail Bridge, named after the African American cyclist legend. And history isn't the only draw for visitors: Thanks to initiatives by Audubon Great Lakes and other conservation groups, more marsh bird species are returning to this restored wetland area. -- AnneLise Sorensen

The Inner Hebrides, Scotland

A signature industry searches for a sustainable future using water and high-tech fuel

These islands along Scotland's west coast are known for their wild, secluded beauty: fields of wildflowers, solitary beaches, ever-swirling seas. They're also known for producing some of the world's best single-malt whisky. Now, several new energy initiatives are helping to make the region -- and its distilleries, which are largely reliant on fossil fuels -- more eco-friendly. This year, the Bruichladdich Distillery, founded in 1881, is starting a pilot project on the island of Islay to begin using hydrogen fuel, in addition to fuel oil, to power its stills. According to the company, the zero-emission boiler, which will generate some of the steam required for distillation, will be the first of its kind in Britain. Plans are also underway to build new underwater wind turbines in the waters around Islay and Jura, a neighboring island, beginning in 2023. Those, too, could one day contribute to powering the islands and their distilleries, bringing an age-old industry -- and the many tourists it draws -- into a more sustainable future. -- Jenny Gross

Normandy, France

Environmentally friendly bike trails that could inspire Impressionist painters

Claude Monet's paintings of Normandy's moody Atlantic coast could now have another element: a bicycle path, winding in the distance. New bike routes in the region include the 932-mile VÃ©lomaritime, which starts south in Brittany, travels along the shore of the English Channel and ends at the Belgian border. Along the way, Mont-Saint-Michel rises out of the water and World War II's D-Day landing beaches beckon. The VÃ©lomaritime is one of the newer trails making up the EuroVelo, a bike network that aims to unite the European continent. The new 260-mile La Seine Ã  VÃ©lo, with a focus on promoting environmentally friendly bicycle tourism and connecting with local communities, embarks from Notre-Dame in Paris and follows the Seine to the Normandy coast, through sun-dappled countryside. La Seine Ã  VÃ©lo's final stretch swoops through the area of Pays d'Auge, the cradle of Camembert, Calvados and cider. -- AnneLise Sorensen

Estes Park, Colorado

A ski town with no ski lifts makes for a smaller carbon footprint and gets travelers outdoors

Climate change has diminished snow and made for spottier ski seasons in many destinations. Skiers aiming to shrink their carbon footprint can turn to a ski town with no ski lifts: Estes Park, the gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, about 65 miles north of Denver. The town's original ski area, Hidden Valley, opened in 1955 in the park but closed in 1991 because it couldn't compete with larger areas' snow-making capabilities. Now, with runs still cut into the mountain, it attracts backcountry skiers who champion its powder with a ''no pain, no altitude gain'' attitude. Those new to backcountry skiing can learn how to uphill and descend safely with a course from the local Kent Mountain Adventure Center. Rewilding Expeditions offers more unmechanized recreation, including camping and snowshoe tours, and private tours led by Yellow Wood Guiding focus on wildlife and photography. Toast your adventures aprÃ©s-ski with an Altruism amber from Estes' Rock Cut Brewing Company, which donates $1 of every Altruism beer sold to local organizations and nonprofits. -- Elaine Glusac

Kunta Kinteh Island, Gambia

A struggle between a sorrowful history and rising seas on an endangered spot of land

Kunta Kinteh Island, a speck of land near the mouth of the Gambia River, was a key site in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Formerly called James Island and used for hundreds of years as a staging ground for the transport of enslaved people, the island, part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, was renamed in recent years after a character in Alex Haley's best-selling book ''Roots.'' Now, because of heavy erosion and rising seas, the island is at risk of being lost altogether. Its ruins -- including the cramped quarters where men and women were confined before being sent across the Atlantic -- have been partly protected, but only a fraction of the island's land mass remains, the rest having been reclaimed by the surrounding water. Local tour guides can be hired to explain the island's history, and a small cruise company runs annual river trips into Gambia, giving guests the opportunity to donate to a school and film festival the company founded deeper inland. -- Nina Burleigh

Naples, Italy

Locals roll up their sleeves and combat climate change in a city where exploring on foot is part of the solution

See Naples and die, they say, meaning that this Mediterranean beauty should be on everyone's bucket list. But sadly, Naples faces a precarious future. Without intervention, this densely populated city is expected to experience 55 days of extreme heat per year by 2049 and 93 days by 2081, according to a recent report. The good news is that some locals are rolling up their sleeves. A group of residents in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of San Giovanni a Teduccio has set up a ''fair energy'' community to provide free, clean electricity to families living below the poverty line, with a system of 166 solar panels. Local authorities encourage tourists to visit the city by foot, taking tours across Naples's fabled stairways. The Pedamentina, a scenic route tracing it roots to the 14th century and consisting of paved descents and more than 400 steps, cannot be missed. -- Anna Momigliano

HÃ¶ga Kusten, Sweden

A natural refuge on the wild High Coast offers travelers a greener alternative

Swedes have long sought solitude in the untamed northern region known as HÃ¶ga Kusten, or the High Coast, for its dramatic cliffs and pristine archipelago. With more than 100 nature preserves, a national park and hundreds of miles of trails, this wilderness refuge is a draw for hikers, cross-country skiers and mountaineers seeking less-trodden paths, stunning vistas and uncrowded campsites. A dedication to sustainable tourism, including a pledge to make the area carbon-neutral by 2030, promises to protect the future of the coast, its beautiful lakes and its old-growth forests. Last summer, new electric buses began ferrying hikers from nearby towns to the park's entrance. To inspire hikers to appreciate the surrounding nature, the ArkNat architecture project has built several sculptural huts along the trails. -- Ingrid K. Williams

Humboldt, Kansas

Squint, and you'll see hints of Marfa in a Midwest town aiming for renewal

In 2016, a group of Kansas locals who had left decades ago began asking themselves, ''What would it take to move back home?'' The answer lay in tiny Humboldt, two hours southwest of Kansas City with a population of fewer than 2,000 people. With the support of the local community, the group established an organization, A Bolder Humboldt, to revitalize rural living, with the town becoming an unexpected and affordable oasis of cool surrounded by fields of wheat and soybeans. A Bolder Humboldt has already opened shops, community gardens and co-working spaces, with a boutique hotel, a honky-tonk bar and a bookstore all in the works. Outdoor movies are screened on the town square, and the whole town participates in an annual water fight. Base Camp is a collection of lakeside rental cabins at the edge of town, and cyclists can ride a 60-mile trail to nearby Lawrence and the University of Kansas. Humboldt is betting these elevated experiences will draw both locals and tourists to the glories of the Great Plains. -- Gabriela Herman

Greenland

Volunteer to help plant trees in one of the world's most threatened places

With its average temperatures rising faster than anywhere else on the planet, Greenland is establishing a holistic, sustainable approach to tourism that aims to be in harmony with its people, natural wilderness and 4,500-year-old Inuit culture. The world's largest island, a Danish territory, is now directing various grants to locals, including the Inuit dog-sled tour company Greenland Dog Adventure, and offering free training and tourism degrees at Campus Kujalleq in Southern Greenland. Also in Southern Greenland: Greenland Trees. For more than a decade, this nonprofit -- in a region sheltered from the island's traditional stormy weather -- has planted thousands of trees to offset carbon emissions, and future plans include building a greenhouse to cultivate seedlings and restoring land at a former military base. Volunteers are welcomed to help plant trees and enjoy Greenland off the beaten path. Here visitors can see Norse ruins -- the area is a UNESCO World Heritage site, for Norse and Indigenous culture -- and experience the aurora borealis, with few others blocking the view. -- Daniel Scheffler

Marrakesh, Morocco

Visiting a fabled city supports efforts to educate and empower women

While women in Morocco have been granted some additional rights in the past two decades, the country recently ranked 144th (out of 156 countries) in a World Economic Forum study of gender parity. Fortunately, entrepreneurs are creating foundations, cooperatives, shops and restaurants to employ, educate and empower Moroccan women. Since many are in Marrakesh, a trip to this ''Jewel of the South'' offers an opportunity for visitors to help. The Al Kawtar boutique, stocked with clothing, bags and other textiles sewn by disabled women, also operates a home where the women live and receive care. For carpets, consider visiting the atelier of Salam Hello, which is devoted to paying weavers -- mostly rural women -- a fair wage and using profits to assist them. Come lunch or dinner, a traditional Moroccan meal -- tagine, couscous, fruit salad -- at an Amal restaurant provides direct assistance to disadvantaged women and helps finance a nonprofit association that trains women in culinary skills. Finally, when it's time to sleep, consider Peacock Pavilions. The luxury resort, located in an olive grove outside of Marrakesh, is owned by the creators of Project Soar, which provides education and leadership training to teen girls. -- Seth Sherwood

Northland, New Zealand

Cultural lessons await, as do hot springs where visitors can recharge body and soul

According to MÄori legend, the North Island of New Zealand was an enormous fish, caught by the demigod MÄui, and now the forested region of Northland is known as ''the tail of the fish.'' Endless cultural lessons await travelers here. At the newly redeveloped Ngawha Springs, where the people of Ngapuhi came to replenish their wairua, or spirit, visitors can soak in dozens of mineral-rich geothermal pools to alleviate pain and repair common ailments. Also reopening is the cultural and educational center Te Ahurea, which includes an interactive pÄ or settlement site highlighting the history and traditions of the Hongi, Rewa and TÄreha MÄori Indigeneous peoples. For day tours, the MÄori-owned and -operated Tu Tika Tours organizes private adventures that reveal local customs through storytelling, welcome ceremonies, singing, weaving and cuisine. And to rest your head, the secluded eco-retreat Tahi offers luxury while boasting of giving 100 percent of its profits back to local conservation, culture and community. -- Daniel Scheffler

Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

Undisturbed old growth forests remind visitors of what's at stake with climate change

Long a destination for adventurers eager to surf Tofino or watch for orcas or humpback whales, Vancouver Island has recently been the center of a controversy around one of British Columbia's few remaining patches of old-growth rainforest. These complex ecosystems, which remove and store significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, are in increasingly short supply -- an argument demonstrators are using against loggers as they try to protect Douglas firs and yellow cedars in the island's Fairy Creek forest on Pacheedaht First Nation territory. While the fight rages on and Fairy Creek remains inaccessible, the wonderland of Cascadian rainforest can be explored at MacMillan Provincial Park, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve or the UNESCO-protected Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve. Experiencing old-growth forests while we still can is an affecting way to better understand what's at stake, and what we stand to lose. -- Lauren Sloss

Elijio Panti National Park, Belize

In a park where Maya herbalism takes center stage, culture and nature are preserved

Since gaining its independence in 1981, Belize has long prioritized the conservation of its lands and waters. At a park near the country's western border with Guatemala, those conservation efforts extend to cultural and floral realms, too. Elijio Panti National Park, a lush, 13,006-acre oasis, is one of only a handful of parks in Belize that's comanaged by a Maya community. The park takes its name from Don Elijio Panti, a renowned Maya healer who worked from a small hut a couple of miles from the park's entrance. A series of medicine trails display the names and uses of the nearly 100 native plants -- like balsam and gumbo-limbo -- that Mr. Panti foraged here. ''The day we forget how to use our medicinal plants is the day we go extinct,'' said Maria Garcia, Mr. Panti's niece, who inherited her uncle's interest in herbal medicine and serves as one of the park's stewards. Nearby hotels have begun highlighting the park as an attraction; at GAIA Riverlodge, guests can sign up for a five-hour guided tour led by a local shaman. -- Alex Schechter

Sarasota, Florida

Saving the Mod squad to inspire innovative and sustainable design

Architecture Sarasota is a new organization founded to protect and promote the most spectacular concentration of modernist buildings east of the Mississippi. In a booming city on Florida's Gulf Coast, where there's a constant tug of war between developers and preservationists, raising the profile of these modernist buildings is intended to give them greater value in the eyes of locals and attract design tourists, says Anne-Marie Russell, the organization's executive director. The buildings were the work of architects in what was known as the Sarasota School of Architecture, which emerged during the 1940s and ran through the mid-1960s. Among the best-known architects were Paul Rudolph and his partner Ralph Twitchell, Philip Hiss, Gene Leedy, Carl Abbott, Victor Lundy and Jack West. ''Our hope is the Sarasota School's innovative sensitivity to climate and environmental concerns will spur innovative and sustainable design here today,'' Ms. Russell said. Architecture Sarasota organizes guided visits to and private stays at some of the best modernist houses and runs an annual MOD Weekend of tours, exhibits and similar events. -- Alexander Lobrano

Vanuatu

Explore blue lagoons on a fragile Pacific archipelago that is challenging the world on climate change

Visitors to Vanuatu's alluring swimming holes insist that each one is a slightly different shade of blue -- some are an intense turquoise, others are sapphire. After diving into these natural freshwater pools, surrounded by lush foliage, travelers will find remarkable water clarity, even 60 feet down. The pools have been off-limits to visitors from abroad since March 2020, when this collection of around 80 islands, scattered across an 800-mile arc of the South Pacific, shut its borders to protect itself from the coronavirus. The plan is to reopen when more residents are vaccinated.The archipelago, which some liken to Bali or Fiji 40 years ago, because it has yet to reckon with overdevelopment, is also confronting a crisis beyond the pandemic. Along with consistently ranking among the happiest nations out there, Vanuatu is the most disaster-prone country in the world, and climate change is contributing to those disasters, which include cyclones and sea level rise. This tiny country of around 300,000 people is now leading the fight to get the International Court of Justice to issue a legal opinion on countries' obligations to each other to take action to slow climate change. Addressing this currently unresolved area of international law could influence policies not only in Vanuatu, but everywhere we travel. -- Heather Murphy

Santa Cruz County, California

Appreciating old trees on new trails after wildfires threatened their future

In 2020, wildfires across California threatened some of the world's oldest forests, including at Big Basin Redwoods and Henry Cowell Redwoods State Parks in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Thankfully, most of the parks' mighty redwoods survived the flames, and now hope -- in the form of expanded green initiatives -- is dawning across Santa Cruz County. While Henry Cowell is open, as is a small section of Big Basin, with more ambitious rebuilding planned, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is developing new hiking trails, including in the 8,500-acre San Vicente Redwoods. On the North Coast, the Cotoni-Coast Dairies, a recent addition to the California Coastal National Monument, is slated to open within the next year, with nearly 6,000 acres of coastal terraces, redwood forests and sweeping views of the Pacific. The area's designation as a national monument will help protect its rich ecology and cultural history, including ancestral sites of the Indigenous Cotoni people. -- AnneLise Sorensen

Serra da Capivara National Park, Brazil

Art and archaeology in a remote Brazilian park that visitors can help preserve

Sure, it's the dramatic mesas and canyons of northeastern Brazil's caatinga, or cactusy shrub lands, that first catch the eye. But what distinguishes this national park from countless other breathtaking Brazilian landscapes are the archaeological and artistic remains of ancient humans who many researchers believe arrived more than 20,000 years ago. The now 88-year-old French-Brazilian archaeologist NiÃ¨de Guidon first documented the exuberant red ocher cave drawings depicting hunters, prey, revelers and play in the 1960s. Her team unearthed archaeological finds that called into question previous theories on how humans reached the Americas; the area became a national park in 1979, added the Museum of American Man in 1986 and became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1991. The Museum of Nature, opened in 2018, brought a record 30,000 visitors to the park the next year. The pandemic slowed momentum but not progress: New archaeological sites were prepared for visitation, new visitor bathrooms were installed, and most notably, an impressive 200-foot enclosed ladder up a steep cliff face opened in October, allowing safer and far faster visitor access to a popular panoramic viewpoint. -- Seth Kugel

Saguaro National Park, Arizona

Communal help for a keystone species may sustain a park for the future

Saguaro National Park, whose two parcels sit on either side of Tucson, is home to almost 2 million of the tall, multi-limbed cactuses for which it is named. For decades it has delighted visitors with hiking trails, archaeological sites and epic vistas. But climate change is now threatening the very cactuses that have made the park an iconic destination. Rising temperatures, along with more frequent -- and hotter -- wildfires, are curbing the growth of new saguaro. A National Park Service report found that out of 10,000 cactuses, only 70 were less than 11 to 15 years old, a disturbing trend that puts the future of the cactus population in the park at risk. To help mitigate the effects of wildfires, the park launched an eradication program targeting buffelgrass, an invasive species that is drought-resistant and provides an outsize amount of wildfire fuel. The park has also organized monthly buffelgrass pulls, where teams of volunteers spend four hours digging up and disposing of the invasive species. Put on hold during the pandemic, the group pulls are slated to begin again early this year. Officials are also planning to begin a program where visitors can ''adopt'' specific areas of the park and pick buffelgrass on their own time. -- Daniel Tepper

Islas CÃ­es, Spain

On this lush archipelago, keeping overtourism at bay is part of the charm

Even before the pandemic, the Islas CÃ­es off Spain's Galician coast had long limited the number of daily visitors -- 1,800, in high season -- to protect its environment and guard against overtourism. This verdant archipelago, part of the Atlantic Islands of Galicia National Park, is a vision of protected biodiversity: flourishing nature preserves, teeming marine life and robust colonies of seabirds. The strict conservation efforts include restrictions against cars, hotels and noise, and ensure that only in designated areas can visitors explore long, curving beaches, snorkel through clear waters and hike trails that wind toward picturesque lighthouses. The delight continues at night: Ink-black starry skies have earned a Starlight designation for limited light pollution. Island ferries depart from Galicia's RÃ­as Baixas region, with highlights that include misty albariÃ±o vineyards, Pontevedra's old town, and Vigo and its Calle de las Ostras, where you can slurp up fresh oysters at outdoor wooden tables. -- AnneLise Sorensen

Monaco

The principality has a green sheen from its carbon-neutral ambitions

Monaco's gilded reputation shimmers worldwide, but these days the principality's glow is unequivocally green. The sovereign city-state on the French Riviera has an ambitious plan to cut its carbon emissions by 55 percent before 2030 and turn carbon-neutral by 2050. Its sustainability efforts are driven by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, a global charity prioritizing environmental action that was established in 2006. Sixteen years later, evidence of the principality's initiatives is visible (and enjoyable) in the 0.76-square-mile enclave. It has a robust network of electric cars, bikes and hybrid buses, and a solar-powered water taxi that transports people with ease. Strollable public parks and gardens make up 20 percent of Monaco (where escalators help with the climbs), while snorkeling is the activity du jour off Larvotto Beach, where sea life thrives amid 3-D printed reefs, submerged roughly 60 feet below the water's surface to restore habitats damaged by human activity. The locally based company Terrae takes urban gardening and farming to new heights, populating rooftops and balconies, and supplying residents and restaurants, including Michelin-starred Blue Bay. Meanwhile, the Distillery of Monaco produces bitter orange liqueur and gin, flavored with citrus from trees in Monaco and nearby villages. -- Kimberley Lovato

Bronzeville, Milwaukee

With thriving businesses and the reopening of a noted museum, a Black district offers a sense of renewal

At times overshadowed by its namesake neighborhood in Chicago, Milwaukee's Bronzeville district is again distinguishing itself as a center of African American culture. From 1910 to the 1950s, the area buzzed with Black-owned businesses, but it was decimated by ''urban renewal'' projects that razed thriving Black neighborhoods across America. Today's Bronzeville is supported by about $400 million of redevelopment funds from organizations like the Historic King Drive BID, P3 Development Group and Maures Development Group (all led by people of color). Symbolic of this reinvigoration is the reopening next year of America's Black Holocaust Museum. Founded in 1988 by Dr. James Cameron, the only known survivor of a lynching, the museum attracted visitors from around the world before closing in 2008 when it lost funding during the recession. On Feb. 25, the museum will reopen in a 10,000-square-foot space that takes visitors on a journey through more than 4,500 years of African and African American history. Nearby, businesses like Gee's Clippers (a barbershop housed in a 1930s bank) and the Bronzeville Collective (a retail space featuring local Black brands) elevate African American artistry, while the newly opened Maranta Plant Shop, Sam's Place Jazz Cafe and soon-to-open Niche Book Bar prove that Bronzeville is back. -- Shayla Martin

Thaidene NÃ«nÃ© National Park Reserve, Canada

Canada's newest national park sets a model for Indigenous control in a spectacular landscape

Designated in 2019 and located in the Northwest Territories, Canada's newest national park, Thaidene NÃ«nÃ©, means ''Land of the Ancestors'' in the Denesuline language. The park is a mix of boreal forest and tundra along the eastern shoreline of Great Slave Lake. It also sets a new precedent in including Indigenous peoples in park management and oversight. The first Canadian national parks, created in the 19th century, excluded Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands. Although this policy changed, overall control remained in the hands of Parks Canada. At Thaidene NÃ«nÃ©, Indigenous communities, including the nearby Dene settlement of Lutsel K'e, have helped create and manage the park from the beginning. Economic opportunities derived from the park, like guiding and cultural heritage tours, flow back to these communities. Ni Hat'ni Dene is a network of Lutsel K'e residents employed to protect, monitor and provide interpretive tours of the park. Visitors can hike along the trails of Dene ancestors, paddle through the many coves and waterfalls of the eastern arm of Great Slave Lake, fish for lake trout and Arctic grayling during the summer's nearly 24-hour light, and camp at the transition point between the subarctic and Arctic environments. -- Peter Kujawinski

Cerro Castillo National Park, Chile

Conservation efforts offer hope for a country's national animal whose numbers have dwindled dramatically

Located along the Route of Parks of Patagonia, a network of 17 national reserves that make up about a third of Chile, Cerro Castillo was designated as a national park in 2018 and is at the center of an effort to protect the country's national animal, the huemul or South Andean deer, from extinction. The huemul population has dwindled to 1,500, about 1 percent of its historic size. Rewilding Chile, a conservation organization started by the co-founder of the North Face, Douglas Tompkins, working with the Chilean government, is leading an initiative to save them. They established the National Huemul Corridor to give the huemules more room to roam between the parks, and are building a huemul rehabilitation center in Cerro Castillo to treat animals infected with Linfoadenitis caseosa, a disease transmitted by cattle. Visitors to Cerro Castillo may spot the animals while enjoying a short walk on one of the trails through the Lenga and Ã‘irre forests, or can opt for a circuit through the park that takes four to five days. The park's crown jewel is a mountain peak that resembles a castle, from which it takes its name. -- ConcepciÃ³n de LeÃ³n

Daintree Rainforest, Australia

A rainforest returned to its Indigenous owners lets visitors learn about their culture and stewardship of the land

The 180-million-year-old Daintree Rainforest in northern Queensland is one of the world's most complex ecosystems. Part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, the area is home to sparkling rivers, copious wildlife and lush tropical flora, all of which tumble down to white sand beaches that abut the Great Barrier Reef. The region has always been popular with tourists. But in 2021 it became an even more compelling destination, after nearly 400,000 acres of land, including Daintree, were handed back to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji, an Aboriginal people who are believed to have lived in the area for more than 50,000 years. The hope is that the transfer of ownership will encourage visitors to learn more about the culture and ecological stewardship of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji, as well as provide career opportunities for members of the tribe. It is an example of the increasingly vital role Indigenous Australians are taking in the country's tourism industry. -- Besha Rodell

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/10/travel/52-places-for-a-changed-world.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/10/travel/52-places-for-a-changed-world.html)

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**Body**

Immigration can invigorate the country. But when it is poorly managed, it can cause social division — just as it’s doing right now.

In 2001, when I was the new Washington correspondent for The Arizona Republic, I attended the annual awards dinner of the National Immigration Forum. The forum is a left-right coalition that lobbies for unauthorized immigrants and expansive immigration policies. Its board has included officials of the National Council of La Raza, the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Immigration Lawyers Association, as well as the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Restaurant Association and the American Nursery and Landscape Association.

After dinner, the group’s executive director, Frank Sharry, made a pitch to business allies who wanted Congress to allow them unfettered access to foreign workers. “You guys in business get all the workers you want, whenever you want them,” he proposed. “No bureaucracy.”

“Sold!” yelled John Gay, a lobbyist for the American Hotel and Lodging Association. Mr. Sharry quickly added that the deal must include advocacy for “three little, tiny pieces of paper: a green card, a union card and a voter registration card” for unauthorized immigrants.

For me, a reporter who had long covered immigration in the Southwest and Mexico, the exchange was a revelation about the politics of immigration in Washington. Business lobbyists like Mr. Gay — conservatives who seek loose labor markets so employers can keep wages down — align themselves with liberal activists like Frank Sharry to pursue policies that serve their groups.

Who, I wondered, was lobbying for the American workers competing with the new arrivals? The answer, I learned, was no one. As the former labor secretary [*Robert Reich*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/) once put it, “There’s no National Association of Working Poor.”

This mismatch of political influence, combined with the social and fiscal consequences of a wave of low-skilled immigrants, led me to believe that immigration should be restricted so that its power to invigorate our country is not eclipsed by its potential to harm workers. I think immigration, like capitalism itself, should be regulated in the national interest, not shaped to serve the free-market libertarianism of the right or the post-national humanitarianism of the left.

That’s why I call myself a liberal restrictionist.I have long considered myself a moderate liberal, in part because Democrats have always been the allies of working people. For many decades, liberals were outspoken in their alarm about illegal immigration.

In 1970, Senator Walter Mondale [*warned that*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/) “we have a massive poverty population coming into the country” from Mexico. In 1983 a   [*New York Times editorial*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/) argued that while the country needed immigrants, “what it does not need is such an uncontrollable flood of illegal migrants that it tries public patience.” In 1994, Barbara Jordan, the civil rights icon chosen by President Bill Clinton to direct the Federal Commission on Immigration Reform,   [*told Congress*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/), “As a nation of immigrants committed to the rule of law, this country must set limits on who can enter.” In 2003,   [*Hillary Clinton*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/) declared that she was “adamantly against illegal immigration.”

But by the time Mrs. Clinton was running for president in 2016, she was courting the Latino vote, pledging not to deport unauthorized immigrants who did not have criminal records.

Now many liberal Democrats, including those who call for the abolition of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, seek to erase the distinction between legal and illegal immigration. Under the banner of inclusiveness, equality, human rights, racial reconciliation and reparations for American interventions in the third world, those liberals demand sanctuary for those who make it past the Border Patrol or overstay a visa. Few speak openly of open borders, but that is essentially what they are calling for.

Over the years, righteous outrage against restrictionists has been fueled by some truly odious people. Lance Morrow of Time magazine [*described the problem in 1980*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/): “Ku Klux Klansmen have paraded around Florida lately, dispensing their old nativist bile and giving a bad name to an argument (‘America for Americans,’ the picket signs say) that has more thoughtful and respectable proponents.”

Today, President Trump has brought such outrage into the mainstream with the repugnant charge that unauthorized immigrants “[*infest our country*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/).” But Mr. Trump does not deserve all the blame for our dysfunction. The immigration debate has been warped by tribal passions on the left as well.

What the left misses is that as Mr. Trump pursues his draconian efforts to stem the tide, many Americans think he is fighting the good fight. They may be dismayed at his manic nastiness and his proclivity for crude insult. But they admire his willingness to wage what they see as a patriotic battle to defend common people.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the prominent liberal historian, believed that immigration restrictions were essential. [*He wrote*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/) in “The Disuniting of America” that while “any curtailment of immigration offends something in the American soul,” it was also true that “uncontrolled immigration is an impossibility.”

President Ronald Reagan in 1986 proclaimed that he and Congress had fulfilled that duty. He signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, combining an amnesty with a program to stop future illegal immigration by requiring employers to verify that their new hires were legal.

The amnesty was delivered. Work-site enforcement was not. Illegal immigration exploded. [*From 1990 to 2007*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/), the unauthorized population grew at an annual average of 500,000. It reached a peak of 12.2 million in 2007, before falling to its present level of about 11 million.

In 2004, as the national immigration reporter for the San Diego-based Copley newspaper chain, I returned to Arizona to report on Proposition 200, a statewide ballot initiative to deny public services to unauthorized immigrants. Public anxiety had grown in tandem with the state’s illegal immigrant population, which had jumped to [*480,000 in 2005*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/) from   [*an estimated 88,000 in 1990*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/).

In Phoenix [*I spoke with Donna Neill*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/), a volunteer organizer in a ***working-class*** neighborhood and the driving force in the construction of a park that was used primarily by immigrant children. Nevertheless, she supported Proposition 200.

She pointed to crowded classrooms, apartments where two or three families crammed into a space meant for one and home additions in violation of housing codes that went unenforced. “We’re losing the simple things that make a society a society, but no one wants to step forward because they’re afraid of crossing some line and being called a racist,” said Ms. Neill.

Despite a publicity campaign that branded the proposition as racist, it was approved by a large margin. Exit polls showed that 47 percent of Latino voters had supported it. “People think they’re driving down wages and taking jobs,” John Garcia, a professor of political science at the University of Arizona, told me. (Such concerns would later be overshadowed by Latinos’ anger at a state law that targeted illegal immigration and by the neighborhood “sweeps” orchestrated by Sheriff Joe Arpaio.)

In 2008, I left the newspaper industry. But the immigration story still tugged at me. I was fascinated by its human, political and moral complexity. I also wanted to push back against the campaign by activist groups to label restrictionism as inherently racist. A year later, I became a researcher and writer for the Center for Immigration Studies, which seeks restrictions on immigration.

I disagree with some of the center’s hard-line positions. I favor a generous welcome for those who were brought here illegally as children and support comprehensive reform that would reprise the 1986 amnesty-plus-enforcement compromise. But restrictionists are right to insist that any new reform must guarantee work-site controls. They also make valid points in pushing for a system of legal immigration like the one developed by Canada, which favors people with education and skills.

No one understood the moral ambiguity of the immigration debate better than the historian and immigration scholar John Higham. Higham was a liberal contrarian who observed that while restrictionists “claimed to be the hard-boiled realists,” their realism “was seldom free of prejudice or hysteria.” On the other side, “anti-restrictionists tended to gloss over the dilemmas that immigration imposed.”

Higham urged adoption of the 1986 immigration legislation and was dismayed when it wasn’t enforced. In the Higham archives at Johns Hopkins University, where he taught for many years, I found a letter in which he identified himself as “a mild restrictionist.”

I like that label. It suggests the conciliatory spirit that our country so badly needs. As the political divide around immigration intensified in the years before his death in 2003, Higham worried about the prospects for such a spirit. “Are we experiencing, basically, an increasing indifference of people to one another, both within and between ethnic groups?” [*he wrote*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/). “If so, immigration may prove to be just an aspect of a wider social fragmentation.”

Higham, it seems, anticipated the tempest now upon us.

Jerry Kammer, who shared a Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 2006, is a senior research fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies and writing a book about the politics of immigration.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/07/05/a-semi-tough-policy-on-illegal-workers/97eb6f70-00b2-4781-ab9a-f30e9b0fe775/).

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Jerry Kammer is a senior research fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael George Haddad FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Despair, Detours and the Fulfillment of a Dream***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60N0-06P1-JBG3-61C0-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

More than three decades after his first presidential run, in the midst of a deadly pandemic and without his son Beau at his side, the former vice president has met his moment.

Joe Biden tells funny stories at funerals and sad ones at campaign stops.

He has been running for president long enough to lose the 1988 Democratic primary as a hard-charging 40-something pushing generational change -- and to win the 2020 primary as the white-haired statesman who has steered through sorrow, who can still sniff it out in any room and close in like a pang-seeking missile for the stricken.

''He asked if I was OK and gave me a hug,'' a cane-shuffling Iowa man, Brian Peters, said last winter, blinking away tears after pledging his support to Mr. Biden on a characteristically misty post-event rope line. ''I told him that I would be.''

Maybe it had to happen this way, friends say, if it was going to happen at all: After nearly a half-century of public life defined most viscerally by the forced commingling of politics and personal loss, the tint of the moment at last matches Mr. Biden's own story: shadowed by despair, sustained by faith -- in himself; in God; in the human capacity for resilience, founded or not.

''We all are an accumulation of our life's experiences,'' said Joe Riley, a friend of Mr. Biden's and the former longtime mayor of Charleston, S.C.

And Joseph Robinette Biden Jr.'s experiences have delivered him here. He has at last captured the Democratic presidential nomination, earning the chance to face President Trump because he is, admirers say, all the things that the incumbent is not: empathetic, dependable, decent.

''Character is on the ballot,'' Mr. Biden said in his convention address Thursday evening, inside a quiet hall in Wilmington, Del. ''Compassion is on the ballot.''

There is some irony, Democrats concede, in the idea that Mr. Biden prevailed because voters found him comforting and familiar. Through his years in presidential politics, his longevity has generally served to remind his skeptics of all they believe he has gotten wrong: He voted to authorize the use of military force in Iraq and came to regret it. He presided over the committee that subjected Anita Hill to demeaning and invasive questioning in the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for now-Justice Clarence Thomas. He helped craft tough-on-crime legislation that many criminal justice experts now associate with mass incarceration.

In this primary campaign, Mr. Biden, 77, could often appear almost willfully out of step with the times, telling debate viewers to keep their record players on at night for children's educational purposes and warmly remembering his relationships with segregationist senators.

He won anyway, stepping to the lectern on Thursday having reached the precipice of a prize he has chased for more than three decades and talked about since grade school.

Yet like many flashes of triumph in his long career, this one is not as he imagined it, the would-be jubilation laced with an abiding gravity.

His speech skewed sober, befitting the national mood. He did not have a large crowd to cheer him through it in person, in deference to the pandemic that has overwhelmed the country he hopes to lead. He did not have Beau Biden, his son and political heir, who died in 2015 while pleading with his father not to withdraw from the public arena. A video tribute to him played instead.

''Beau should be the one running,'' Mr. Biden said in January, choking up in a television interview.

But then, the ''should'' constructions have never much cooperated in Mr. Biden's arc, where the bitter and the sweet tend to find each other in metronomic succession.

His underdog Senate victory in 1972, as a relentless 29-year-old who did not know better, came a month before the car crash that killed his wife and daughter and injured his two sons, the trauma that forever enshrined him as an avatar of bereavement in the public consciousness.

His debacle of a first presidential bid, for the 1988 Democratic nomination, collapsed just as he was carrying off one of his signature congressional achievements: helping to engineer the defeat of a deeply conservative Supreme Court nominee, Judge Robert H. Bork.

Then an aneurysm nearly killed him.

The signal promotion of Mr. Biden's career to date -- his elevation to the vice presidency -- came after another campaign flameout in 2008. And his eight years as President Barack Obama's chief lieutenant ended with Mr. Biden a tragic figure once more, burying Beau and deciding against another run in 2016.

Long fluent in the emotional force of foreboding Irish poetry and proverb, Mr. Biden has been known to lean on an axiom borrowed from Daniel Patrick Moynihan, his former Senate colleague: ''I don't think there's any point in being Irish if you don't know that the world is going to break your heart eventually.''

So it has gone, on some level, in each chapter of Mr. Biden's biography: the boy with the stutter; the young man in a hurry; the senator with a binder of old eulogies in his office, a brimful accounting of his grief.

In one of them, for his father in 2002, he offered up this working definition of a Biden man: ''a dreamer burdened with reality, a sensitive spirit layered in stoicism.''

That sounds about right, people close to him say, for better or worse. He has nurtured his White House dreams and, in his penchant for exaggeration, occasionally strained to recast reality. He has laid bare his sensitivity -- he is a hugger and a crier, a walking purveyor of vulnerability -- and been left to suffer his losses stoically at times, maintaining a public profile through private anguish.

''He has inordinate strength,'' said Carol Balick, a longtime family friend whose husband hired Mr. Biden as a young lawyer. ''He doesn't carry a mythology about himself.''

But he does have his stories, repeated and refashioned through the years with a homespun sweep calibrated to his audiences.

He was raised in Scranton, Pa., the sort of white ***working-class*** hub that became part of his political coalition, and in Delaware -- the son of a car-salesman father and a strong-willed mother who encouraged Mr. Biden through his speech difficulties, telling him he was just so bright that he couldn't get the thoughts out fast enough.

While his renderings of his youth can feel culled from a Norman Rockwell, with Mass on Sundays and penny candy for a neighborhood snack, the Bidens slogged through financial hardships severe enough that they were forced at one point to move in with his mother's parents.

More distinguished as an athlete than a student, Mr. Biden edged into adulthood amid the swirl of 1960s activism but found himself at a clear remove from it. He has at once described civil rights as the animating cause of his interest in public service and overstated his own participation in the struggle, compelling advisers years later to gently remind him that if he did not actually ''march,'' he should probably stop telling voters that he did.

In fact, Mr. Biden's most consequential encounter around this time happened poolside in the Bahamas, by his account, during a spring break trip in 1964, his junior year at the University of Delaware.

''I've got the blonde,'' Mr. Biden told a friend, zipping toward a stranger, Neilia Hunter, and her suntanning companion.

Mr. Biden and Ms. Hunter had dinner that night. They were married two years later.

And this, Mr. Biden has suggested, is what most informed his throwback bearing in this period of national upheaval. He was growing up fast: a family, a burgeoning legal career, a run for county council soon enough.

''I was married, I was in law school,'' he told reporters once, explaining his psychic distance from the antiwar fervor of his contemporaries. ''I wore sport coats. I was not part of that. I'm serious!''

He was. And he did not lack for ambition. Even in his 20s, Mr. Biden was a plotter, a grinder, a wear-you-down talker.

If he could seem, at times, like an older man in a young man's body, his next job would only amplify the effect. With his audacious, successful 1972 challenge to the incumbent senator, J. Caleb Boggs, Mr. Biden saw his future snapping into place. He was a senator-elect before turning 30. He had a wife and three children already.

And then the crash.

Those who knew him then recall those early Senate days as a kind of rolling thunderstorm, breaking occasionally but never clearing in full.

''Even after it got better -- where after four, five, six months you'd go and things would seem kind of normal -- then one day it was right back in the beginning,'' said Ted Kaufman, a longtime friend and aide who briefly succeeded Mr. Biden in the Senate. ''He'd come into work, and he was clearly hurting. But he came, and he did it.''

Mr. Biden likes to talk about the people who rescued him in these years: the senators who looked after him, cementing his lifelong reverence for the chamber, and the woman -- Jill Jacobs, for a time -- who rebuilt his family.

''She put us back together,'' Mr. Biden said in a video presentation during the convention this week. ''She gave me back my life. She gave us back a family.''

As Mr. Biden's Senate tenure swelled, rumblings about a White House run became something of a quadrennial tradition.

His first campaign, like this one, was premised as much on his personal integrity as any signature policy push.

His second -- two decades later, by which time Mr. Biden had spent more earthly years in the Senate than outside of it -- centered on experience and judgment, drawing on his grounding in foreign affairs and his talent for ''God-love-ya'' glad-handing.

That both failed is a matter of political shortcomings, yes, but also of timing.

This Joe Biden, the one who won the 2020 primary, is still known best for all he has lost. He is still liable to misstate, misstep, mishandle. And he is still often at his strongest offstage, deploying long hugs and finger-guns among the well-wishers.

If the pandemic crystallized Mr. Biden's rationale for the nomination, even after he had effectively claimed it, it also reinforced his longstanding case against Mr. Trump as a national emergency unto himself.

Often, his supporters' argument has seemed this simple: You need a good man to defeat a bad man.

Barbara Boxer, a former Democratic senator from California, turned a phone interview over to her spouse as she worked to summarize her former colleague's appeal. ''My husband said, 'In a word, he's a mensch,''' Ms. Boxer reported. ''You should say her husband leaned over and said, 'He's a mensch.' But it's true.''

In recent weeks, friends say Mr. Biden has approached his convention spotlight with a solemnity reflecting the nation's distress. He has said this is not about ego and never was. He has said he could die happy without ever hearing ''Hail to the Chief'' play for him.

He has also thought he would be president before -- if never this deep into a campaign -- only to meet a reversal of fortunes.

''He's been pretty reserved,'' Representative James Clyburn, the South Carolina Democrat whose endorsement helped revive Mr. Biden's once-floundering bid, said of the candidate's present outlook.

And why would a polling lead change that? Why would the presidency?

''That's what losing will do for you,'' Mr. Clyburn reasoned.

That is what Joe Biden understands.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/us/politics/joe-biden-2020.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/us/politics/joe-biden-2020.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Joseph R. Biden Jr. after winning the South Carolina primary in February, above, and signing a button in 2008 in Iowa, left. He accepted the Democratic nomination on Thursday night after three presidential campaigns spread across the decades. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JOSHUA LOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Biden announced his first presidential campaign with his family in 1987 in Wilmington, Del. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KEITH MEYERS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13)

**Load-Date:** August 21, 2020

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[***Biden Vows to Guide U.S. Out of 'Darkness'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60N0-06P1-JBG3-61CH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Mr. Biden urged Americans to have faith that they could ''overcome this season of darkness,'' and he pledged to bridge the country's divisions in ways President Trump had not.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. accepted the Democratic presidential nomination on Thursday night, beginning a general-election challenge to President Trump that Democrats cast this week as a rescue mission for a country equally besieged by a crippling pandemic and a White House defined by incompetence, racism and abuse of power.

Speaking before a row of flags in his home state of Delaware, Mr. Biden urged Americans to have faith that they could ''overcome this season of darkness,'' and pledged that he would seek to bridge the country's political divisions in ways Mr. Trump had not.

''The current president has cloaked America in darkness for much too long -- too much anger, too much fear, too much division,'' Mr. Biden said. ''Here and now, I give you my word: If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst. I will be an ally of the light, not the darkness.''

Mr. Biden's appearance was an emphatic closing argument in a four-day virtual convention in which Democrats presented a broad coalition of women, young people and racial minorities while going to unusual lengths to welcome Republicans and independent voters seeking relief from the tumult of the Trump era.

The former vice president alluded to that outreach, saying that while he is a Democratic candidate, he will be ''an American president.'' And in an implicit contrast with Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden said he would ''work hard for those who didn't support me.''

''This is not a partisan moment,'' he said. ''This must be an American moment.''

The party has offered Mr. Biden, 77, less as a traditional partisan standard-bearer than as a comforting national healer, capable of restoring normalcy and calm to the United States and returning its federal government to working order. He has campaigned as an apostle of personal decency and political conciliation, and as a transitional figure who would take on some of the worst American crises -- not just the coronavirus outbreak but also economic inequality, climate change and gun violence -- before handing off power to another generation.

That rising generation, defined by its diversity and in many cases by its liberalism, was again in evidence on Thursday, as it has been throughout the week, most notably with the introduction on Wednesday of Mr. Biden's running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, the first woman of color to appear on a major party's presidential ticket.

The program leading up to Mr. Biden's address included speakers such as Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, an Asian-American military veteran; Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta, one of the country's most prominent Black mayors; and Pete Buttigieg, the first openly gay major presidential candidate. All are younger than Mr. Biden by a quarter-century or more.

Mr. Buttigieg hailed Mr. Biden's leadership on the issue of same-sex marriage in the not-distant past as a sign of how much progress Democrats could quickly make toward building ''an America where everyone belongs.''

Ms. Duckworth, a former helicopter pilot who lost her legs in the Iraq war, used her remarks to denounce Mr. Trump's leadership of the military and singled out for scorn his administration's tear-gassing of peaceful protesters in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C., in June.

''Donald Trump doesn't deserve to call himself commander in chief for another four minutes, let alone another four years,'' said Ms. Duckworth, whom Mr. Biden considered seriously for his running mate.

The task that faced Mr. Biden on Thursday night, and that looms over him for the next 10 weeks, was assuring Americans that he had both the grit and the vision first to topple Mr. Trump and then to deliver on a governing agenda that would materially improve their lives. Mr. Biden has laid out an ambitious suite of plans for next year, should Democrats win power, but in the daily din of public health emergencies and presidential outbursts, it is not clear how many voters are familiar with them.

The party conveyed its governing priorities throughout the convention, with multiple segments featuring victims of gun violence and people struggling with the immigration system and the cost of health care.

Democrats have promised to redraw the country's energy economy to fight climate change and to build new protections for Americans' voting rights. Mr. Biden promised to strengthen labor unions and to ensure that ''the wealthiest people and the biggest corporations in this country paid their fair share'' in taxes, even as he emphasized that he would not seek to ''punish anyone.''

Every night of the convention featured front-and-center vows to take on racism in the economy and criminal justice system, and to empower the generation of women whose political mobilization has reshaped the Democratic Party into a powerful anti-Trump coalition.

The overarching focus of the party, however, was on defining Mr. Trump as an enemy of public health, economic prosperity and democracy itself. More than any other modern political convention, this one placed the greatest threat to Americans' lives and freedoms not in a foreign capital or a terrorist encampment, or in the executive suite of an insurance company or a Wall Street bank -- but rather in the Oval Office, and in the person of the incumbent president.

''This,'' Mr. Biden said, ''is a life-changing election. This will determine what America's going to look like for a long, long time.''

If Democrats depicted Mr. Trump as an aspiring autocrat, then in their telling Mr. Biden took on the role of a sturdy holdover from an earlier government -- a chairman of Senate committees, a shaper of laws and a counselor to presidents who was capable of delivering the practical prize of national stability if not a more romantic version of national salvation.

For Mr. Biden, his speech on Thursday night, at a Wilmington event center, was the culmination of nearly five decades in national politics, a career he began in his 20s as a Senate candidate who won a November 1972 election several weeks before he reached the constitutional age of eligibility to serve. After 36 years and two unsuccessful presidential campaigns, Mr. Biden finally achieved national office in 2008 as a political sidekick -- Barack Obama's running mate.

A child of Scranton, Pa., and Claymont, Del., Mr. Biden has long emphasized his family's blue-collar roots in courting a multiracial coalition of ***working-class*** voters, as well as more affluent white moderates. In the Senate, he spent decades forging his credentials as an expert on foreign policy and the judiciary, along the way developing a reverence for Washington institutions and old-school Capitol Hill deal making.

Should Mr. Biden win in November, he would be the country's second Catholic president, after John F. Kennedy. He would also be the first since Ronald Reagan not to hold an Ivy League degree.

Earlier efforts to win the presidency in his own right ended in defeat and even humiliation. Mr. Biden's campaign for the 1988 nomination collapsed amid plagiarism controversies, and his 2008 bid never gained traction. But this cycle, after eight years as Mr. Obama's vice president, Mr. Biden entered the race as the front-runner. He is known to the country as a loyal adviser to a popular president, and as the resilient father of a tragedy-stricken family, possessed of an uncommon capacity to relate to voters experiencing grief.

Senator Chris Coons of Delaware, a close ally of Mr. Biden's, paid tribute to his friend on Thursday night, describing him as a man of deep faith.

''Joe knows the power of prayer, and I've seen him in moments of joy and triumph, of loss and despair, turn to God for strength,'' Mr. Coons said, citing the ''nuns and priests right here in Delaware who taught him and inspired in him a passion for justice.''

The overt emphasis on faith was striking at the event. But on the campaign trail Mr. Biden has often cited his Irish Catholic upbringing, a background that may help him connect with some swing voters in the Midwest in particular.

From the start of his 2020 campaign, Mr. Biden pitched himself as a sober, seasoned leader who stood the best chance of defeating Mr. Trump. It was a message that ultimately resonated with Democratic voters -- especially African-Americans and white suburban moderates -- as he surged to the nomination despite facing great trepidation from younger and more progressive voters, and after stumbling badly in the first two nominating contests in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Mr. Biden enters the general election with a clear upper hand against Mr. Trump, leading him by wide margins in most national polls and appearing to hold a clear advantage in crucial swing states like Michigan and Pennsylvania. Mr. Biden's electoral strength is derived mainly from the president's deep unpopularity. And swing voters this year appear far more comfortable with Mr. Biden than they were with several of his 2020 primary rivals -- or with the Democratic Party's previous nominee, Hillary Clinton.

Yet Mr. Biden's advisers have cautioned that they expect the polls to tighten in the fall, and there is widespread anxiety among Democrats about the possibility that the pandemic may complicate the process of voting in ways that will disadvantage voters of color and others in their urban political base.

Indeed, even more than on previous nights, reminders to turn out the vote formed an insistent drumbeat throughout Thursday's program. There were exhortations from, among others, Ms. Bottoms; Julia Louis-Dreyfus, the actor and comedian who served as master of ceremonies; and Alex Padilla and Jocelyn Benson, the top election officials in California and Michigan, reflecting Democrats' concern that limp voter enthusiasm or Republican efforts to obstruct the vote could hinder Mr. Biden.

''We must pass on the gift that John Lewis sacrificed to give us,'' Ms. Bottoms said. ''We must register, and we must vote.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/us/politics/Joe-Biden-accepts-democratic-nomination.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/us/politics/Joe-Biden-accepts-democratic-nomination.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''This is not a partisan moment,'' Joseph R. Biden Jr. said in closing the Democratic convention. ''This must be an American moment.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

''We must pass on the gift that John Lewis sacrificed to give us,'' Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta said of the late lawmaker, above, as she urged people to vote. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CREESE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Cedric Richmond Jr., left, recited the Pledge of Allegiance on Thursday. Brayden Harrington, right, recalled how Joseph R. Biden Jr. had spoken with him about their shared experience of stuttering.

Mr. Biden's granddaughters spoke during the final night of the Democratic National Convention. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION) (A14)

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[***Joe Biden Accepts Democratic Nomination: ‘I Will Draw on the Best of Us’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60MX-VFR1-JBG3-6121-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Mr. Biden urged Americans to have faith that they could “overcome this season of darkness,” and he pledged to bridge the country’s divisions in ways President Trump had not.

[*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) accepted the Democratic presidential nomination on Thursday night, beginning a general-election challenge to [*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) that Democrats cast this week as a rescue mission for a country equally besieged by a crippling pandemic and a White House defined by incompetence, racism and abuse of power.

Speaking before a row of flags in his home state of Delaware, Mr. Biden urged Americans to have faith that they could “overcome this season of darkness,” and pledged that he would seek to bridge the country’s political divisions in ways Mr. Trump had not.

“The current president has cloaked America in darkness for much too long — too much anger, too much fear, too much division,” Mr. Biden said. “Here and now, I give you my word: If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst. I will be an ally of the light, not the darkness.”

Mr. Biden’s appearance was an emphatic closing argument in a four-day virtual convention in which Democrats presented a broad coalition of women, young people and racial minorities while going to unusual lengths to welcome Republicans and independent voters seeking relief from the tumult of the Trump era.

The former vice president alluded to that outreach, saying that while he is a Democratic candidate, he will be “an American president.” And in an implicit contrast with Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden said he would “work hard for those who didn’t support me.”

“This is not a partisan moment,” he said. “This must be an American moment.”

The party has offered Mr. Biden, 77, less as a traditional partisan standard-bearer than as a comforting national healer, capable of restoring normalcy and calm to the United States and returning its federal government to working order. He has campaigned as an apostle of personal decency and political conciliation, and as a transitional figure who would take on some of the worst American crises — not just the coronavirus outbreak but also economic inequality, climate change and gun violence — before handing off power to another generation.

That rising generation, defined by its diversity and in many cases by its liberalism, was again in evidence on Thursday, as it has been throughout the week, most notably with the introduction on Wednesday of Mr. Biden’s running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, the first woman of color to appear on a major party’s presidential ticket.

The program leading up to Mr. Biden’s address included speakers such as Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, an Asian-American military veteran; Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta, one of the country’s most prominent Black mayors; and Pete Buttigieg, the first openly gay major presidential candidate. All are younger than Mr. Biden by a quarter-century or more.

Mr. Buttigieg hailed Mr. Biden’s leadership on the issue of same-sex marriage in the not-distant past as a sign of how much progress Democrats could quickly make toward building “an America where everyone belongs.”

Ms. Duckworth, a former helicopter pilot who lost her legs in the Iraq war, used her remarks to denounce Mr. Trump’s leadership of the military and singled out for scorn his administration’s tear-gassing of peaceful protesters in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C., in June.

“Donald Trump doesn’t deserve to call himself commander in chief for another four minutes, let alone another four years,” said Ms. Duckworth, whom Mr. Biden considered seriously for his running mate.

The task that faced Mr. Biden on Thursday night, and that looms over him for the next 10 weeks, was assuring Americans that he had both the grit and the vision first to topple Mr. Trump and then to deliver on a governing agenda that would materially improve their lives. Mr. Biden has laid out an ambitious suite of plans for next year, should Democrats win power, but in the daily din of public health emergencies and presidential outbursts, it is not clear how many voters are familiar with them.

The party conveyed its governing priorities throughout the convention, with multiple segments featuring victims of gun violence and people struggling with the immigration system and the cost of health care.

Democrats have promised to redraw the country’s energy economy to fight climate change and to build new protections for Americans’ voting rights. Mr. Biden promised to strengthen labor unions and to ensure that “the wealthiest people and the biggest corporations in this country paid their fair share” in taxes, even as he emphasized that he would not seek to “punish anyone.”

Every night of the convention featured front-and-center vows to take on racism in the economy and criminal justice system, and to empower the generation of women whose political mobilization has reshaped the Democratic Party into a powerful anti-Trump coalition.

The overarching focus of the party, however, was on defining Mr. Trump as an enemy of public health, economic prosperity and democracy itself. More than any other modern political convention, this one placed the greatest threat to Americans’ lives and freedoms not in a foreign capital or a terrorist encampment, or in the executive suite of an insurance company or a Wall Street bank — but rather in the Oval Office, and in the person of the incumbent president.

“This,” Mr. Biden said, “is a life-changing election. This will determine what America’s going to look like for a long, long time.”

If Democrats depicted Mr. Trump as an aspiring autocrat, then in their telling Mr. Biden took on the role of a sturdy holdover from an earlier government — a chairman of Senate committees, a shaper of laws and a counselor to presidents who was capable of delivering the practical prize of national stability if not a more romantic version of national salvation.

For Mr. Biden, his speech on Thursday night, at a Wilmington event center, was the culmination of nearly five decades in national politics, a career he began in his 20s as a Senate candidate who won a November 1972 election several weeks before he reached the constitutional age of eligibility to serve. After 36 years and two unsuccessful presidential campaigns, Mr. Biden finally achieved national office in 2008 as a political sidekick — Barack Obama’s running mate.

A child of Scranton, Pa., and Claymont, Del., Mr. Biden [*has long emphasized*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) his family’s blue-collar roots in courting a multiracial coalition of ***working-class*** voters, as well as more affluent white moderates. In the Senate, he spent decades forging his credentials as an expert on foreign policy and the judiciary, along the way developing a reverence for Washington institutions and old-school Capitol Hill deal making.

Should Mr. Biden win in November, he would be the country’s second Catholic president, after John F. Kennedy. He would also be the first since Ronald Reagan not to hold an Ivy League degree.

Earlier efforts to win the presidency in his own right ended in defeat and even humiliation. Mr. Biden’s campaign for the 1988 nomination [*collapsed amid plagiarism controversies*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html), and his 2008 bid never gained traction. But this cycle, after eight years as Mr. Obama’s vice president, Mr. Biden entered the race as the front-runner. He is known to the country as a loyal adviser to a popular president, and as the resilient father of a tragedy-stricken family, possessed of an uncommon [*capacity to relate*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) to voters experiencing grief.

Senator Chris Coons of Delaware, a close ally of Mr. Biden’s, paid tribute to his friend on Thursday night, describing him as a man of deep faith.

“Joe knows the power of prayer, and I’ve seen him in moments of joy and triumph, of loss and despair, turn to God for strength,” Mr. Coons said, citing the “nuns and priests right here in Delaware who taught him and inspired in him a passion for justice.”

The overt emphasis on faith was striking at the event. But on the campaign trail Mr. Biden has often cited his Irish Catholic upbringing, a background that may help him connect with some swing voters in the Midwest in particular.

From the start of his 2020 campaign, Mr. Biden [*pitched himself*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) as a sober, seasoned leader who stood the best chance of defeating Mr. Trump. It was a message that ultimately resonated with Democratic voters — especially African-Americans and white suburban moderates — as he surged to the nomination despite facing great trepidation from younger and more progressive voters, and after stumbling badly in the first two nominating contests in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Mr. Biden enters the general election with a clear upper hand against Mr. Trump, leading him by wide margins in most national polls and appearing to hold a clear advantage in crucial swing states like Michigan and Pennsylvania. Mr. Biden’s electoral strength is derived mainly from the president’s deep unpopularity. And swing voters this year appear far [*more comfortable*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) with Mr. Biden than they were with several of his 2020 primary rivals — or with the Democratic Party’s previous nominee, Hillary Clinton.

Yet Mr. Biden’s advisers have cautioned that they expect the polls to tighten in the fall, and there is widespread anxiety among Democrats about the possibility that the pandemic may complicate the process of voting in ways that will disadvantage voters of color and others in their urban political base.

Indeed, even more than on previous nights, reminders to turn out the vote formed an insistent drumbeat throughout Thursday’s program. There were exhortations from, among others, Ms. Bottoms; Julia Louis-Dreyfus, the actor and comedian who served as master of ceremonies; and Alex Padilla and Jocelyn Benson, the top election officials in California and Michigan, reflecting Democrats’ concern that limp voter enthusiasm or Republican efforts to obstruct the vote could hinder Mr. Biden.

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[***What Does Home Mean Now?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:629N-XSX1-JBG3-62B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2976 words

**Byline:** By Penelope Green

**Body**

We're tired, and so are our living spaces. As we emerge from lockdown, architects, writers and others reflect on how we'll reinvent them -- and what matters now.

One spring more than 200 years ago, Xavier de Maistre, a well-to-do, well-read French army officer and balloon enthusiast, was sentenced to house arrest for a dueling incident. He spent 42 days in his bedroom, in a modest apartment on the top floor of a building in Turin, and wrote a whimsical travelogue of his time there called ''A Journey Around My Room.''

Wearing his ''traveling clothes'' -- a bathrobe and pajamas -- he visited his comfy sofa, his desk, his cheerful pink-and-white bed (colors he recommended to his readers because they compelled him to wake up happy) and his memories, seeing all of these elements with fresh eyes. (He wrote a sequel, ''Nocturnal Expedition Around My Room,'' in which he journeyed by looking out his window at the night sky.) Like the Pevensie children, who stumbled into Narnia through an old wardrobe in a spare room, M. de Maistre found an entire world in a confined interior space, and pioneered, as Alain de Botton wrote in the foreword to a reissue of both stories, a novel mode of experience: room travel.

During this long year of house arrest, our relationships to our homes, like M. de Maistre's to his bedroom, have been altered in profound and ridiculous ways. Our homes have been a refuge and a prison, often filled with too many people (and their newly adopted shelter dogs) doing things the spaces were never meant for, like school, work and physical activity. (The 19th-century rural model -- the home as the site of leisure and production -- has been reprised, although the activity may be happening in a cramped apartment instead of an airy farmhouse.)

Partners and children have stayed put, which has been both a boon and a corrosive to family life, depending on the family -- or the day. Or maybe the home has been empty save for one human, and the place that was intended to be a launching pad or a respite from the energy of public life may have felt like solitary confinement. And that's if you're lucky.

For the more than one million households that faced evictions last year, despite moratoriums in many states, the idea of home is evanescent, a relationship not just fraught, but unattainable, as even basic shelter becomes a luxury -- and more completely out of reach.

After so many months confined to our homes, we asked those who think about place -- architects, urban policy experts, novelists -- how our relationships with our homes have changed, and what home means to them. (Their responses have been edited for clarity and condensed.)

We're Tired of Our Homes -- and They're Tired of Us

Hashim Sarkis is the dean of the school of architecture and planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the curator of the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, rescheduled for May, with a title -- ''How Will We Live Together?'' -- made more poignant and urgent by the delay.

Our homes now operate 24/7. Before, they used to take a break from us during working hours. We are paying more attention to them, but we are also wearing them out. They are tired of us. We need to be gentler with them.

Spaces dedicated to hospitality have been taken over by us, the hosts. The guest bedroom is now a study; the reception area, the gym. Home is not where we receive people anymore. I worry that this change will last longer than the others. Home may no longer be hospitable for some time.

The pandemic has been quite categorical about what types of households it deems safer than others: The solitary living is the safest, then the nuclear family home. The extended family home is threatened. Grandparents are isolated within the larger household, or away from it. The multiple family or shared homes or apartment buildings have entered into new spatial contracts that govern more strictly the behavior of the residents -- not just what happens at home, but what happens outside.

What is even more disturbing is that different income levels have absorbed these changes differently. The more space you have, the easier it is. The difference between rich home and poor home has become much more exaggerated and visible. -- HASHIM SARKIS

What a Year in Captivity Will Teach You

When Emma Donoghue conceived the room in ''Room,'' her 2010 novel about a space that was horribly more than its four walls, she designed it on the Ikea website, choosing the second-cheapest item on every page because, as she said, Jack and Ma's captor, Old Nick, was (among other shortcomings) deeply cheap, but thinking long-term. (The book was made into a feature film in 2015.) Now that Ms. Donoghue and her family have been living in a less dystopic version of that world, its lessons have been an inspiration. Not so much about the furniture placement -- Ms. Donoghue lives with her female partner and two teenagers in London, Ontario, in Canada, with ''plenty of house, a yard and a deck and a front porch'' -- but more about the fluidity of the space and the relationship between parent and child.

Anytime Ma could say yes to Jack, she did. I didn't want theirs to be a life of unnecessary rules. I tried to make it flexible, so she was able to say yes to running a race, and put the table on the bed.

I think a lot of parents have adopted that mind-set. What can we say yes to? My top priority has been I don't want to be quarreling with the kids, so I have become a much more laid-back mom. I suspended my rules about screen time. They were living such a confined life, and everything fun was canceled. If my daughter wanted to watch ''The Good Place'' while doing math, then go for it. And ''The Good Place'' is like a philosophy course.

I decided that basic domestic harmony was the most important thing. We haven't had any screaming rows since last March -- so, to me, that makes a good pandemic.

I tried to make Jack and Ma kind of like buddies. Because they were not in any social context, they didn't have to divide along the traditional gender or social or generational lines. Ma didn't have to be the grown up doing grown up things; she meets her son where he is. That's why I think their bond is so special. A lot of parents have said it's nice to see the kids get a break from those social roles. The home, at its best, can be a place of freedom, a break from some of those social conventions. Pants optional, and all that. -- EMMA DONOGHUE

Moving Toward a More Equitable Future

Marc Norman, an urban planner, spent the year working virtually from his two-family house in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where he lives with his husband, Jonathan Massey, an architectural historian and dean of the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. Mr. Norman's specialty is affordable housing; this past year, his firm, Ideas and Action, focused on civic work devoted to racial reconciliation and wealth building. One project in particular, with the Albina Vision Trust in Portland, Oregon, is imagining alternative forms of development, ownership and governance on land taken away from the area's Black community.

As the line between office and home was erased, Mr. Norman said he felt both liberated (from the commute) and stifled (without it). But the experience also showed the promise, he said, of ideas urban planners have had for years: How cities with less rigid, more inclusive zoning and a revenue model less dependent on property ownership might make for more just, affordable and humane communities.

For people in planning and creative place making, this is the flexibility we've always been fighting for. Of course, we didn't want it to happen this way.

Sometimes I joke with colleagues on Zoom that we're all doing something illegal. We're in single-family houses that specifically prohibit businesses, specifically prohibit all these other things, and here we are. Those rules were put in place assuming the need to impose segregation of uses, races and family types. We are living with the legacy of exclusionary zoning and racial covenants.

When this is over, there is going to be the fallout of: What do we do with all this isolated office and commercial real estate?

I hope that, going forward, we are able to determine for ourselves how we want to use our spaces and our cities. It's been determined for us that streets are for cars, neighborhoods are for single-family dwellings and offices go in office districts. That doesn't work for a lot of people. It certainly doesn't work for people that need child care, that don't want to have a car and that want to have the ability to freely run errands during the day.

That all plays into the revenue of cities. We pay for everything with property taxes. Should we? In Europe, they pay for social services, transportation and health care with the Value Added Tax. I think we should be thinking about that. Part of the problem is we decided to raise revenue in certain ways that are about property ownership and the necessity of increasing value as the only way to pay for schools and other necessities. -- MARC NORMAN

The Quest for a Huggable Home

Kim Gordon designs and builds rustic modern houses for tech and record executives and new media moguls in Venice Beach, Calif., and beyond. Her glass-and-timber houses have been emblematic of a lifestyle that has stretched out for more than a decade in open-plan spaces, with kitchens that flow into living rooms, floor-to-ceiling windows and not much storage. (Venice lots are small, and the well-heeled residents regularly stock up on expensive coffee and small-batch bread yeast, but don't squirrel away toilet paper.)

When Covid first hit, I was in the middle of designing this wonderful home in the Pacific Palisades, and I started to research those no-touch faucets, thinking of keeping everything clean. But now I want my house to not be that way.

The world is constantly telling me: Don't touch! Don't hug! So at home, I want to feel safe enough to touch my own faucet. I want to know I'm home and safe, and I can touch everything. I'm free to hug people and squishy pillows.

The lack of hugging means you want to hug and touch more. I'm looking at design as something that's very cushiony and textural. I'm imagining that we'll continue to see a softening in design -- softer colors, rounded countertops, sexier, more tactile. -- KIM GORDON

Home Is Where You Park It

Jessica Bruder is the author of ''Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century,'' a 2017 book that told the stories of older Americans battling economic hardship and precarious housing by living in vans and chasing seasonal work -- and finding a kind of liberation in doing so. (It is now, of course, a critically acclaimed movie starring Frances McDormand, with multiple Oscar nominations.) For the book, Ms. Bruder traveled with her subjects in a white GMC Vandura she named Halen, after the 1980s hair band, a vehicle that soon become a cherished home. This past year, Halen has been stranded in a friend's backyard in Reno, N.V., where Ms. Bruder, who lives in Brooklyn, was scheduled to speak last spring. She had hoped to reunite with it then, but the pandemic canceled those plans. Nonetheless, she took to the road in a 10-year-old Prius she kitted out with an Igloo cooler that plugs into the cigarette-lighter socket, camping gear and a five-gallon bucket of sanitary necessities, including gloves, masks, sanitizer, wipes and ''the feminine accessory of the season,'' she said, ''a She Wee, a.k.a. pee funnel,'' so as to avoid public restrooms.

The more I stayed home, the less at home I felt. No out-of-town guests came to couch-surf. No communal meals were shared at the long oak table I built for that purpose. Sirens and helicopters made it hard to sleep.

New York City had become a centrifuge, spitting friends out in faraway places. So I decided to hit the road, loading up my Prius like a space capsule with all the necessities to sustain human life.

Soon, home was a tent -- on a Maine porch, in a New Hampshire backyard -- for socially distant visits with friends. Or it was staying in an Asheville basement, hanging out with family in the carport. Or it was a spartan KOA cabin in Virginia, after it got aired out and the door handles were Cloroxed. There's a kind of refuge in motion. -- JESSICA BRUDER

We're All Feral Weirdos Now

Kate Wagner is the architecture critic for The New Republic, and the creator of the satisfying McMansion Hell blog, which chronicles the excesses of that housing type. She does not live in a McMansion, or even a house, but a two-bedroom apartment in Chicago, where she has been confined with relative ease, thinking about privacy and consent, and how the open office has migrated to the Zoom-ified house.

Life has gotten so much less private. The idea of my seventh-grade self being in Zoom school and seeing the bedroom of my seventh-grade crush would just be too much. There is now too much insight in your peers' lives, the exposing of the home life of kids from unequal backgrounds.

I've been thinking about McMansions, too. McMansions formulated this idea of a room for everything -- a wrapping room, a man cave, a theater, a bar -- and brought so much of public life into the house. I was thinking maybe they were right all along. But the problem is you're still alone in your house.

When you bring those luxuries into the house, it robs them of their currency. It's sad to me to drink alone at a bar in your basement. It's a ruin of the social activity we used to do. We're all like feral weirdos now.

But I've done pretty well in the pandemic. It reminds me of when I was in high school. I didn't have anything in common with my peers. I would go to school, not talk to anyone and come home and read or write terrible science fiction. I lived a totally interior life. Now I've reverted. It's been so productive. What if this is just better for me, to live a life of isolation? -- KATE WAGNER

Reclaiming Times Square

For over a decade, Jeremiah Moss -- the pseudonym of Griffin Hansbury, a writer and psychoanalyst -- has chronicled, and mourned, the physical casualties of gentrification, particularly in his home neighborhood, the East Village. Jeremiah's Vanishing New York, his blog and a 2017 book of the same name, have been a kind of diary of homesickness. Yet the events of the last year have mostly alleviated those feelings for him.

Half of the people living in the East Village left between last March and May, and my sense is that a lot of the people who left were the people who made the neighborhood feel less like home.

I came here as a trans person, as a queer person, as a writer in the early '90s. Home is a neighborhood, yes, but it's also a psychic space. The way I think about the psychic space of the East Village I came to is it was a place of otherness, of deviance -- using that term sociologically, so deviating from the dominant norm.

During the pandemic year, there has been a resurgence of connectedness. We were looking at each other again, recognizing each other on the street. I was hanging out in Times Square, which is a crazy thing for a New Yorker to say. Without the tourists, it had become a magnet for the marginalized and queer, for artists and for Black and brown ***working-class*** New Yorkers. It also became a hub of protests.

The main thing I've noticed is people who occupy minoritized identities -- nonwhite, nonstraight -- seem to be more comfortable taking up public space in this time. So all of this makes me feel at home.

Tragedy breaks us out of the status quo, wakes us up, and in that wakefulness we can be more humane. I don't know if it's something we can hang onto, so as I'm living in this sense of being home again, I'm also living in this anticipatory grief of the inevitable loss. -- JEREMIAH MOSS

A Ritual for Expressing Gratitude

For his 2016 book, ''Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City,'' a heartbreaking tour of unstable housing, Matthew Desmond, a sociologist, moved into a mobile home park and a rooming house in Milwaukee, chronicling firsthand the violence of eviction, an experience that irrevocably altered his relationship with the idea of home. Mr. Desmond now teaches at Princeton University and runs the school's Eviction Lab, which tracks evictions across the country; he lives with his wife and two small children in a house nearby.

I'm going to start with the hopeful stuff. When Covid started, housing advocates said we needed a moratorium on evictions, and they were laughed out of the room. And then, lo and behold, we had one in New York, and then all over the country, and then from the federal government.

Are those moratoriums airtight and perfect? No, but they are historic, and they push us to think about what can be done. Whatever you care about, a stable home is crucial. I think that's hopeful. In a pandemic, where your best medicine is to stay in your home, it really elevates the violence of eviction and the harm it does.

In our home, we have a ritual of expressing gratitude every day, in prayer or other ways, to little things. We have windows that keep the cold out. Everyone has their own bed. Our kids have separate rooms. Light. When the plumbing stops working, we can get it fixed. Our mail comes; there is hot water.

When I lived in the mobile home park, I met families that didn't have heat. They would crouch around a space heater and cover themselves with a blanket to get warm. Families are really at risk. So many of us are so tired of looking at the same walls, but there is a chunk of Americans that's just praying they get to hang onto those walls. -- MATTHEW DESMOND

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/23/realestate/what-does-home-mean-to-us-not-the-same-thing-it-did-before-the-pandemic.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/23/realestate/what-does-home-mean-to-us-not-the-same-thing-it-did-before-the-pandemic.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: HASHIM SARKIS: DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT M.I.T. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DUNIA SARKIS)

MATTHEW DESMOND: PRINCETON SOCIOLOGIST (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMIR LEVY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

EMMA DONOGHUE: AUTHOR OF 'ROOM' (PHOTOGRAPH BY UNA ROULSTON)

JEREMIAH MOSS: WRITER (PHOTOGRAPH BY J. STEELE)

JESSICA BRUDER: AUTHOR OF THE 2017 BOOK 'NOMADLAND' (PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIA MOBURG)

MARC NORMAN: URBAN PLANNER (PHOTOGRAPH VIA MARC NORMAN)

KIM GORDON: DESIGNER (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BRAGER) (RE9)

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Joe Biden Finally Got the Timing Right***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60MV-54K1-DXY4-X4S2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Highlight:** More than three decades after his first presidential run, in the midst of a deadly pandemic and without his son Beau at his side, the former vice president has met his moment.

**Body**

More than three decades after his first presidential run, in the midst of a deadly pandemic and without his son Beau at his side, the former vice president has met his moment.

[*Joe Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/28/us/politics/democrats-filibuster-supreme-court-biden.html) tells funny stories at funerals and sad ones at campaign stops.

He has been running for president long enough to lose the 1988 Democratic primary as a hard-charging 40-something pushing generational change — and to win the 2020 primary as the white-haired statesman who has steered through sorrow, who can still sniff it out in any room and close in like a pang-seeking missile for the stricken.

“He asked if I was OK and gave me a hug,” a cane-shuffling Iowa man, Brian Peters, said last winter, blinking away tears after pledging his support to Mr. Biden on a characteristically misty post-event rope line. “I told him that I would be.”

Maybe it had to happen this way, friends say, if it was going to happen at all: After nearly a half-century of public life defined most viscerally by the forced commingling of politics and personal loss, the tint of the moment at last matches Mr. Biden’s own story: shadowed by despair, sustained by faith — in himself; in God; in the human capacity for resilience, founded or not.

“We all are an accumulation of our life’s experiences,” said Joe Riley, a friend of Mr. Biden’s and the former longtime mayor of Charleston, S.C.

And Joseph Robinette Biden Jr.’s experiences have delivered him here. He has at last captured the [*Democratic presidential nomination*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/us/politics/Joe-Biden-accepts-democratic-nomination.html), earning the chance to face President Trump because he is, admirers say, all the things that the incumbent is not: empathetic, dependable, decent.

“Character is on the ballot,” Mr. Biden said in his convention address Thursday evening, inside a quiet hall in Wilmington, Del. “Compassion is on the ballot.”

There is some irony, Democrats concede, in the idea that Mr. Biden prevailed because voters found him comforting and familiar. Through his years in presidential politics, his longevity has generally served to remind his skeptics of all they believe he has gotten wrong: He voted to authorize the use of military force in Iraq and came to regret it. He presided over the committee that subjected Anita Hill to demeaning and invasive questioning in the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for now-Justice Clarence Thomas. He helped craft tough-on-crime legislation that many criminal justice experts now associate with mass incarceration.

In this primary campaign, Mr. Biden, 77, could often appear almost willfully out of step with the times, telling debate viewers to keep their record players on at night for children’s educational purposes and warmly remembering his relationships with segregationist senators.

He won anyway, stepping to the lectern on Thursday having reached the precipice of a prize he has chased for more than three decades and talked about since grade school.

Yet like many flashes of triumph in his long career, this one is not as he imagined it, the would-be jubilation laced with an abiding gravity.

His speech skewed sober, befitting the national mood. He did not have a large crowd to cheer him through it in person, in deference to the pandemic that has overwhelmed the country he hopes to lead. He did not have [*Beau Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/04/us/politics/biden-beau-afghanistan.html), his son and political heir, who died in 2015 while pleading with his father not to withdraw from the public arena. A video tribute to him played instead.

“Beau should be the one running,” Mr. Biden said in January, choking up in a television interview.

But then, the “should” constructions have never much cooperated in Mr. Biden’s arc, where the bitter and the sweet tend to find each other in metronomic succession.

His underdog Senate victory in 1972, as a relentless 29-year-old who did not know better, came a month before the car crash that killed his wife and daughter and injured his two sons, the trauma that forever enshrined him as an avatar of bereavement in the public consciousness.

His debacle of a first presidential bid, for the 1988 Democratic nomination, collapsed just as he was carrying off one of his signature congressional achievements: helping to engineer the defeat of a deeply conservative Supreme Court nominee, Judge Robert H. Bork.

Then an aneurysm nearly killed him.

The signal promotion of Mr. Biden’s career to date — his elevation to the vice presidency — came after another campaign flameout in 2008. And his eight years as President Barack Obama’s chief lieutenant ended with Mr. Biden a tragic figure once more, burying Beau and deciding against another run in 2016.

Long fluent in the emotional force of foreboding Irish poetry and proverb, Mr. Biden has been known to lean on an axiom borrowed from Daniel Patrick Moynihan, his former Senate colleague: “I don’t think there’s any point in being Irish if you don’t know that the world is going to break your heart eventually.”

So it has gone, on some level, in each chapter of Mr. Biden’s biography: the boy with the stutter; the young man in a hurry; the senator with a binder of old eulogies in his office, a brimful accounting of his grief.

In one of them, for his father in 2002, he offered up this working definition of a Biden man: “a dreamer burdened with reality, a sensitive spirit layered in stoicism.”

That sounds about right, people close to him say, for better or worse. He has nurtured his White House dreams and, in his penchant for exaggeration, occasionally strained to recast reality. He has laid bare his sensitivity — he is a hugger and a crier, a walking purveyor of vulnerability — and been left to suffer his losses stoically at times, maintaining a public profile through private anguish.

“He has inordinate strength,” said Carol Balick, a longtime family friend whose husband hired Mr. Biden as a young lawyer. “He doesn’t carry a mythology about himself.”

But he does have his stories, repeated and refashioned through the years with a homespun sweep calibrated to his audiences.

He was raised in Scranton, Pa., the sort of white ***working-class*** hub that became part of his political coalition, and in Delaware — the son of a car-salesman father and a strong-willed mother who encouraged Mr. Biden through his speech difficulties, telling him he was just so bright that he couldn’t get the thoughts out fast enough.

While his renderings of his youth can feel culled from a Norman Rockwell, with Mass on Sundays and penny candy for a neighborhood snack, the Bidens slogged through financial hardships severe enough that they were forced at one point to move in with his mother’s parents.

More distinguished as an athlete than a student, Mr. Biden edged into adulthood amid the swirl of 1960s activism but found himself at a clear remove from it. He has at once described civil rights as the animating cause of his interest in public service and overstated his own participation in the struggle, compelling advisers years later to gently remind him that if he did not actually “march,” he should probably stop telling voters that he did.

In fact, Mr. Biden’s most consequential encounter around this time happened poolside in the Bahamas, by his account, during a spring break trip in 1964, his junior year at the University of Delaware.

“I’ve got the blonde,” Mr. Biden told a friend, zipping toward a stranger, Neilia Hunter, and her suntanning companion.

Mr. Biden and Ms. Hunter had dinner that night. They were married two years later.

And this, Mr. Biden has suggested, is what most informed his throwback bearing in this period of national upheaval. He was growing up fast: a family, a burgeoning legal career, a run for county council soon enough.

“I was married, I was in law school,” he told reporters once, explaining his psychic distance from the antiwar fervor of his contemporaries. “I wore sport coats. I was not part of that. I’m serious!”

He was. And he did not lack for ambition. Even in his 20s, Mr. Biden was a plotter, a grinder, a wear-you-down talker.

If he could seem, at times, like an older man in a young man’s body, his next job would only amplify the effect. With his audacious, successful 1972 challenge to the incumbent senator, J. Caleb Boggs, Mr. Biden saw his future snapping into place. He was a senator-elect before turning 30. He had a wife and three children already.

And then the crash.

Those who knew him then recall those early Senate days as a kind of rolling thunderstorm, breaking occasionally but never clearing in full.

“Even after it got better — where after four, five, six months you’d go and things would seem kind of normal — then one day it was right back in the beginning,” said Ted Kaufman, a longtime friend and aide who briefly succeeded Mr. Biden in the Senate. “He’d come into work, and he was clearly hurting. But he came, and he did it.”

Mr. Biden likes to talk about the people who rescued him in these years: the senators who looked after him, cementing his lifelong reverence for the chamber, and the woman — Jill Jacobs, for a time — who rebuilt his family.

“She put us back together,” Mr. Biden said in a video presentation during the convention this week. “She gave me back my life. She gave us back a family.”

As Mr. Biden’s Senate tenure swelled, rumblings about a White House run became something of a quadrennial tradition.

His first campaign, like this one, was premised as much on his personal integrity as any signature policy push.

His second — two decades later, by which time Mr. Biden had spent more earthly years in the Senate than outside of it — centered on experience and judgment, drawing on his grounding in foreign affairs and his talent for “God-love-ya” glad-handing.

That both failed is a matter of political shortcomings, yes, but also of timing.

This Joe Biden, the one who won the 2020 primary, is still known best for all he has lost. He is still liable to misstate, misstep, mishandle. And he is still often at his strongest offstage, deploying long hugs and finger-guns among the well-wishers.

If the pandemic crystallized Mr. Biden’s rationale for the nomination, even after he had effectively claimed it, it also reinforced his longstanding case against Mr. Trump as a national emergency unto himself.

Often, his supporters’ argument has seemed this simple: You need a good man to defeat a bad man.

Barbara Boxer, a former Democratic senator from California, turned a phone interview over to her spouse as she worked to summarize her former colleague’s appeal. “My husband said, ‘In a word, he’s a mensch,’” Ms. Boxer reported. “You should say her husband leaned over and said, ‘He’s a mensch.’ But it’s true.”

In recent weeks, friends say Mr. Biden has approached his convention spotlight with a solemnity reflecting the nation’s distress. He has said this is not about ego and never was. He has said he could die happy without ever hearing “Hail to the Chief” play for him.

He has also thought he would be president before — if never this deep into a campaign — only to meet a reversal of fortunes.

“He’s been pretty reserved,” Representative James Clyburn, the South Carolina Democrat whose endorsement helped revive Mr. Biden’s once-floundering bid, said of the candidate’s present outlook.

And why would a polling lead change that? Why would the presidency?

“That’s what losing will do for you,” Mr. Clyburn reasoned.

That is what Joe Biden understands.

PHOTOS: Joseph R. Biden Jr. after winning the South Carolina primary in February, above, and signing a button in 2008 in Iowa, left. He accepted the Democratic nomination on Thursday night after three presidential campaigns spread across the decades. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JOSHUA LOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Biden announced his first presidential campaign with his family in 1987 in Wilmington, Del. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KEITH MEYERS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13)

**Load-Date:** September 4, 2021

**End of Document**



[***In Queens, a Lifeline for the 'Most Famous Bar You've Never Heard Of'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1C-95G1-DXY4-X05K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 11, 2020 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1356 words

**Byline:** By Corey Kilgannon

**Body**

The owner of Neir's Tavern in Queens said it would close on Sunday, barring a ''miracle.'' The city, it turns out, works in mysterious ways.

Loycent Gordon, who owns Neir's Tavern in Queens, likes to call the place ''the most famous bar you've never heard of.''

Neir's claim to its limited fame comes from its age: It opened in 1829 in the Woodhaven neighborhood, and Mr. Gordon has long said that makes it the oldest bar in New York City to continuously operate in the same location.

Locals claim that Mae West may have begun her performance career in its ballroom, and that Neir's was a regular haunt of President Trump's father, Fred, who grew up in Woodhaven.

Also, it was immortalized in the 2011 film ''Tower Heist'' with Ben Stiller and Eddie Murphy, and provided the setting for memorable bar scenes from the 1990 mob classic ''Goodfellas.''

But despite that history, the bar seemed destined to close.

Mr. Gordon, 40, interrupted happy hour on Wednesday to gather staff members and longtime customers. He then tearfully broke the news that Sunday would be the tavern's last day of operation, ''unless a miracle happens.''

The two dozen employees and patrons were visibly shaken, some to tears. A few stared into their drinks. Others gave shouts of gratitude and support. Most thanked Mr. Gordon for continually finding new ways to attract customers and keep the bar open, even while revenue was shrinking.

With increases in rent and other costs, Mr. Gordon said, he was losing money and finding it more difficult to juggle the business along with his Fire Department job and family obligations.

''I'm sorry I failed you,'' he told the happy hour crowd. ''I ran out of options.''

Luz Rocca, a longtime customer, sat somberly as other patrons both commiserated and toasted Neir's with shots of liquor.

''This was Woodhaven's family bar, and you can't recreate that,'' Ms. Rocca said. ''You had so many different types of people. It was like the U.N., with so much camaraderie.''

Mr. Gordon, a Jamaican immigrant and a lieutenant in the New York Fire Department, bought and restored Neir's in 2009 and worked to keep it a hub of community activity in his largely ***working-class*** area of Queens.

''This area doesn't have the money to build their own community center, but they had Neir's Tavern,'' he said. Several years ago he had hoped to buy the building and turn it into a community center and museum, he said, but a Queens property owner, Henry Shi, quietly purchased it for $1.3 million.

Mr. Shi raised the monthly rent from $2,000 to $3,000, and recently said it would be increased to more than $5,000, according to Mr. Gordon.

Reached by phone on Wednesday, Mr. Shi refused to discuss the matter, saying only, ''Do not call this number again,'' before hanging up. The managing agent for the building did not respond to messages seeking comment.

As word spread about the impending closure, Mr. Gordon's ''miracle'' was in the works: He, Mr. Shi and his brother Ken, City Councilman Robert Holden, Assemblyman Mike Miller, a representative of the Queens Chamber of Commerce and others met on Friday in hopes of finding a compromise.

Mr. Holden, a Democrat who represents the area, said the negotiations were tense until it became clear that a major problem for Mr. Shi was that he could not get a mortgage because the building lacked a proper certificate of occupancy and did not meet current zoning rules.

Mr. Holden said an agreement was reached under which his office would work to ensure that the building met all requirements; the city would make a small business grant available to improve the property; and Mr. Shi would raise the rent much less than he had proposed.

The result was a handshake deal for a new five-year lease, Mr. Holden said, adding that what was supposed to be the bar's last night would now be ''a celebration.''

''Thank you to all parties for helping to make this project work,'' the Shi brothers said in a statement.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said in a statement of his own that he was ''proud to have helped keep the doors open.''

''New York City's small businesses are what make this city so special, and as the city's oldest bar, Neir's leads the pack,'' the mayor said.

Mr. Gordon has long maintained that Neir's, partly because it is tucked away in a drab-looking building in a residential neighborhood, has never gotten the recognition it deserves as one of New York's great old taverns.

When Woodhaven was mostly farmland, its main attraction was the Union Course racetrack. The track manager opened the bar, which over the years changed owners and names -- the Blue Pump Room, the Union Course Tavern, the Old Abbey -- before being bought by the Neirs, a German immigrant family, in 1898, the same year Queens became part of New York City.

The bar once had a catering hall, a small bowling alley and a music hall where patrons have said Ms. West -- who was born in 1893 in Brooklyn and is buried a mile away in Cypress Hills Cemetery -- started out.

Local historians believe the bar operated through Prohibition by becoming a speakeasy.

In 2015, Mr. Gordon and some historians tried to have the bar's interior landmarked by the city, noting the historical value of the 19th-century mahogany bar and its old-fashioned ice-coil tap system, as well as other artifacts.

While landmarking would not keep the bar from being sold or being used for another function, it would prevent ''anyone from ripping out the heart and soul of the bar,'' Mr. Gordon said.

But the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission rejected the application, concluding that the bar's interior ''did not rise to the level of significance necessary for designation'' as a landmark.

''You put your trust in the city to recognize its most historic spots,'' said Ed Wendell, president of the Woodhaven Cultural and Historical Society.

''Woodhaven is not the most glamorous part of the city, but it should matter when New York stands to lose something so special,'' he added.

The question over which is the oldest bar in New York City has long been debated and may be impossible to nail down.

Fraunces Tavern in Lower Manhattan was opened in 1762 and was frequented by George Washington, but has been rebuilt and renovated several times.

The Ear Inn, on Spring Street, which once served denizens of the docks of the Hudson River, may have opened at least as early as 1835.

McSorley's Old Ale House, established in 1854 in the East Village, served beer to Abraham Lincoln and John Lennon. It has remained in continuous operation by obtaining a special beer license to legally sell a low-alcohol ''near beer'' during Prohibition.

Pete's Tavern, in the Gramercy Park neighborhood, was opened in 1864 and continued operating during Prohibition by posing as a flower shop.

In addition to being a watering hole, Neir's has long provided space for meetings, fund-raisers and youth breakfasts. Last year, during a block party for the tavern's 190th anniversary, Mr. Gordon began confiding to loyal patrons that he was struggling to obtain an affordable lease.

''Neir's was home base for the community. It's iconic,'' said Kenichi Wilson, the chairman of the local community board, who was at the bar on Wednesday night as Selenia Correa, a bartender, served up a beer to Glenn Vile, a regular customer.

''We get tourists coming straight from J.F.K. Airport with their luggage because they heard it was the bar from 'Goodfellas,''' Ms. Correa said.

Neir's interior makes an appearance in the scene where Robert De Niro's character, Jimmy, throws a Christmas party after the Lufthansa heist at Kennedy International Airport.

Locals said that some of the gangsters portrayed in the film were known to drink at Neir's.

Mr. Vile said he bought his house nearby several years ago, ''because I wanted to live around the 'Goodfellas' bar.''

He looked around the tavern on Wednesday and said he could not imagine a Woodhaven without Neir's. He chuckled and added, ''I may have to sell the house.''

But with the new lease agreement, he may not have to.

Ed Shanahan and Jeffrey E. Singer contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/nyregion/neirs-tavern-closing.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/nyregion/neirs-tavern-closing.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Neir's Tavern in Queens is ''Woodhaven's family bar, and you can't recreate that,'' Luz Rocca, a patron, said. The watering hole was set to close before local politicians and City Hall intervened.

Ed Wendell, president of the Woodhaven Cultural and Historical Society, at Neir's with his 16-year-old cat, Lily. The bar had been set to close Sunday.

Neir owner Loycent Gordon, a New York Fire Department lieutenant, with regulars. The pub is a neighborhood insti- tution and also draws tourists because parts of 1990's ''Goodfellas'' and 2011's ''Tower Heist'' were filmed there. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 20, 2020

**End of Document**



[***After 190 Years, the ‘Most Famous Bar You’ve Never Heard of’ Avoids Last Call***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XYC-K4J1-JBG3-6320-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 10, 2020 Friday 14:32 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1439 words

**Byline:** Corey Kilgannon

**Highlight:** The owner of Neir’s Tavern in Queens said it would close on Sunday, barring a “miracle.” The city, it turns out, works in mysterious ways.

**Body**

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Loycent Gordon, who owns Neir’s Tavern in Queens, likes to call the place “the most famous bar you’ve never heard of.”

[*Neir’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/20/nyregion/thecity/in-a-mouthy-town-a-softspoken-oldtimer.html) claim to its limited fame comes from its age: It opened in 1829 in the Woodhaven neighborhood, and Mr. Gordon has long said that makes it the oldest bar in New York City to continuously operate in the same location.

Locals claim that Mae West may have begun her performance career in its ballroom, and that Neir’s was a regular haunt of President Trump’s father, Fred, who [*grew up in Woodhaven*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/20/nyregion/thecity/in-a-mouthy-town-a-softspoken-oldtimer.html).

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Fraunces Tavern in Lower Manhattan was opened in 1762 and was frequented by George Washington, but has been rebuilt and renovated several times.

The Ear Inn, on Spring Street, which once served denizens of the docks of the Hudson River, may have opened at least as early as 1835.

McSorley’s Old Ale House, established in 1854 in the East Village, served beer to Abraham Lincoln and John Lennon. It has remained in continuous operation by obtaining a special beer license to legally sell a low-alcohol “near beer” during Prohibition.

Pete’s Tavern, in the Gramercy Park neighborhood, was opened in 1864 and continued operating during Prohibition by posing as a flower shop.

In addition to being a watering hole, Neir’s has long provided space for meetings, fund-raisers and youth breakfasts. Last year, during a block party for the tavern’s 190th anniversary, Mr. Gordon began confiding to loyal patrons that he was struggling to obtain an affordable lease.

“Neir’s was home base for the community. It’s iconic,” said Kenichi Wilson, the chairman of the local community board, who was at the bar on Wednesday night as Selenia Correa, a bartender, served up a beer to Glenn Vile, a regular customer.

“We get tourists coming straight from J.F.K. Airport with their luggage because they heard it was the bar from ‘Goodfellas,’” Ms. Correa said.

Neir’s interior makes an appearance in the scene where Robert De Niro’s character, Jimmy, throws a Christmas party after the Lufthansa heist at Kennedy International Airport.

Locals said that some of the gangsters portrayed in the film were known to drink at Neir’s.

Mr. Vile said he bought his house nearby several years ago, “because I wanted to live around the ‘Goodfellas’ bar.”

He looked around the tavern on Wednesday and said he could not imagine a Woodhaven without Neir’s. He chuckled and added, “I may have to sell the house.”

But with the new lease agreement, he may not have to.

Ed Shanahan and Jeffrey E. Singer contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Neir’s Tavern in Queens is “Woodhaven’s family bar, and you can’t recreate that,” Luz Rocca, a patron, said. The watering hole was set to close before local politicians and City Hall intervened.; Ed Wendell, president of the Woodhaven Cultural and Historical Society, at Neir’s with his 16-year-old cat, Lily. The bar had been set to close Sunday.; Neir owner Loycent Gordon, a New York Fire Department lieutenant, with regulars. The pub is a neighborhood insti- tution and also draws tourists because parts of 1990’s “Goodfellas” and 2011’s “Tower Heist” were filmed there. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 12, 2020

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[***Warren Squeezed by Attacks From Left and Center***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1C-6MH1-JBG3-60V4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Ms. Warren is figuring out what candidates like Beto O'Rourke, Kamala Harris and Kirsten Gillibrand have already learned: It's hard to appeal to both the center and the left of the Democratic Party.

DAVENPORT, Iowa -- The voter asked Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts the question on many Iowans' minds: What did she have to offer besides her litany of policy proposals?

At first, Ms. Warren responded with a story about her ***working-class*** upbringing, saying she intimately understood a family's day-to-day financial struggles. Then she gave a second answer, a more direct argument for her ability to beat President Trump.

''I'm the only person who will be on the debate stage who's beaten a popular incumbent Republican anytime in the last 25 years,'' Ms. Warren said. ''In other words, I know how to fight, I know how to win, and that's what I plan to do.''

The response, given at a rally in Davenport on Sunday, was a rare foray into horse-race politics from a candidate who has dismissed the importance of polls, rarely reads news coverage about herself and detests Beltway punditry. But it was part of a quiet recognition among her advisers and surrogates that, less than one month before the Iowa caucuses, Ms. Warren is being damaged by criticism and pressure from both moderates and liberals within the Democratic Party, whose doubts about her have fueled concerns about her ability to win.

These worries have also filtered down to voters, who, in more than two dozen interviews during Ms. Warren's two most recent trips to Iowa, have expressed a growing fear that her candidacy is neither satisfying nor uniting the political factions in the party.

''It's been a problem,'' said Peter Leo, the chairman of Iowa's Carroll County Democrats, who has endorsed Ms. Warren. ''She's getting hit from the left and the right.''

Ms. Warren's conundrum is tied to the all-important notion of ''electability,'' the vague and sometimes discriminatory concept that has become paramount to Democratic voters who are motivated by defeating Mr. Trump.

When Ms. Warren's campaign was riding high in the summer and early fall, the energy around her ideas was an implicit message to both liberals and moderates: She was the one who could win. But after a series of attacks, beginning on health care policy, she has lost ground as some voters have retreated to their ideological corners: the left-wing base that has rallied around Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, and the moderate group of Democrats who have largely backed former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. or former Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind.

It has created a self-fulfilling cycle that Ms. Warren is now trying to break.

Wallace Watson, a 52-year-old who attended her rally over the weekend in Dubuque, Iowa, said he decided to support Ms. Warren months ago because he saw her as the only candidate who could energize both voters who backed Mr. Sanders in 2016 and those who supported Hillary Clinton, the party's nominee. In recent months, however, he admitted that his faith in Ms. Warren had been tested.

''I think she has long-term viability, but it's unfortunate that she has had press coverage in the last months of the year that has seemed to lessen her impact,'' Mr. Watson said. ''She needs to step up her campaign and make herself a viable candidate again. I'm hopeful she will.''

Ms. Warren's campaign did not respond to a request for comment for this story. But in private conversations, her advisers acknowledge that this ideological squeeze is similar to one that doomed earlier candidates like former Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Senator Kamala Harris of California. But unlike those candidates, who often made grand pivots in order to appease both sides, Ms. Warren is placing her bet on authenticity and hoping voters will reward her for being consistent.

But she is still making minor tweaks to her strategy. She has appeared on more national television programs in recent days, including a rare appearance on the Sunday political talk show circuit. Adam Green, who leads the Progressive Change Campaign Committee and has advised Ms. Warren, said to expect her to ''make the case for electability'' against Mr. Trump in the coming month, aimed at ''scared progressives'' who are ''tentatively parked with others like Biden.''

The campaign has also amassed a roster of energetic and potentially influential surrogates, including Julián Castro, the former cabinet secretary and presidential candidate, Representatives Ayanna S. Pressley of Massachusetts and Katie Porter of California, and a collective of activists called ''Black Womxn For,'' all of whom are set to descend on Iowa in the coming weeks.

These surrogates may go on the offensive in ways Ms. Warren has resisted. At their joint rally in Brooklyn on Tuesday, it was Mr. Castro -- not Ms. Warren -- who made the most explicit case for why she was better suited than her primary opponents to beat Mr. Trump.

''More than any other candidate in this race, more than any other candidate that's going to be on that debate stage in a few days, Elizabeth Warren is the candidate who can unite the entire Democratic Party,'' he said. ''When you talk to people on the ground, you find that they like Elizabeth Warren. You find that they're willing to support her. You find that she has the best damn organization in these early states.''

Ms. Warren's campaign has avoided setting expectations for its Iowa finish. But Sean McElwee, whose think tank, Data for Progress, has worked closely with Ms. Warren's campaign, said he thought she probably needed a first- or second-place finish in Iowa to unlock her numbers elsewhere -- and at a minimum, she must beat Mr. Sanders.

''One of her advantages are that a lot of people are considering her,'' Mr. McElwee said. ''One of her disadvantages is that the people who are considering her are considering everyone else.''

It will be an electoral tightrope walk of the highest order, as evidenced by the way the debate about Ms. Warren's health care plan consumed the final months of 2019. It started with the race's moderates, who pressured Ms. Warren into providing additional details about how she planned to pay for and transition to a ''Medicare for all'' system. When those details diverged from the outline in Mr. Sanders's bill, some members of the party's left flank accused her of political betrayal.

Other issues have prompted a backlash against Ms. Warren in the early days of this year. After Mr. Trump ordered the killing of Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, one of Iran's top military commanders, Ms. Warren issued a statement that was rejected by some on the party's left, who said she had not sufficiently embraced an antiwar framework like that of Mr. Sanders. After she released a second statement, she faced criticism for not denouncing Mr. Suleimani in sufficiently harsh terms, even as other candidates who also adjusted their public remarks -- including Mr. Buttigieg -- escaped scrutiny.

Last week, Ms. Warren surprised some of her own supporters by embracing the updated trade deal between the United States, Mexico and Canada, which was negotiated by Mr. Trump to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, saying it created some market stability for farmers. It was also a rare break between her and Mr. Sanders, who argued the bill would not stop the outsourcing of jobs and had lax environmental regulations.

The Sunrise Movement, the nationwide group of young climate activists, said Ms. Warren's support for the agreement ''undermines her commitments to the Green New Deal.'' Prominent online supporters of Ms. Warren, including leaders at the Working Families Party, the progressive group that endorsed her in September, boosted tweets about being ''heartbroken'' by Ms. Warren's decision.

In his western Iowa county, Mr. Leo said, Ms. Warren had not lost support to Mr. Sanders, but to moderates like Mr. Biden, Mr. Buttigieg and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. He believes the Warren campaign should focus on persuading moderate Democrats who may have abandoned it over electability fears.

''Forty percent of people are with the progressives. Forty percent of people are with Biden or Buttigieg. It'll be a sprint to that 20 percent,'' Mr. Leo said. ''It's an advantage that she's a lot of people's second choice. So when Pete or Joe or Amy isn't viable, that support can find itself to her.''

Mr. McElwee, for his part, criticized the analysis of Ms. Warren's general election prospects, including a poll released by The New York Times in the fall. He said it helped create a narrative that Ms. Warren was a weak candidate against Mr. Trump, resulting in a campaign that is more reliant on good results in Iowa than ever before.

At the same time, he cautioned Ms. Warren's campaign against outsourcing the all-important electability argument to surrogates and outsiders.

''It's been baffling,'' Mr. McElwee said of the campaign's response to being attacked from both sides. ''They haven't really contested the question.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/08/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-2020.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/08/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-2020.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, Ms. Warren campaigning in Maquoketa, Iowa, on Sunday. Left, a town hall in Dubuque. Less than a month before the Iowa caucuses, Ms. Warren is facing criticism from both moderates and liberals. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator Elizabeth Warren at a rally on Tuesday in Brooklyn, an event attended by Julián Castro, who recently endorsed her. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CALLA KESSLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 20, 2020

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[***Trump Trails in Pennsylvania. But Biden Is Hardly Surging.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:608H-CK51-JBG3-622S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

The president's campaign and allies have sketched out a comeback path in the battleground state, which he narrowly won in 2016, hoping to capitalize on factors like energy policy.

In political speeches for 40 years, Joseph R. Biden Jr. has evoked his scrappy childhood in Scranton, Pa. He kicked off his presidential run last year in Pittsburgh, and as he takes tentative steps out of home confinement in Wilmington, Del., the campaign trail has often led to the state next door.

Yet surprisingly, Mr. Biden is enjoying no special boost in his native Pennsylvania.

A New York Times/Siena College poll of six battleground states released last week showed that the former vice president's net approval in Pennsylvania was largely the same as elsewhere: Fifty percent of registered voters viewed him positively and 48 percent saw him negatively.

President Trump, mired in the lowest point of his presidency, was viewed favorably by just 43 percent of voters in the six battlegrounds. It helped explain why he trailed Mr. Biden in all six states and by 10 percentage points in Pennsylvania, a dire picture of the president's chances of re-election.

Still, with four months to go until Election Day, Mr. Trump could well become competitive again. Leaders of his campaign in Pennsylvania, seizing on Mr. Biden's failure to shine as a favorite son, have sketched out a comeback path for Mr. Trump. Its steps include the Republican Party's advantage in new voter registrations; a return to in-person organizing while Mr. Biden's ground game remains virtual; and a range of issues -- including energy policy, reopening the economy and defunding the police -- that Republicans believe will peel away swing voters in a state Mr. Trump narrowly won in 2016.

''The 10 points doesn't bother me,'' said Lawrence Tabas, the chairman of the Republican Party of Pennsylvania, referring to Mr. Trump's deficit in the Times poll. ''He's an incumbent president, there's a crisis and people get angry. It's a snapshot. He's been way behind before.''

A spokeswoman for the Biden campaign, Emma Riley, said the former vice president considered Pennsylvania crucial to his 2020 chances.

''What's become clear is that Pennsylvanians have outright rejected the Trump administration's failed record of leadership, reckless trade wars and corruption that's favored corporations and their wealthy C.E.O.s ahead of everyday Americans,'' Ms. Riley said.

Pennsylvania Democrats cautioned that the president's base of rural and exurban voters, who delivered him the state in 2016 in a startling upset, were still largely supportive.

''Pennsylvania is a swing state; it's not the Democratic state that a lot of people think it is, not anymore,'' said Ryan Bizzarro, a Democratic state representative from Erie County.

Mr. Trump's victory in Pennsylvania by a mere 44,000 votes, out of more than six million cast, was a result of sweeping defections by white residents who once voted Democratic, largely in western and northeastern Pennsylvania.

In the 2018 midterm elections and in 2019 local races, Democrats came roaring back as a blue wave swept the Philadelphia suburbs. At the same time, Republicans seized control in blue-collar union counties outside Pittsburgh.

With both parties predicting higher turnout this year than in 2016, winning statewide depends on some delicate dial-twisting: Will the Republican surge in rural counties outweigh the rejection of Mr. Trump by suburban voters, especially independents and women?

And will turnout by Black voters in Philadelphia return to near 2012 levels and offset the inroads Mr. Trump made in the city in 2016?

''The Republican base is very strong outside southeast Pennsylvania,'' said Rob Gleason, a former chairman of the state G.O.P., who lives in Johnstown, a city in central Pennsylvania. ''It's immovable. Whenever there's any type of controversy about his administration, more Trump signs go up and flags get raised.''

In Cambria County, which includes Johnstown, Democrats have lost 7,000 registered voters since 2016, while Republicans have gained 3,700. Statewide, Democrats retain a historical registration advantage, but the last four years have brought bad news for the party: Republicans have closed the gap on Democrats by 121,000 since November 2016, a measure of enthusiasm that favors the G.O.P.

Mr. Trump, unlike previous incumbents, has done little to reach beyond his core supporters. Since the killing of George Floyd by the police in Minneapolis, the president has played to white voters with racist and inflammatory messages about protesters, Civil War monuments and crime.

Bernadette Comfort, the chair of Mr. Trump's campaign in Pennsylvania, disputed that he was running a base-only strategy.

''The president in fact appeals to the single mom in suburbia, the president appeals to the ***working-class*** Republican, Democrat, whatever,'' Ms. Comfort said. ''We will go after independents, Democrats, after those folks who did not come out in 2016.''

Nonetheless, the Times poll showed erosion in the president's base. Mr. Trump was favored by 86 percent of Pennsylvanians who said they voted for him in 2016, down from 92 percent in a Times poll in October.

In contrast to western Pennsylvania, the growing and racially diversifying counties outside Philadelphia have moved in the opposite direction. Four years ago, registered Republicans outnumbered Democrats by more than 18,000 in Chester County; today, Democrats have an edge of about 1,000.

Shivani Jain, a bank analyst in Chester County, is among the 47 percent of Pennsylvanians with a ''very unfavorable'' view of Mr. Trump, leaving him a very narrow path to win the state. Ms. Jain, 25, has participated in recent protests.

''As a person of color myself, I find the last few years has been heartbreaking,'' she said. ''I'm hoping with what I'm seeing with the Black Lives Matter movement and how many of my generation have come out, people take that energy to the voting booth.''

An issue Republican officials believe will help the president is the cautious reopening of the state by Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, which has met furious opposition in some regions with fewer coronavirus cases.

Cynthia Sabat, 52, a Trump supporter who lives east of Pittsburgh, called the governor's support for the city's ban on consuming alcohol in bars, after a spike in cases over the weekend, ''moronic.''

''Wolf is horrible,'' she said. ''I don't subscribe to conspiracy theories -- I believe the virus is real -- but you can't just keep people from their livelihoods. They have a right to make a living.''

It is unclear, however, whether this will be a winning issue for the president. In the Times poll, only 27 percent of Pennsylvanians said stay-home orders had gone too far.

Since mid-June, the Trump campaign has returned to in-person door knocking and has held training sessions for volunteers without masks or social distancing. The campaign, which says it has 106 organizers in the state to identify and motivate supporters, appears to be ahead of Mr. Biden's ground game.

''They haven't hired a state director,'' Michael Joyce, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee, said of the Biden team. ''They simply don't have the ground game, the data operation, the infrastructure every campaign needs to get their candidate across the finish line. It's too late to catch up.''

Mr. Bizzarro, who witnessed Mr. Trump flip the longtime Democratic bastion of Erie County in 2016, said Mr. Biden needed a stronger ground game and in-person organizing.

''I've been on the phone with Biden's national political director several times already this week,'' he said. ''The urgency is real. Banking on virtually touching enough voters to win isn't something I'm comfortable with for Biden, myself as a candidate or any other candidate up and down the ballot.''

The Biden campaign did not dispute its lack of a state director, but said it was working with the Democratic National Committee and state parties to place hundreds of organizers in battleground states including Pennsylvania. Rebounding from 2016, when Hillary Clinton could not find enough local field staff members, Democrats have trained more than 100 organizers in communities of color in the state.

A potentially potent issue for Republicans is Mr. Biden's energy policy, as progressives like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York push him to endorse the Green New Deal.

''Joe likes to claim he's for Pennsylvania and understands Pennsylvania -- on that point alone, he will lose western Pennsylvania with this energy policy,'' Ms. Comfort said.

A pro-Trump super PAC, America First Action, spent nearly $800,000 on attack ads in the state in June, claiming that Mr. Biden would ban fracking for natural gas, an industry that has brought thousands of jobs to southwestern Pennsylvania.

The ads misleadingly edit a statement of Mr. Biden's from a debate to suggest he would ''eliminate'' coal and fracking. In the full quotation, he said he would eliminate ''subsidies'' for fossil fuels.

The Biden campaign said in a statement that Mr. Biden did not endorse the Green New Deal. His climate plan calls for a ban on new oil and gas drilling on public lands, though not on private property.

''There's clearly an effort by the Trump campaign to mischaracterize his position,'' said Representative Conor Lamb, a pro-fracking Democrat who won his seat in 2018 by carrying some of Pittsburgh's red-hued suburbs.

Mr. Lamb said that four years after Mr. Trump campaigned by promising to restore blue-collar jobs, there was little to show for it. ''We've seen steel-related jobs and coal-related jobs go away,'' Mr. Lamb said. ''The president has four years of a record and he hasn't delivered.''

A third issue that Republicans said they would lean into in the state is the movement to defund police departments. That has become a focal point of some protesters, including those in South Philadelphia who have faced off against armed counterprotesters at a statue of Christopher Columbus.

''How many white women suburban voters will support that?'' asked Mr. Joyce of the R.N.C., referring to calls to defund the police. The issue will ''hand the suburbs right to us,'' he added.

Tami Drumheller, a Republican in Berks County, in the exurbs of Philadelphia, might seem to be one such voter. She voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 but remains undecided this year. ''He's all for defunding the police and taking away our rights to defend ourselves,'' she said of Mr. Biden. (While many Democratic officials support reallocating money from police departments to social services, Mr. Biden does not.)

Ms. Drumheller, an office administrator, might come home to the Republican Party in November. But to listen to her now, it is far from certain.

''He needs to be more understanding about where these people are coming from,'' she said of the president and the protesters. ''I am a middle-class white female. I do have African-American nephews.'' It is not her own voice that society needs to hear, she said. ''It's my nephews' voices.''

''How the president comes off,'' she said, ''he comes off very ignorant about everything.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/us/politics/pennsylvania-trump-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/us/politics/pennsylvania-trump-biden.html)

**Graphic**

photos: Whenever there's any type of controversy about his administration, more Trump signs go up and flags get raised,'' said Rob Gleason, a former state chairman of the Pennsylvania Republican Party.

President Trump visiting Allentown, Pa., in May. He won Pennsylvania by 44,000 votes, out of six million cast, in 2016. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW)

Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Lancaster, Pa., last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES ''YORK TIMES)

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[***Updating the ‘You Go Girl’ Book Collection; Children’s Books***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60M4-R3D1-DXY4-X4H3-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** New children’s books published to mark the 19th Amendment’s 100th anniversary provide a wider lens than Alice Paul and dig deeper than “Girls Rule!”

**Body**

New children’s books published to mark the 19th Amendment’s 100th anniversary provide a wider lens than Alice Paul and dig deeper than “Girls Rule!”

If you’re a parent of kids (who am I kidding: girls) and possess a passing interest in basic human rights and dignity, you most likely have been gifted some of the books I have come to call the You Go Girl Collection. Infant libraries once home mostly to overinvested bunny mothers and magic pasta pots are now studded with bobble-headed cartoon depictions of female pioneers from Ada Lovelace to Bessie Coleman, while older kids now read about women resisting, persisting and dissenting till they puke.

Some of the new wave of children’s progressive history is brilliant and transporting; Erica Armstrong Dunbar’s young readers’ edition of “Never Caught,” about George and Martha Washington’s runaway slave Ona Judge, and her Harriet Tubman biography, “She Came to Slay,” are gold standards, and I love David Roberts’s “Suffragette: The Battle for Equality,” Jonah Winter’s [*“Lillian’s Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/books/review/making-every-vote-count.html) and so many others. But there’s plenty that will make you want to self-immolate (“Cleopatra was Queen of the Nile and said girls rule!”).

I try to remind myself that, despite their varied quality, the proliferation of these books means that kids are at least hearing about history I never knew existed. I gobbled the Landmark history books like candy, and by third grade could have told you in excruciating detail about John F. Kennedy’s PT-109, but wouldn’t have recognized Alice Paul or Mary Church Terrell if they’d shown up to picket my house.

Still, it was with trepidation that I tackled a new crop of children’s books published to mark the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. When the story of the long fight for women’s enfranchisement has been told popularly, it has too often been presented as flat celebration — all the complexities and nastiness, the racism and classism, the defining incompleteness of the project pressed out to make a neat fist-in-the-air tale of victory. If it’s so hard to honestly address the ways in which injustices have been replicated within movements for justice, how can those contours be effectively communicated in children’s books? Especially children’s books that are designed to inspire?

Barb Rosenstock’s [*FIGHT OF THE CENTURY: Alice Paul Battles Woodrow Wilson for the Vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/books/review/making-every-vote-count.html) (Calkins Creek/Boyds Mills &amp; Kane, 40 pp., $18.99; ages 7 to 10), with illustrations by Sarah Green, did not assuage my anxieties. Rosenstock perplexingly presents the protracted battle between suffragist Paul and then-President Woodrow Wilson over a suffrage amendment to the Constitution as a boxing match: “This fight determines whether the women of the United States can vote, folks. The winner changes the country forever.” This framing, aside from giving kids bonkers ideas about what constitutes real political challenge — “In this corner, standing five feet six inches, 100 pounds, wearing long skirts and a large-brimmed hat, women’s rights leader, Alice Paul!” — also undersells what was actually radical about her tactics. While Rosenstock writes that Paul’s pickets outside the White House were a first in American protest strategy, the impact of that point gets dulled somewhere around “DING! END OF ROUND THREE.”

Why Rosenstock believed that ringside vernacular would resonate more with kids than direct storytelling is mysterious, but so are the gaps in her history. Green’s illustrations of the 1913 suffrage parade Paul organized show cheerfully integrated crowds of white and Black women. There is no mention until the concluding author’s note that Paul herself signed off on the segregation of Black suffragists to the back of the march to appease white suffragists who did not want them included at all; even when she does offer up this information, Rosenstock notes that Paul’s “support of her organization’s discriminatory actions damaged her historical reputation as a fighter for equal rights,” as if the reputational damage sustained by Paul — and not the white supremacy of a movement that purported to be on the side of liberty and democracy — is the key takeaway.

What a pleasure, then, to dive into [*HOW WOMEN WON THE VOTE: Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, and Their Big Idea*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/books/review/making-every-vote-count.html) (Harper, 80 pp., $18.99; ages 8 to 12) by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, with illustrations by Ziyue Chen, which offers an engaging and nuanced view of the movement, without attempting to pretty it up. Bartoletti describes the process of force-feeding suffragists who protested their imprisonment with hunger strikes: “A prison doctor stuck a long rubber hose as thick as a finger up [Paul’s] nose. He snaked the tube down her throat and into her stomach. He fastened a funnel to the top of the hose. Into the funnel, the doctor poured milk and two raw eggs. This is called force-feeding. And it hurt.” Ziyue’s illustrations of protesters being clubbed by police are interspersed with photographs reminding young readers that these things happened to real people in real life.

While this book, like “Fight of the Century,” settles on Paul as a central character (and does not address the very different, inside approach her contemporary, the National American Woman Suffrage Association leader Carrie Chapman Catt, took to persuading Wilson to come around to the 19th Amendment), its view of the movement is broader and comes far closer to providing the multigenerational, multiracial and, very often, racist bigger picture. Bartoletti dedicates several pages to Black suffragists, including the anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells — who was instructed not to march with the white Illinois delegation in the 1913 parade but flouted orders by joining them partway through — as well as the N.A.A.C.P. co-founder Mary Church Terrell, Nellie May Quander, Nannie Helen Burroughs and Carrie Williams Clifford. But its conclusion is something of a letdown: a pat celebration of the 19th Amendment, with an afterword promisingly entitled “More Work to Be Done” that is mostly about Paul’s later work to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, and not about the long battle to overturn Jim Crow-era disenfranchisement of Black women and men, a fight that extended 45 years beyond the 19th Amendment and — especially in the wake of the Supreme Court’s 2013 gutting of the Voting Rights Act — continues today.

For a longer view, slightly older readers can turn to [*HISTORY SMASHERS: WOMEN’S RIGHT TO VOTE*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/books/review/making-every-vote-count.html) (Random House, 224 pp., $7.99; ages 8 to 12) by Kate Messner, illustrated by Dylan Meconis. This volume is the most conversational of the bunch, a mix of sidebars, graphic-novel-style storytelling and cartoons; the text is often disconcertingly colloquial. Of suffragist and abolitionist Ernestine Rose, who pushed for the Married Women’s Property Act that New York passed in 1848, Messner writes, “She thought that the state’s law about married women not being able to keep their own property was the dumbest thing ever.” Which, y’know, isn’t wrong.

The book’s format may be a good match for those with shorter attention spans, and permits it to be gratifyingly capacious in what it covers. Messner pays welcome attention to Harriot Stanton Blatch’s Equality League of Self-Supporting Women, as well as to the labor activists, including Rose Schneiderman, who understood suffrage as a key lever of influence for ***working-class*** women. She also covers the history of fighting voter suppression up through Stacey Abrams’s contested loss in the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial election and concludes with a photo and prompt from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: “Just imagine what all those women who fought for their right to vote would think if they could see their country now.”

My favorite of the books is [*FINISH THE FIGHT! The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/books/review/making-every-vote-count.html) (Versify/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 144 pp., $18.99; ages 8 to 12), written by the staff of The New York Times, led by Veronica Chambers. “The way we frame suffrage needs attention. It is thought to be kind of dowdy and dour, whereas in fact it is exciting and radical,” the historian Kate Clarke Lemay is quoted as saying near the start. In addition to that “makeover,” the writers note, this history requires “a wider lens,” and so they highlight the activists who were not Paul, Susan B. Anthony or Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

They begin, as the suffrage movement is widely understood to have begun, in Seneca Falls, New York, but they do not linger on Stanton or her 1848 convention there. Instead the book describes the Haudenosaunee confederacy of Native American tribes, a society, built on matrilineal power lines, in which women were public speakers and leaders. Instead of considering the impact the Haudenosaunee had on white suffragists — an angle that keeps the focus on those white feminists — it recounts how the imposition of white political culture on the Haudenosaunee women contributed to their disempowerment, and left them to their own centuries-long battle to get back the authority they’d had long before suffragists came into view. “The Seneca Nation constitution wouldn’t be changed to allow women to vote in tribal elections until 1964,” we learn.

We also learn about the New Yorker Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, who in 1912 rode a white horse as she led members of her Chinese and Chinese-American community in one of the biggest suffrage parades in U.S. history. And there is an excellent section on the suffragist and writer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper — one of the first African-American women in the United States to publish short stories and novels — who said, “I do not believe that white women are dew-drops just exhaled from the skies. I think that like men they may be divided into three classes, the good, the bad and the indifferent. The good would vote according to their convictions and principles; the bad, as dictated by prejudice or malice; and the indifferent will vote on the strongest side of the question, with the winning party.” Could there be a more vivid description of the gendered, racial and political dynamics of our contemporary moment, a century after the 19th Amendment, and two and a half months before an election in which a Black woman is the vice presidential candidate on a major party’s ticket for the first time in this nation’s history?

Reading the lushly illustrated chapters about the Mexican suffragist Jovita Idár and the Dakota Sioux writer and activist Zitkála-Sá, as well as about Elizabeth Piper Ensley, who in the 1890s fought for racial integration within the suffrage movement in the Western states and wrote, “Women’s work in politics must be like that of the chambered nautilus, the spiral animal, which after completing one house or shell proceeds to make another and so is constantly advancing,” I felt myself wanting more. Not from this volume, which offers lots, but from others.

These books make me hungry for more like them, for children and adults. I want this history offered in as many forms and with as much energy and dedication as the history of this nation’s white men over the centuries.

The purely heroic, bang-pow version of affirmative women’s history is the stuff I fear younger readers will reflexively rear back from, reasonably question and ultimately reject. The complex, challenging texts that provoke curiosity and frustration seem more likely to drive kids of every gender, race and identity to want to read more, learn more, write more of their own history and, most crucially, jump into America’s ongoing, jumbled, urgent fight for full enfranchisement.

Also of Note: “[*Bold &amp; Brave: Ten Heroes Who Won Women the Right to Vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/books/review/making-every-vote-count.html),” by Kirsten Gillibrand and Maira Kalman (Random House, 40 pp., $7.99; ages 6 to 9) is now out in paperback, and “[*The Suffragist Playbook: Your Guide to Changing the World*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/06/books/review/making-every-vote-count.html),” by Lucinda Robb and Rebecca Boggs Roberts (Candlewick, 160 pp., $15.99; ages 12 and up), by the daughters of Lynda Robb and Cokie Roberts, will be published October 27.

Rebecca Traister is a writer for New York magazine and author of “Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women’s Anger.”

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PHOTO: “I shall not march at all,” Ida B. Wells said, “unless I can march under the Illinois banner.” From left, Nellie May Quander, Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells, Alice Paul. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ziyue Chen/"How Women Won the Vote" FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Trump Is in Trouble in Pennsylvania, but ‘He’s Been Way Behind Before’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6089-6HV1-DXY4-X4R5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The president’s campaign and allies have sketched out a comeback path in the battleground state, which he narrowly won in 2016, hoping to capitalize on factors like energy policy.

**Body**

The president’s campaign and allies have sketched out a comeback path in the battleground state, which he narrowly won in 2016, hoping to capitalize on factors like energy policy.

In political speeches for 40 years, [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) has evoked his scrappy childhood in [*Scranton, Pa*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html). He kicked off his presidential run last year in Pittsburgh, and as he takes tentative steps out of home confinement in Wilmington, Del., the campaign trail has often led to the state next door.

Yet surprisingly, Mr. Biden is enjoying no special boost in his native Pennsylvania.

A New York Times/Siena College [*poll of six battleground states*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) released last week showed that the former vice president’s net approval in Pennsylvania was largely the same as elsewhere: Fifty percent of registered voters viewed him positively and 48 percent saw him negatively.

[*President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html), mired in the lowest point of his presidency, was viewed favorably by just 43 percent of voters in the six battlegrounds. It helped explain why he trailed Mr. Biden in all six states and by 10 percentage points in Pennsylvania, a dire picture of the president’s chances of re-election.

Still, with four months to go until Election Day, Mr. Trump could well become competitive again. Leaders of his campaign in Pennsylvania, seizing on Mr. Biden’s failure to shine as a favorite son, have sketched out a comeback path for Mr. Trump. Its steps include the Republican Party’s advantage in new voter registrations; a return to in-person organizing while Mr. Biden’s ground game remains virtual; and a range of issues — including energy policy, reopening the economy and defunding the police — that Republicans believe will peel away swing voters in a state Mr. Trump narrowly won in 2016.

“The 10 points doesn’t bother me,” said Lawrence Tabas, the chairman of the Republican Party of Pennsylvania, referring to Mr. Trump’s deficit in the Times poll. “He’s an incumbent president, there’s a crisis and people get angry. It’s a snapshot. He’s been way behind before.”

A spokeswoman for the Biden campaign, Emma Riley, said the former vice president considered Pennsylvania crucial to his 2020 chances.

“What’s become clear is that Pennsylvanians have outright rejected the Trump administration’s failed record of leadership, reckless trade wars and corruption that’s favored corporations and their wealthy C.E.O.s ahead of everyday Americans,” Ms. Riley said.

Pennsylvania Democrats cautioned that the president’s base of rural and exurban voters, who delivered him the state in 2016 in a startling upset, were still largely supportive.

“Pennsylvania is a swing state; it’s not the Democratic state that a lot of people think it is, not anymore,” said Ryan Bizzarro, a Democratic state representative from Erie County.

Mr. Trump’s victory in Pennsylvania by [*a mere 44,000 votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html), out of more than six million cast, was a result of sweeping defections by white residents who once voted Democratic, largely in western and northeastern Pennsylvania.

In the 2018 midterm elections and in 2019 local races, Democrats came roaring back as [*a blue wave swept the Philadelphia suburbs*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html). At the same time, [*Republicans seized control*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) in blue-collar union counties outside Pittsburgh.

With both parties predicting higher turnout this year than in 2016, winning statewide depends on some delicate dial-twisting: Will the Republican surge in rural counties outweigh the rejection of Mr. Trump by suburban voters, especially independents and women?

And will turnout by Black voters in Philadelphia return to near 2012 levels and offset the inroads Mr. Trump made in the city in 2016?

“The Republican base is very strong outside southeast Pennsylvania,” said Rob Gleason, a former chairman of the state G.O.P., who lives in Johnstown, a city in central Pennsylvania. “It’s immovable. Whenever there’s any type of controversy about his administration, more Trump signs go up and flags get raised.”

In Cambria County, which includes Johnstown, Democrats have lost 7,000 registered voters since 2016, while Republicans have gained 3,700. Statewide, Democrats retain a historical registration advantage, but the last four years have brought bad news for the party: Republicans have closed the gap on Democrats by [*121,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) since November 2016, a measure of enthusiasm that favors the G.O.P.

Mr. Trump, unlike previous incumbents, has done little to reach beyond his core supporters. Since the killing of George Floyd by the police in Minneapolis, the president has played to white voters with [*racist and inflammatory messages*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) about protesters, Civil War monuments and crime.

Bernadette Comfort, the chair of Mr. Trump’s campaign in Pennsylvania, disputed that he was running a base-only strategy.

“The president in fact appeals to the single mom in suburbia, the president appeals to the ***working-class*** Republican, Democrat, whatever,” Ms. Comfort said. “We will go after independents, Democrats, after those folks who did not come out in 2016.”

Nonetheless, the Times poll showed erosion in the president’s base. Mr. Trump was favored by 86 percent of Pennsylvanians who said they voted for him in 2016, down from 92 percent in a Times poll in October.

In contrast to western Pennsylvania, the growing and racially diversifying counties outside Philadelphia have moved in the opposite direction. Four years ago, registered Republicans outnumbered Democrats by more than 18,000 in Chester County; today, Democrats have an edge of about 1,000.

Shivani Jain, a bank analyst in Chester County, is among the 47 percent of Pennsylvanians with a “very unfavorable” view of Mr. Trump, leaving him a very narrow path to win the state. Ms. Jain, 25, has participated in recent protests.

“As a person of color myself, I find the last few years has been heartbreaking,” she said. “I’m hoping with what I’m seeing with the Black Lives Matter movement and how many of my generation have come out, people take that energy to the voting booth.”

An issue Republican officials believe will help the president is the cautious reopening of the state by Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, which has met furious opposition in some regions with fewer coronavirus cases.

Cynthia Sabat, 52, a Trump supporter who lives east of Pittsburgh, called [*the governor’s support*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) for the city’s ban on consuming alcohol in bars, after a spike in cases over the weekend, “moronic.”

“Wolf is horrible,” she said. “I don’t subscribe to conspiracy theories — I believe the virus is real — but you can’t just keep people from their livelihoods. They have a right to make a living.”

It is unclear, however, whether this will be a winning issue for the president. In the Times poll, only 27 percent of Pennsylvanians said stay-home orders had gone too far.

Since mid-June, the Trump campaign has returned to in-person door knocking and has held [*training sessions for volunteers*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) without masks or social distancing. The campaign, which says it has 106 organizers in the state to identify and motivate supporters, appears to be ahead of Mr. Biden’s ground game.

“They haven’t hired a state director,” Michael Joyce, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee, said of the Biden team. “They simply don’t have the ground game, the data operation, the infrastructure every campaign needs to get their candidate across the finish line. It’s too late to catch up.”

Mr. Bizzarro, who witnessed Mr. Trump flip the longtime Democratic bastion of Erie County in 2016, said Mr. Biden needed a stronger ground game and in-person organizing.

“I’ve been on the phone with Biden’s national political director several times already this week,” he said. “The urgency is real. Banking on virtually touching enough voters to win isn’t something I’m comfortable with for Biden, myself as a candidate or any other candidate up and down the ballot.”

The Biden campaign did not dispute its lack of a state director, but said it was working with the Democratic National Committee and state parties to place hundreds of organizers in battleground states including Pennsylvania. Rebounding from 2016, when Hillary Clinton could not find enough local field staff members, [*Democrats have trained*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) more than 100 organizers in communities of color in the state.

A potentially potent issue for Republicans is Mr. Biden’s energy policy, as progressives like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York push him to endorse the [*Green New Deal*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html).

“Joe likes to claim he’s for Pennsylvania and understands Pennsylvania — on that point alone, he will lose western Pennsylvania with this energy policy,” Ms. Comfort said.

A pro-Trump super PAC, America First Action, spent nearly $800,000 on attack ads in the state in June, claiming that Mr. Biden would ban fracking for natural gas, an industry that has brought thousands of jobs to southwestern Pennsylvania.

The ads [*misleadingly edit*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) a statement of Mr. Biden’s from a debate to suggest he would “eliminate” coal and fracking. In the full quotation, he said he would eliminate “subsidies” for fossil fuels.

The Biden campaign said in a statement that Mr. Biden did not endorse the Green New Deal. His climate plan calls for a ban on new oil and gas drilling on public lands, though not on private property.

“There’s clearly an effort by the Trump campaign to mischaracterize his position,” said Representative Conor Lamb, a pro-fracking Democrat who won his seat in 2018 by carrying some of Pittsburgh’s red-hued suburbs.

Mr. Lamb said that four years after Mr. Trump campaigned by promising to restore blue-collar jobs, there was little to show for it. “We’ve seen steel-related jobs and coal-related jobs go away,” Mr. Lamb said. “The president has four years of a record and he hasn’t delivered.”

A third issue that Republicans said they would lean into in the state is the movement to defund police departments. That has become a focal point of some protesters, including those in South Philadelphia who have [*faced off against armed counterprotesters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html) at a statue of Christopher Columbus.

“How many white women suburban voters will support that?” asked Mr. Joyce of the R.N.C., referring to calls to defund the police. The issue will “hand the suburbs right to us,” he added.

Tami Drumheller, a Republican in Berks County, in the exurbs of Philadelphia, might seem to be one such voter. She voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 but remains undecided this year. “He’s all for defunding the police and taking away our rights to defend ourselves,” she said of Mr. Biden. (While many Democratic officials support reallocating money from police departments to social services, [*Mr. Biden does not*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/elections/joe-biden.html).)

Ms. Drumheller, an office administrator, might come home to the Republican Party in November. But to listen to her now, it is far from certain.

“He needs to be more understanding about where these people are coming from,” she said of the president and the protesters. “I am a middle-class white female. I do have African-American nephews.” It is not her own voice that society needs to hear, she said. “It’s my nephews’ voices.”

“How the president comes off,” she said, “he comes off very ignorant about everything.”

photos: Whenever there’s any type of controversy about his administration, more Trump signs go up and flags get raised,” said Rob Gleason, a former state chairman of the Pennsylvania Republican Party.; President Trump visiting Allentown, Pa., in May. He won Pennsylvania by 44,000 votes, out of six million cast, in 2016. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW); Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Lancaster, Pa., last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES “YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2020

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[***How Elizabeth Warren Is Being Squeezed by 2 Democratic Factions***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XXY-MSH1-DXY4-X22M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Ms. Warren is figuring out what candidates like Beto O’Rourke, Kamala Harris and Kirsten Gillibrand have already learned: It’s hard to appeal to both the center and the left of the Democratic Party.

**Body**

Ms. Warren is figuring out what candidates like Beto O’Rourke, Kamala Harris and Kirsten Gillibrand have already learned: It’s hard to appeal to both the center and the left of the Democratic Party.

DAVENPORT, Iowa — The voter asked Senator [*Elizabeth Warren*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) of Massachusetts the question on many Iowans’ minds: What did she have to offer besides her litany of policy proposals?

At first, Ms. Warren responded with a story about her ***working-class*** upbringing, saying she intimately understood a family’s day-to-day financial struggles. Then she gave a second answer, a more direct argument for her ability to beat President Trump.

“I’m the only person who will be on the debate stage who&#39;s beaten a popular incumbent Republican anytime in the last 25 years,” Ms. Warren said. “In other words, I know how to fight, I know how to win, and that’s what I plan to do.”

The response, given at a rally in Davenport on Sunday, was a rare foray into horse-race politics from a candidate who has dismissed the importance of polls, rarely reads news coverage about herself and detests Beltway punditry. But it was part of a quiet recognition among her advisers and surrogates that, less than one month before the Iowa caucuses, Ms. Warren is being damaged by criticism and pressure from both moderates and liberals within the Democratic Party, whose doubts about her have fueled concerns about her ability to win.

These worries have also filtered down to voters, who, in more than two dozen interviews during Ms. Warren’s two most recent trips to Iowa, have expressed a growing fear that her candidacy is neither satisfying nor uniting the political factions in the party.

“It’s been a problem,” said Peter Leo, the chairman of Iowa’s Carroll County Democrats, who has endorsed Ms. Warren. “She’s getting hit from the left and the right.”

Ms. Warren’s conundrum is tied to the all-important notion of “electability,” the vague and sometimes discriminatory concept that has become paramount to Democratic voters who are motivated by defeating Mr. Trump.

When Ms. Warren’s campaign was riding high in the summer and early fall, the energy around her ideas was an implicit message to both liberals and moderates: She was the one who could win. But after a series of attacks, beginning on health care policy, she has lost ground as some voters have retreated to their ideological corners: the left-wing base that has rallied around Senator [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) of Vermont, and the moderate group of Democrats who have largely backed former Vice President   [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) or former Mayor   [*Pete Buttigieg*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) of South Bend, Ind.

It has created a self-fulfilling cycle that Ms. Warren is now trying to break.

Wallace Watson, a 52-year-old who attended her rally over the weekend in Dubuque, Iowa, said he decided to support Ms. Warren months ago because he saw her as the only candidate who could energize both voters who backed Mr. Sanders in 2016 and those who supported Hillary Clinton, the party’s nominee. In recent months, however, he admitted that his faith in Ms. Warren had been tested.

“I think she has long-term viability, but it’s unfortunate that she has had press coverage in the last months of the year that has seemed to lessen her impact,” Mr. Watson said. “She needs to step up her campaign and make herself a viable candidate again. I’m hopeful she will.”

Ms. Warren’s campaign did not respond to a request for comment for this story. But in private conversations, her advisers acknowledge that this ideological squeeze is similar to one that doomed earlier candidates like former Representative Beto O’Rourke of Texas, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Senator Kamala Harris of California. But unlike those candidates, who often made grand pivots in order to appease both sides, Ms. Warren is placing her bet on authenticity and hoping voters will reward her for being consistent.

But she is still making minor tweaks to her strategy. She has appeared on more national television programs in recent days, including a rare appearance on the Sunday political talk show circuit. Adam Green, who leads the Progressive Change Campaign Committee and has advised Ms. Warren, said to expect her to “make the case for electability” against Mr. Trump in the coming month, aimed at “scared progressives” who are “tentatively parked with others like Biden.”

The campaign has also amassed a roster of energetic and [*potentially influential surrogates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html), including   [*Julián Castro*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html), the former cabinet secretary and   [*presidential candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html), Representatives   [*Ayanna S. Pressley*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) of Massachusetts and Katie Porter of California, and a collective of activists called   [*“Black Womxn For,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) all of whom are set to descend on Iowa in the coming weeks.

These surrogates may go on the offensive in ways Ms. Warren has resisted. At their joint rally in Brooklyn on Tuesday, it was Mr. Castro — not Ms. Warren — who made the most explicit case for why she was better suited than her primary opponents to beat Mr. Trump.

“More than any other candidate in this race, more than any other candidate that’s going to be on that debate stage in a few days, Elizabeth Warren is the candidate who can unite the entire Democratic Party,” he said. “When you talk to people on the ground, you find that they like Elizabeth Warren. You find that they’re willing to support her. You find that she has the best damn organization in these early states.”

Ms. Warren’s campaign has avoided setting expectations for its Iowa finish. But Sean McElwee, whose think tank, Data for Progress, has worked closely with Ms. Warren’s campaign, said he thought she probably needed a first- or second-place finish in Iowa to unlock her numbers elsewhere — and at a minimum, she must beat Mr. Sanders.

“One of her advantages are that a lot of people are considering her,” Mr. McElwee said. “One of her disadvantages is that the people who are considering her are considering everyone else.”

It will be an electoral tightrope walk of the highest order, as evidenced by the way the debate about Ms. Warren’s health care plan consumed the final months of 2019. It started with the race’s moderates, who pressured Ms. Warren into providing additional details about how she planned to pay for and transition to a “Medicare for all” system. When those details diverged from the outline in Mr. Sanders’s bill, some members of the party’s left flank accused her of political betrayal.

Other issues have prompted a backlash against Ms. Warren in the early days of this year. After Mr. Trump ordered the killing of Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, one of Iran’s top military commanders, Ms. Warren issued a statement that was rejected by some on the party’s left, who said she had not sufficiently embraced an antiwar framework like that of Mr. Sanders. After she released a second statement, she faced criticism for not denouncing Mr. Suleimani in sufficiently harsh terms, even as other candidates who also adjusted their public remarks — including Mr. Buttigieg — escaped scrutiny.

Last week, Ms. Warren surprised some of her own supporters by embracing the updated trade deal between the United States, Mexico and Canada, which was negotiated by Mr. Trump to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, saying it created some market stability for farmers. It was also a rare break between her and Mr. Sanders, who argued the bill would not stop the outsourcing of jobs and had lax environmental regulations.

The Sunrise Movement, the nationwide group of young climate activists, said Ms. Warren’s support for the agreement “undermines her commitments to the Green New Deal.” Prominent online supporters of Ms. Warren, including leaders at the Working Families Party, the progressive group that [*endorsed her in September*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html), boosted tweets about being “heartbroken” by Ms. Warren’s decision.

In his western Iowa county, Mr. Leo said, Ms. Warren had not lost support to Mr. Sanders, but to moderates like Mr. Biden, Mr. Buttigieg and Senator [*Amy Klobuchar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) of Minnesota. He believes the Warren campaign should focus on persuading moderate Democrats who may have abandoned it over electability fears.

“Forty percent of people are with the progressives. Forty percent of people are with Biden or Buttigieg. It’ll be a sprint to that 20 percent,” Mr. Leo said. “It’s an advantage that she’s a lot of people’s second choice. So when Pete or Joe or Amy isn’t viable, that support can find itself to her.”

Mr. McElwee, for his part, criticized the analysis of Ms. Warren’s general election prospects, including a poll [*released by The New York Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-disability-plan.html) in the fall. He said it helped create a narrative that Ms. Warren was a weak candidate against Mr. Trump, resulting in a campaign that is more reliant on good results in Iowa than ever before.

At the same time, he cautioned Ms. Warren’s campaign against outsourcing the all-important electability argument to surrogates and outsiders.

“It’s been baffling,” Mr. McElwee said of the campaign’s response to being attacked from both sides. “They haven’t really contested the question.”

PHOTOS: Above, Ms. Warren campaigning in Maquoketa, Iowa, on Sunday. Left, a town hall in Dubuque. Less than a month before the Iowa caucuses, Ms. Warren is facing criticism from both moderates and liberals. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES; JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Senator Elizabeth Warren at a rally on Tuesday in Brooklyn, an event attended by Julián Castro, who recently endorsed her. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CALLA KESSLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2020

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[***Gains in Economics Diversity Push***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y1C-5WJ1-JBG3-6061-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Ben Casselman, Jim Tankersley and Jeanna Smialek

**Body**

After a year of revelations about racism and sexism, the profession's annual meeting reflected signs of progress, but also work to be done.

SAN DIEGO -- When the nation's economists gathered here over the weekend, the event looked different than in past years. There was a woman holding ''office hours'' to help victims of sexual harassment and abuse. Job interviews were no longer conducted in hotel rooms, where female candidates had long felt uncomfortable. There was a long list of panel discussions on racism and sexism in the profession.

There were even, some attendees noted with delight, long lines for the women's restroom.

Many economists celebrated those developments as a sign of progress after a year of revelations -- in front-page stories and surveys of the group's members -- about sexism, racism and harassment in the discipline.

But others stressed the need for even more aggressive action to address those issues, particularly racial discrimination. And the group's leaders said they would need years of sustained effort to begin to erode the structural barriers that have held back women and nonwhite men in the field.

''There's certainly a problem -- we identified that problem,'' said Ben S. Bernanke, the former Federal Reserve chair, whose one-year term as president of the group, the American Economic Association, ended Sunday. ''Progress in terms of outcomes, it's too soon to say, obviously. Progress in terms of process I think has been tremendous.''

In an interview, Mr. Bernanke and the new president, Janet L. Yellen, his successor as Fed chair, said the association would soon finalize procedures for investigating violations of its code of conduct and for punishing violators. One formal complaint has already been filed, they said.

Mr. Bernanke said further steps might be needed to diversify the profession's power structures, still dominated by white men (although a majority of the association's executive committee, with Ms. Yellen's ascension, is female). Additional efforts could include grading university economics departments on their diversity efforts, and insuring racial and gender diversity in top positions at leading journals, which can make or break economists' careers by choosing to publish or reject their research.

Economics is grappling with these issues as other academic disciplines are facing their own reckonings. The National Academy of Sciences in 2018 published a report finding widespread sexual harassment in science, engineering and medicine. Prominent scholars in political science, government, law and other fields have been accused of sexual harassment. But gender and racial gaps in economics are wider -- and have been more stubborn -- than in many other fields.

The lack of diversity in economics, particularly in the top ranks, is nothing new. But the discipline has been forced to confront its problems by a series of incidents in recent years. In 2017, an economics student, Alice Wu, published a paper documenting discrimination, harassment and bullying on a popular industry online forum. The following year, Roland G. Fryer Jr., a star economist at Harvard, was accused of harassing and bullying women at his university-affiliated research lab. (Harvard suspended Mr. Fryer last year.)

At the economics association's meeting last year -- less than a month after The New York Times published details of the claims against Mr. Fryer -- some of the field's most prominent women shared searing stories of harassment and discrimination. And in March, the association published the results of a survey finding that female and minority economists faced rampant bias, harassment and even outright sexual assault.

The association has taken a number of steps in response to those revelations. It adopted a new code of conduct, and changed its bylaws to allow sanctions against members who violate it. It hired an ombudsperson to hear complaints, and a new general counsel who is empowered to investigate charges of misconduct. It has created task forces charged with addressing the profession's problems and with recruiting more women and people of color, and a permanent committee on issues facing gay, lesbian and transgender economists.

''What I've heard, over and over again, is -- this is the moment, we need to take advantage of it,'' said M.V. Lee Badgett, a professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst who is co-chair of the association's new Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession.

Some economists, particularly younger ones, are calling for a more radical rethinking of the discipline's structure. Academic economics remains dominated by researchers who attended and work at a handful of elite institutions. Relatively few economists, particularly in top programs, come from ***working-class*** backgrounds or have parents who did not attend college.

''Diversity means not bringing people with darker skin who use exactly the same models and ask exactly the same questions and reach the same conclusions,'' said Cecilia Conrad, an economist who is now an executive at the MacArthur Foundation. ''Embracing diversity means opening up to the kinds of new questions and new ways of seeing the world that will eventually improve economic science.''

Ms. Conrad, who is black, spoke on a panel titled ''How Can Economics Solve Its Race Problem?'' Discussion of race and racism was more prominent on this year's agenda, after organizers were criticized last year for neglecting those issues.

''Last year was the gender conference, this year is the race conference,'' said Lisa D. Cook, an economist at Michigan State University who is one of the field's most prominent black women. Gender and race, she added, go hand in hand -- the association's survey last year found that more black women report experiencing discrimination than any other group.

Ms. Cook is also one of four women newly elected to the executive committee. Economists, including many of the young activists, said the new leadership had made a difference, and credited Mr. Bernanke and Ms. Yellen with pushing the typically slow-moving association to become more aggressive.

There are also signs of a broader cultural shift. Many attendees said they had grown more comfortable raising questions about diversity in their departments, for example, and a growing list of schools have adopted rules meant to improve the tone of economics seminars, which some have described as toxic.

''The problem is not solved, absolutely not,'' said Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman, a Harvard research fellow who as an undergraduate was a co-founder of the Sadie Collective, a group aiming to bring more black women into economics. ''But we are seeing that the field itself is at a very high level taking measures to talk about diversity and inclusion in a very broad way.''

Research presented at the conference showed that decisions on promotion, invitations to present research and other milestones on the road to success still skewed disproportionately white and male.

An exhaustive study of economics seminars, presented by Alicia Sasser Modestino of Northeastern University on behalf of several co-authors, found that female economists face far more questions from men in the audience during their presentations than male economists do. ''In general,'' Ms. Modestino told a largely packed room for a session on gender in economics, ''women are more likely to receive questions that are not fair.''

While economists have become more willing to talk about general issues of discrimination, many remain reluctant to go public with more specific allegations. Leto Copeley, a lawyer who has been made the association's ombudsperson, said people had come to her with cases of severe abuse but were fearful of speaking out publicly.

Ms. Yellen said that ''it's not been a deluge of people coming forward'' with allegations. ''There is a concern,'' she said. ''In academia, you are really talking about power relationships, when women are being harassed by men who are important for their careers.''

At several points over the weekend, there were reminders that economists have pushed for greater diversity in the past with limited results. In the Friday session on race, panelists talked of a ''golden age'' in the late 1970s and early '80s when top departments had a substantial number of black graduate students. But that moment quickly passed.

At a lunch on Saturday, members of the National Economic Association celebrated the group's 50th anniversary. The organization was founded as the Caucus of Black Economists in December 1969 at an impromptu gathering in the midst of the profession-wide convention at a New York hotel. Several founders spoke at the lunch, praising the gains that black economists have won but lamenting that far more were needed.

One founder, Bernard E. Anderson, an emeritus professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, said he was encouraged by the recent diversity focus by the American Economic Association and its leaders. He recalled that when his group first met at that New York hotel in 1969, association leaders summoned city police officers.

''They thought we were a bunch of radicals who wanted to disrupt the convention,'' Mr. Anderson said, ''when all we wanted to be was economists.''

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ben Bernanke, a former Fed chair, with Harry Ellis, a conference attendee, left.

(B1)

Attendees listening to panelists during the ''Black Women in the Economics Profession'' discussion, above, at the annual meeting in San Diego. At left, the former Fed chair Janet Yellen speaking with an attendee before a panel called ''How Can Economics Solve Its Race Problem?'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SANDY HUFFAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4)

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[***What Does Home Mean to Us? Not the Same Thing It Did Before the Pandemic; Sheltering***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:628K-H1G1-DXY4-X0FS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 3030 words

**Byline:** Penelope Green

**Highlight:** We’re tired, and so are our living spaces. As we emerge from lockdown, architects, writers and others reflect on how we’ll reinvent them — and what matters now.

**Body**

We’re tired, and so are our living spaces. As we emerge from lockdown, architects, writers and others reflect on how we’ll reinvent them — and what matters now.

One spring more than 200 years ago, Xavier de Maistre, a well-to-do, well-read French army officer and balloon enthusiast, was sentenced to house arrest for a dueling incident. He spent 42 days in his bedroom, in a modest apartment on the top floor of a building in Turin, and wrote a whimsical travelogue of his time there called “A Journey Around My Room.”

Wearing his “traveling clothes” — a bathrobe and pajamas — he visited his comfy sofa, his desk, his cheerful pink-and-white bed (colors he recommended to his readers because they compelled him to wake up happy) and his memories, seeing all of these elements with fresh eyes. (He wrote a sequel, “Nocturnal Expedition Around My Room,” in which he journeyed by looking out his window at the night sky.) Like the Pevensie children, who stumbled into Narnia through an old wardrobe in a spare room, M. de Maistre found an entire world in a confined interior space, and pioneered, as Alain de Botton wrote in the foreword to a reissue of both stories, a novel mode of experience: room travel.

During this long year of house arrest, our relationships to our homes, like M. de Maistre’s to his bedroom, have been altered in profound and ridiculous ways. Our homes have been a refuge and a prison, often filled with too many people (and their newly adopted shelter dogs) doing things the spaces were never meant for, like school, work and physical activity. (The 19th-century rural model — the home as the site of leisure and production — has been reprised, although the activity may be happening in a cramped apartment instead of an airy farmhouse.)

Partners and children have stayed put, which has been both a boon and a corrosive to family life, depending on the family — or the day. Or maybe the home has been empty save for one human, and the place that was intended to be a launching pad or a respite from the energy of public life may have felt like solitary confinement. And that’s if you’re lucky.

For the more than one million households that faced evictions last year, [*despite moratoriums in many states*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/), the idea of home is evanescent, a relationship not just fraught, but unattainable, as even basic shelter becomes a luxury — and more completely out of reach.

After so many months confined to our homes, we asked those who think about place — architects, urban policy experts, novelists — how our relationships with our homes have changed, and what home means to them. (Their responses have been edited for clarity and condensed.)

We’re Tired of Our Homes — and They’re Tired of Us

Hashim Sarkis is the dean of the school of architecture and planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the curator of the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, [*rescheduled for May*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/), with a title — “How Will We Live Together?” — made more poignant and urgent by the delay.

Our homes now operate 24/7. Before, they used to take a break from us during working hours. We are paying more attention to them, but we are also wearing them out. They are tired of us. We need to be gentler with them.

Spaces dedicated to hospitality have been taken over by us, the hosts. The guest bedroom is now a study; the reception area, the gym. Home is not where we receive people anymore. I worry that this change will last longer than the others. Home may no longer be hospitable for some time.

The pandemic has been quite categorical about what types of households it deems safer than others: The solitary living is the safest, then the nuclear family home. The extended family home is threatened. Grandparents are isolated within the larger household, or away from it. The multiple family or shared homes or apartment buildings have entered into new spatial contracts that govern more strictly the behavior of the residents — not just what happens at home, but what happens outside.

What is even more disturbing is that different income levels have absorbed these changes differently. The more space you have, the easier it is. The difference between rich home and poor home has become much more exaggerated and visible. — HASHIM SARKIS

What a Year in Captivity Will Teach You

When Emma Donoghue conceived the room in [*“Room,” her 2010 novel about a space that was horribly more than its four walls*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/), she designed it on the Ikea website, choosing the second-cheapest item on every page because, as she said, Jack and Ma’s captor, Old Nick, was (among other shortcomings) deeply cheap, but thinking long-term. (The book was made into a feature [*film in 2015*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/).) Now that Ms. Donoghue and her family have been living in a less dystopic version of that world, its lessons have been an inspiration. Not so much about the furniture placement — Ms. Donoghue lives with her female partner and two teenagers in London, Ontario, in Canada, with “plenty of house, a yard and a deck and a front porch” — but more about the fluidity of the space and the relationship between parent and child.

Anytime Ma could say yes to Jack, she did. I didn’t want theirs to be a life of unnecessary rules. I tried to make it flexible, so she was able to say yes to running a race, and put the table on the bed.

I think a lot of parents have adopted that mind-set. What can we say yes to? My top priority has been I don’t want to be quarreling with the kids, so I have become a much more laid-back mom. I suspended my rules about screen time. They were living such a confined life, and everything fun was canceled. If my daughter wanted to watch “The Good Place” while doing math, then go for it. And “The Good Place” is like a philosophy course.

I decided that basic domestic harmony was the most important thing. We haven’t had any screaming rows since last March — so, to me, that makes a good pandemic.

I tried to make Jack and Ma kind of like buddies. Because they were not in any social context, they didn’t have to divide along the traditional gender or social or generational lines. Ma didn’t have to be the grown up doing grown up things; she meets her son where he is. That’s why I think their bond is so special. A lot of parents have said it’s nice to see the kids get a break from those social roles. The home, at its best, can be a place of freedom, a break from some of those social conventions. Pants optional, and all that. — EMMA DONOGHUE

Moving Toward a More Equitable Future

Marc Norman, an urban planner, spent the year working virtually from his two-family house in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where he lives with his husband, Jonathan Massey, an architectural historian and dean of the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. Mr. Norman’s specialty is affordable housing; this past year, his firm, [*Ideas and Action*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/), focused on civic work devoted to racial reconciliation and wealth building. One project in particular, with the [*Albina Vision Trust*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/)in Portland, Oregon, is imagining alternative forms of development, ownership and governance on land taken away from the area’s Black community.

As the line between office and home was erased, Mr. Norman said he felt both liberated (from the commute) and stifled (without it). But the experience also showed the promise, he said, of ideas urban planners have had for years: How cities with less rigid, more inclusive zoning and a revenue model less dependent on property ownership might make for more just, affordable and humane communities.

For people in planning and creative place making, this is the flexibility we’ve always been fighting for. Of course, we didn’t want it to happen this way.

Sometimes I joke with colleagues on Zoom that we’re all doing something illegal. We’re in single-family houses that specifically prohibit businesses, specifically prohibit all these other things, and here we are. Those rules were put in place assuming the need to impose segregation of uses, races and family types. We are living with the legacy of exclusionary zoning and racial covenants.

When this is over, there is going to be the fallout of: What do we do with all this isolated office and commercial real estate?

I hope that, going forward, we are able to determine for ourselves how we want to use our spaces and our cities. It’s been determined for us that streets are for cars, neighborhoods are for single-family dwellings and offices go in office districts. That doesn’t work for a lot of people. It certainly doesn’t work for people that need child care, that don’t want to have a car and that want to have the ability to freely run errands during the day.

That all plays into the revenue of cities. We pay for everything with property taxes. Should we? In Europe, they pay for social services, transportation and health care with the Value Added Tax. I think we should be thinking about that. Part of the problem is we decided to raise revenue in certain ways that are about property ownership and the necessity of increasing value as the only way to pay for schools and other necessities. — MARC NORMAN

The Quest for a Huggable Home

Kim Gordon designs and builds rustic modern houses for tech and record executives and new media moguls in Venice Beach, Calif., and beyond. Her glass-and-timber houses have been emblematic of a lifestyle that has stretched out for more than a decade in open-plan spaces, with kitchens that flow into living rooms, floor-to-ceiling windows and not much storage. (Venice lots are small, and the well-heeled residents regularly stock up on expensive coffee and small-batch bread yeast, but don’t squirrel away toilet paper.)

When Covid first hit, I was in the middle of designing this wonderful home in the Pacific Palisades, and I started to research those no-touch faucets, thinking of keeping everything clean. But now I want my house to not be that way.

The world is constantly telling me: Don’t touch! Don’t hug! So at home, I want to feel safe enough to touch my own faucet. I want to know I’m home and safe, and I can touch everything. I’m free to hug people and squishy pillows.

The lack of hugging means you want to hug and touch more. I’m looking at design as something that’s very cushiony and textural. I’m imagining that we’ll continue to see a softening in design — softer colors, rounded countertops, sexier, more tactile. — KIM GORDON

Home Is Where You Park It

Jessica Bruder is the author of [*“Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century,”*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/) a 2017 book that told the stories of older Americans battling economic hardship and precarious housing by living in vans and chasing seasonal work — and finding a kind of liberation in doing so. (It is now, of course, [*a critically acclaimed movie*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/) starring Frances McDormand, with multiple Oscar nominations.) For the book, Ms. Bruder traveled with her subjects in a white GMC Vandura she named Halen, after the 1980s hair band, a vehicle that soon become a cherished home. This past year, Halen has been stranded in a friend’s backyard in Reno, N.V., where Ms. Bruder, who lives in Brooklyn, was scheduled to speak last spring. She had hoped to reunite with it then, but the pandemic canceled those plans. Nonetheless, she took to the road in a 10-year-old Prius she kitted out with an Igloo cooler that plugs into the cigarette-lighter socket, camping gear and a five-gallon bucket of sanitary necessities, including gloves, masks, sanitizer, wipes and “the feminine accessory of the season,” she said, “a She Wee, a.k.a. pee funnel,” so as to avoid public restrooms.

The more I stayed home, the less at home I felt. No out-of-town guests came to couch-surf. No communal meals were shared at the long oak table I built for that purpose. Sirens and helicopters made it hard to sleep.

New York City had become a centrifuge, spitting friends out in faraway places. So I decided to hit the road, loading up my Prius like a space capsule with all the necessities to sustain human life.

Soon, home was a tent — on a Maine porch, in a New Hampshire backyard — for socially distant visits with friends. Or it was staying in an Asheville basement, hanging out with family in the carport. Or it was a spartan KOA cabin in Virginia, after it got aired out and the door handles were Cloroxed. There’s a kind of refuge in motion. — JESSICA BRUDER

We’re All Feral Weirdos Now

Kate Wagner is the architecture critic for The New Republic, and the creator of the satisfying [*McMansion Hell blog*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/), which chronicles the excesses of that housing type. She does not live in a McMansion, or even a house, but a two-bedroom apartment in Chicago, where she has been confined with relative ease, thinking about privacy and consent, and how the open office has migrated to the Zoom-ified house.

Life has gotten so much less private. The idea of my seventh-grade self being in Zoom school and seeing the bedroom of my seventh-grade crush would just be too much. There is now too much insight in your peers’ lives, the exposing of the home life of kids from unequal backgrounds.

I’ve been thinking about McMansions, too. McMansions formulated this idea of a room for everything — a wrapping room, a man cave, a theater, a bar — and brought so much of public life into the house. I was thinking maybe they were right all along. But the problem is you’re still alone in your house.

When you bring those luxuries into the house, it robs them of their currency. It’s sad to me to drink alone at a bar in your basement. It’s a ruin of the social activity we used to do. We’re all like feral weirdos now.

But I’ve done pretty well in the pandemic. It reminds me of when I was in high school. I didn’t have anything in common with my peers. I would go to school, not talk to anyone and come home and read or write terrible science fiction. I lived a totally interior life. Now I’ve reverted. It’s been so productive. What if this is just better for me, to live a life of isolation? — KATE WAGNER

Reclaiming Times Square

For over a decade, Jeremiah Moss — the pseudonym of Griffin Hansbury, a writer and psychoanalyst — has chronicled, and mourned, the physical casualties of gentrification, particularly in his home neighborhood, the East Village. [*Jeremiah’s Vanishing New York*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/), his blog and a [*2017 book*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/) of the same name, have been a kind of diary of homesickness. Yet the events of the last year have mostly alleviated those feelings for him.

Half of the people living in the East Village left between last March and May, and my sense is that a lot of the people who left were the people who made the neighborhood feel less like home.

I came here as a trans person, as a queer person, as a writer in the early ’90s. Home is a neighborhood, yes, but it’s also a psychic space. The way I think about the psychic space of the East Village I came to is it was a place of otherness, of deviance — using that term sociologically, so deviating from the dominant norm.

During the pandemic year, there has been a resurgence of connectedness. We were looking at each other again, recognizing each other on the street. I was hanging out in Times Square, which is a crazy thing for a New Yorker to say. Without the tourists, it had become a magnet for the marginalized and queer, for artists and for Black and brown ***working-class*** New Yorkers. It also became a hub of protests.

The main thing I’ve noticed is people who occupy minoritized identities — nonwhite, nonstraight — seem to be more comfortable taking up public space in this time. So all of this makes me feel at home.

Tragedy breaks us out of the status quo, wakes us up, and in that wakefulness we can be more humane. I don’t know if it’s something we can hang onto, so as I’m living in this sense of being home again, I’m also living in this anticipatory grief of the inevitable loss. — JEREMIAH MOSS

A Ritual for Expressing Gratitude

For his 2016 book, [*“Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City,”*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/) a heartbreaking tour of unstable housing, Matthew Desmond, a sociologist, moved into a mobile home park and a rooming house in Milwaukee, chronicling firsthand the violence of eviction, an experience that irrevocably altered his relationship with the idea of home. Mr. Desmond now teaches at Princeton University and runs the school’s [*Eviction Lab*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/), which tracks evictions across the country; he lives with his wife and two small children in a house nearby.

I’m going to start with the hopeful stuff. When Covid started, housing advocates said we needed a moratorium on evictions, and they were laughed out of the room. And then, lo and behold, we had one in New York, and then all over the country, and then from the federal government.

Are those moratoriums airtight and perfect? No, but they are historic, and they push us to think about what can be done. Whatever you care about, a stable home is crucial. I think that’s hopeful. In a pandemic, where your best medicine is to stay in your home, it really elevates the violence of eviction and the harm it does.

In our home, we have a ritual of expressing gratitude every day, in prayer or other ways, to little things. We have windows that keep the cold out. Everyone has their own bed. Our kids have separate rooms. Light. When the plumbing stops working, we can get it fixed. Our mail comes; there is hot water.

When I lived in the mobile home park, I met families that didn’t have heat. They would crouch around a space heater and cover themselves with a blanket to get warm. Families are really at risk. So many of us are so tired of looking at the same walls, but there is a chunk of Americans that’s just praying they get to hang onto those walls. — MATTHEW DESMOND

For weekly email updates on residential real estate news, [*sign up here*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/). Follow us on Twitter: [*@nytrealestate*](https://evictionlab.org/missing-eviction-filings/).

PHOTOS: HASHIM SARKIS: DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT M.I.T. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DUNIA SARKIS); MATTHEW DESMOND: PRINCETON SOCIOLOGIST (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMIR LEVY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); EMMA DONOGHUE: AUTHOR OF ‘ROOM’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY UNA ROULSTON); JEREMIAH MOSS: WRITER (PHOTOGRAPH BY J. STEELE); JESSICA BRUDER: AUTHOR OF THE 2017 BOOK ‘NOMADLAND’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIA MOBURG); MARC NORMAN: URBAN PLANNER (PHOTOGRAPH VIA MARC NORMAN); KIM GORDON: DESIGNER (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BRAGER) (RE9)

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[***Andrew Jackson in the Persian Gulf***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XXR-NK21-DXY4-X339-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1692 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** The Suleimani assassination is the kind of tactic Trump promised his voters — but without a strategy to match.

**Body**

The Suleimani assassination is the kind of tactic Trump promised his voters — but without a strategy to match.

There’s a witticism that makes the rounds on Twitter whenever Donald Trump does something particularly plutocratic or corrupt, a variation on the following: Look, this is what all those folks in Midwestern diners voted for. The sarcastic point being either that Trump’s populism was a con with blue-collar voters as its mark, or else that Trump’s supporters professed to care about his populist promises only as a means to own the libs.

But with the assassination of Qassim Suleimani, I’m afraid that I must deploy the one-liner seriously: This was, in fact, exactly what a certain kind of Trump supporter voted for — including both the downscale, disaffected conservatives who turned out for him in the primary and the blue-collar Obama-Trump moderates who tipped the Midwest in the general election.

Not the killing of Suleimani specifically; like Trump himself on the campaign trail, some of these voters wouldn’t be able to tell the Quds Force from the Kurds. But the strategic spirit behind the killing, the preference for a single act of vengeance over more ambitious forms of intervention, the belief in the hardest possible counterpunch, the dismissal of norms and rules and cautious habits that constrain the violence that America deals out … all this is what Trump promised in the 2016 campaign, with his simultaneous dismissal of both neoconservatism and liberal internationalism and his pledge to crush America’s enemies by any means.

This combined promise was not a contradiction; it was an expression of a practical philosophy of foreign policy, usefully called Jacksonianism, that many Americans and especially many white and rural and ***working-class*** Americans have always tended to embrace.

The phrase “Jacksonian” belongs to the foreign policy scholar Walter Russell Mead, part of [*a famous typology*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence) in which he   [*divides*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence) American foreign policy tendencies into four worldviews: Hamiltonian, Wilsonian, Jacksonian and Jeffersonian. The worldviews are simplifications (“intended to be suggestive and evocative,” in Mead’s words), and they inevitably frustrate many scholars; nonetheless, they remain a useful way of thinking about how, in our imperial era, American foreign policy tends to work.

The Hamiltonians are the business-minded internationalists, cold-eyed and stability-oriented and wary of wars that seem idealistic rather than self-interested. The Wilsonians are the idealists, whether neoconservative or liberal-humanitarian, who regard the United States military as a force for spreading democracy and protecting human rights. Most foreign policy elites belong to one of these two groups, both political parties include both tendencies in their upper echelons, and most recent presidencies have been defined by internal conflicts between the two.

But far more American voters are either Jacksonians or Jeffersonians. The Jeffersonian impulse, more common on the left than on the right, is toward a “come home, America” retreat from empire that regards global hegemony as a corrupting folly and America’s wars as mostly unwise and unjust. (“No blood for oil” is the defining Jeffersonian attitude toward all our Middle Eastern misadventures.) The Jacksonian tendency, more common on the right than on the left, is toward a pugilistic nationalism that’s wary of all international entanglements but ready for war whenever threats arise. (“More rubble, less trouble” is the essential Jacksonian credo.) Since neither tendency has that much purchase in the imperial capital, it’s a safe bet that at any given moment in Washington, D.C., elites in both political parties will be trying to mobilize Jacksonian or Jeffersonian sentiment to achieve Hamiltonian or Wilsonian ends.

But when elites of both persuasions preside over too many calamities, you can get Jeffersonians and Jacksonians as important presidential contenders in their own right — think of George McGovern and George Wallace when the Vietnam War went bad. And when one party’s elite loses control of the electoral process entirely, it turns out that you can get an actual Jacksonian in the White House.

Yes, not everything Trump has done fits Mead’s paradigm — but [*a great deal*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence) of what makes him different from previous presidents is plainly Jacksonian. A Hamiltonian wouldn’t have saber-rattled so wildly against North Korea; a Wilsonian wouldn’t be so subsequently eager for a deal with such an odious regime. A Hamiltonian wouldn’t be as eager for an extended trade war with China; a Wilsonian would speak out more clearly against Beijing’s human rights abuses instead of just treating them as one more bargaining chip. Trump’s bureaucracy-impeded attempts to pull out of Syria and Afghanistan are patently Jacksonian; likewise his disdain for his predecessor’s negotiations on climate change. His eagerness to pardon war criminals and threaten war crimes, meanwhile, are Jacksonianism at its worst.

What is the best of Jacksonianism? I would say it’s the capacity to identify and prioritize threats, an area where Wilsonians get way too expansive and ambitious (“make the world safe for democracy,” “an end to evil”), while Hamiltonians sometimes let realpolitik blind them to ideological enmities that can’t be negotiated away.

To the extent that Trump’s foreign policy has been a [*useful corrective*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence) to his predecessors, and better than what other Republican candidates might have offered, it’s been because of his attempts at just such a prioritization. The execution has been, inevitably, Trumpy, but the goals — drawing down in Syria and Central Asia, confronting China while de-escalating with North Korea, burden-shifting to other NATO powers in Europe while keeping our relationship with Russia cool but short of Cold War hostility — are more strategically reasonable than the Bushian and Clintonite forms of interventionism that Trump campaigned against.

But in Trump’s Iran policy we may be seeing the limits of Jacksonianism, or at least a Jacksonianism that operates in strategic contexts that its own impulses did not create.

The Iranian government is [*indeed our enemy*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence), to an extent that the Hamiltonians in the Obama administration sometimes underestimated, and in that sense Trump’s hawkishness toward the mullahs fits with his Jacksonian approach. But the Tehran regime’s capacity and inclination to cause problems for America also reflect our regional presence, posture and alliances, which mostly exist to advance a kind of mixtape of Hamiltonian and Wilsonian grand strategies — access to Middle Eastern oil, the promotion of democracy and human rights, and regime change in Tehran itself.

None of these are naturally Jacksonian goals, especially now that America is more energy independent than when the Carter Doctrine was formulated or the first Iraq War fought. Were America’s Iran policy fully Jacksonian we might still be at loggerheads with Tehran, but we wouldn’t be nearly so invested in projecting power in the Persian Gulf, and there would be fewer natural flash points and fewer targets for Iranian attacks.

But so long as Trump is working within an inherited Hamiltonian-Wilsonian strategic framework, his Jacksonian tactical approach — in the Suleimani case, picking the most surprising and dramatic option on the military board of retaliatory options — is unlikely to serve his official goal of escaping endless Middle Eastern entanglements. Instead, it points to either a permanent retaliatory cycle with the Iranians — we hit hard, they hit hard, we hit a little harder, ad infinitum — or else a disastrous ground war in a nonessential theater, the least Jacksonian of ends.

[[*Listen to “The Argument” podcast every Thursday morning, with Ross Douthat, Michelle Goldberg and David Leonhardt.*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence)]

Precisely because I think Trump’s Jacksonianism is fundamentally sincere, I don’t think the full-scale war scenario is particularly likely. And since I’ve written numerous columns, before his election and since, about Trump as geopolitical destabilizer without anything as bad as Obama’s [*still-unfolding*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence) Libya folly yet ensuing, it’s important to stress that the fallout from the Suleimani gambit could be less dramatic than the panicked punditry expects. Indeed, if the dead general was really the Islamic Republic’s Stonewall Jackson, its asymmetric strategy’s indispensable man, then over the long run his death might benefit American interests more than any subsequent escalation hurts them.

But the most likely near-term consequence of Suleimani’s death is an escalation in hostilities that looks to most Americans like more of the endless war that Trump campaigned against. In which case some war-weary voters might decide that if they really want out of futile Middle Eastern conflicts electing a ruthless Jacksonian is not enough; only a peace-seeking Jeffersonian will do.

And it just so happens that a genuine left-wing Jeffersonian, Bernie Sanders, is currently near the top of the Democratic field, contending with Joe Biden, the embodiment of the Hamiltonian-Wilsonian elite dialectic despite his blue-collar lingo, in an [*increasingly spirited*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence) foreign policy debate.

If the establishment’s follies gave us Trump’s Jacksonian presidency, in other words, the question before the Democratic electorate is whether the perils of Trumpism require that we give that establishment another chance — or whether putting a Jeffersonian in charge of an empire built by Hamiltonians and Wilsonians is the only reasonable option left.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some   [*tips*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence). And here’s our email:   [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.cfr.org/book/special-providence).

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PHOTO: President Trump’s eagerness to pardon war criminals and threaten war crimes is Jacksonianism at its worst. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Harnik/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 9, 2020

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[***A Year After a #MeToo Reckoning, Economists Still Grapple With It***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XXR-NK21-DXY4-X30J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Ben Casselman, Jim Tankersley and Jeanna Smialek

**Highlight:** After a year of revelations about racism and sexism, the profession’s annual meeting reflected signs of progress, but also work to be done.

**Body**

After a year of revelations about racism and sexism, the profession’s annual meeting reflected signs of progress, but also work to be done.

SAN DIEGO — When the nation’s economists gathered here over the weekend, the event looked different than in past years. There was a woman holding “office hours” to help victims of sexual harassment and abuse. Job interviews were no longer conducted in hotel rooms, where female candidates had long felt uncomfortable. There was a long list of panel discussions on racism and sexism in the profession.

There were even, some attendees noted with delight, long lines for the women’s restroom.

Many economists celebrated those developments as a sign of progress after a year of revelations — in front-page stories and surveys of the group’s members — about sexism, racism and harassment in the discipline.

But others stressed the need for even more aggressive action to address those issues, particularly racial discrimination. And the group’s leaders said they would need years of sustained effort to begin to erode the structural barriers that have held back women and nonwhite men in the field.

“There’s certainly a problem — we identified that problem,” said Ben S. Bernanke, the former Federal Reserve chair, whose one-year term as president of the group, the American Economic Association, ended Sunday. “Progress in terms of outcomes, it’s too soon to say, obviously. Progress in terms of process I think has been tremendous.”

In an interview, Mr. Bernanke and the new president, Janet L. Yellen, his successor as Fed chair, said the association would soon finalize procedures for investigating violations of its code of conduct and for punishing violators. One formal complaint has already been filed, they said.

Mr. Bernanke said further steps might be needed to diversify the profession’s power structures, still dominated by white men (although a majority of the association’s executive committee, with Ms. Yellen’s ascension, is female). Additional efforts could include grading university economics departments on their diversity efforts, and insuring racial and gender diversity in top positions at leading journals, which can make or break economists’ careers by choosing to publish or reject their research.

Economics is grappling with these issues as other academic disciplines are facing their own reckonings. The National Academy of Sciences in 2018 published a report finding [*widespread sexual harassment*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) in science, engineering and medicine. Prominent scholars in   [*political science*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo),   [*government*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo),   [*law*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) and other fields have been accused of sexual harassment. But   [*gender and racial gaps*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) in economics are wider — and have been more stubborn — than in many other fields.

The lack of diversity in economics, particularly in the top ranks, is nothing new. But the discipline has been forced to confront its problems by a series of incidents in recent years. In 2017, an economics student, Alice Wu, [*published a paper*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) documenting discrimination, harassment and bullying on a popular industry online forum. The following year, Roland G. Fryer Jr., a star economist at Harvard, was   [*accused of harassing and bullying women*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) at his university-affiliated research lab. (Harvard   [*suspended Mr. Fryer*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) last year.)

At the economics association’s meeting last year — less than a month after The New York Times published details of the claims against Mr. Fryer — some of the field’s most prominent women shared [*searing stories of harassment and discrimination*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo). And in March, the association published the   [*results of a survey*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) finding that female and minority economists faced rampant bias, harassment and even outright sexual assault.

The association has taken a number of steps in response to those revelations. It adopted a new code of conduct, and changed its bylaws to allow sanctions against members who violate it. It hired an ombudsperson to hear complaints, and a new general counsel who is empowered to investigate charges of misconduct. It has created task forces charged with addressing the profession’s problems and with recruiting more women and people of color, and a permanent committee on issues facing gay, lesbian and transgender economists.

“What I’ve heard, over and over again, is — this is the moment, we need to take advantage of it,” said M.V. Lee Badgett, a professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst who is co-chair of the association’s new Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession.

Some economists, particularly younger ones, are calling for a more radical rethinking of the discipline’s structure. Academic economics remains dominated by researchers who attended and work at a handful of elite institutions. Relatively few economists, particularly in top programs, come from ***working-class*** backgrounds or have parents who did not attend college.

“Diversity means not bringing people with darker skin who use exactly the same models and ask exactly the same questions and reach the same conclusions,” said Cecilia Conrad, an economist who is now an executive at the MacArthur Foundation. “Embracing diversity means opening up to the kinds of new questions and new ways of seeing the world that will eventually improve economic science.”

Ms. Conrad, who is black, spoke on a panel titled “How Can Economics Solve Its Race Problem?” Discussion of race and racism was more prominent on this year’s agenda, after organizers were criticized last year for neglecting those issues.

“Last year was the gender conference, this year is the race conference,” said Lisa D. Cook, an economist at Michigan State University who is one of the field’s most prominent black women. Gender and race, she added, go hand in hand — the association’s survey last year found that more black women [*report experiencing discrimination*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo) than any other group.

Ms. Cook is also one of four women newly elected to the executive committee. Economists, including many of the young activists, said the new leadership had made a difference, and credited Mr. Bernanke and Ms. Yellen with pushing the typically slow-moving association to become more aggressive.

There are also signs of a broader cultural shift. Many attendees said they had grown more comfortable raising questions about diversity in their departments, for example, and a growing list of schools have adopted rules meant to improve the tone of economics seminars, which some have described as toxic.

“The problem is not solved, absolutely not,” said Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman, a Harvard research fellow who as an undergraduate was a co-founder of the [*Sadie Collective*](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/13/17453360/sexual-harassment-report-science-metoo), a group aiming to bring more black women into economics. “But we are seeing that the field itself is at a very high level taking measures to talk about diversity and inclusion in a very broad way.”

Research presented at the conference showed that decisions on promotion, invitations to present research and other milestones on the road to success still skewed disproportionately white and male.

An exhaustive study of economics seminars, presented by Alicia Sasser Modestino of Northeastern University on behalf of several co-authors, found that female economists face far more questions from men in the audience during their presentations than male economists do. “In general,” Ms. Modestino told a largely packed room for a session on gender in economics, “women are more likely to receive questions that are not fair.”

While economists have become more willing to talk about general issues of discrimination, many remain reluctant to go public with more specific allegations. Leto Copeley, a lawyer who has been made the association’s ombudsperson, said people had come to her with cases of severe abuse but were fearful of speaking out publicly.

Ms. Yellen said that “it’s not been a deluge of people coming forward” with allegations. “There is a concern,” she said. “In academia, you are really talking about power relationships, when women are being harassed by men who are important for their careers.”

At several points over the weekend, there were reminders that economists have pushed for greater diversity in the past with limited results. In the Friday session on race, panelists talked of a “golden age” in the late 1970s and early ’80s when top departments had a substantial number of black graduate students. But that moment quickly passed.

At a lunch on Saturday, members of the National Economic Association celebrated the group’s 50th anniversary. The organization was founded as the Caucus of Black Economists in December 1969 at an impromptu gathering in the midst of the profession-wide convention at a New York hotel. Several founders spoke at the lunch, praising the gains that black economists have won but lamenting that far more were needed.

One founder, Bernard E. Anderson, an emeritus professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business, said he was encouraged by the recent diversity focus by the American Economic Association and its leaders. He recalled that when his group first met at that New York hotel in 1969, association leaders summoned city police officers.

“They thought we were a bunch of radicals who wanted to disrupt the convention,” Mr. Anderson said, “when all we wanted to be was economists.”

PHOTOS: Ben Bernanke, a former Fed chair, with Harry Ellis, a conference attendee, left.; (B1); Attendees listening to panelists during the “Black Women in the Economics Profession” discussion, above, at the annual meeting in San Diego. At left, the former Fed chair Janet Yellen speaking with an attendee before a panel called “How Can Economics Solve Its Race Problem?” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SANDY HUFFAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4)

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2020

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[***Biden and Sanders Offer Response Plans, and Sharp Rebukes of Trump's***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YDM-S931-DXY4-X398-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 13, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Katie Glueck and Sydney Ember

**Body**

''Unfortunately, this virus laid bare the severe shortcomings of the current administration,'' Mr. Biden said. In his own address, Mr. Sanders said the coronavirus crisis was ''on the scale of major war.''

WILMINGTON, Del. -- Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Thursday delivered a forceful rebuke of President Trump's leadership amid the coronavirus crisis, seeking to project steadiness and resolve from his perch as the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination.

In his own speech about the pandemic, Senator Bernie Sanders, Mr. Biden's main rival, also flamed the president's response. He provided a long list of policy proposals aimed in particular at helping low-income and ***working-class*** families, providing a glimpse of the extraordinary measures he might take if he were president.

''The crisis we face from the coronavirus is on a scale of a major war,'' he said at a news conference in Burlington, Vt. ''And we must act accordingly.''

Taken together, the candidates' blistering denunciations of the president's handling of the outbreak signaled that the coronavirus has fully overtaken the 2020 race, forcing the candidates to cancel events and propose new ways of campaigning, putting fresh political pressure on Mr. Trump, and placing matters of public health and trust at the forefront of the contest.

Mr. Biden, the former vice president, spoke Thursday afternoon from the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington, Del., about the grave challenges the country faces, and he detailed his ideas for managing the outbreak. He also aimed to draw sharp contrasts with Mr. Trump a day after the president addressed the nation from the Oval Office, establishing a preview of what Mr. Biden hopes will be a general election matchup.

''Unfortunately, this virus laid bare the severe shortcomings of the current administration,'' Mr. Biden said, speaking from the hotel where he announced his 1972 bid for the Senate. ''Public fears are being compounded by pervasive lack of trust in this president fueled by adversarial relationship with the truth that he continues to have.''

This moment of national anxiety, some of Mr. Biden's allies believe, throws into sharp relief the choice Americans would face in a general-election matchup between Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump, and the stakes of that contest. Mr. Biden has been seeking to frame the race as a two-person contest against the president, in ways overt and subtle, even as he continues a primary battle with Mr. Sanders.

In his remarks, Mr. Biden offered his own plan for combating the virus, with proposals that included rapidly and vastly expanding testing -- tests, he said, should be available at no charge -- moving aggressively to boost hospital capacity and supporting an accelerated push for a vaccine that he said should be ''again, free of charge.'' And he argued that ''the administration's failure on testing is colossal.''

''We are not ready yet, and the clock is ticking,'' he warned.

He also described plans to help those who are struggling financially at a time of economic peril, appeared dismissive of corporate tax subsidies and said it was a ''national disgrace that millions of our fellow citizens don't have a single day of paid sick leave.''

Mr. Sanders, for his part, urged the president to declare the pandemic a national emergency, and encouraged the public and private sectors to work together to combat the virus and its effects. Like Mr. Biden, he outlined a list of recommendations to deal with the pandemic, including establishing national and state information hotlines, making all treatment ''free of charge,'' providing ''emergency unemployment assistance'' to those who lose their jobs, and expanding the Meals on Wheels and school lunch programs and SNAP ''so that no one goes hungry during this crisis.'' He also urged a ''moratorium on evictions, on foreclosures and on utility shut offs.''

Perhaps above all, he used the health crisis as another opportunity to call for his signature health care plan, ''Medicare for all.''

''Our country is at a severe disadvantage compared to every other major country on earth because we do not guarantee health care to all people as a right,'' he said.

His remarks amounted to a vigorous critique of Mr. Trump, cloaked in the kind of sweeping, uncompromising proposals that have long defined his democratic socialist agenda. He left the news conference without taking questions.

Mr. Biden's appearance here in Delaware came as his campaign underwent another shake-up after an initial shuffling last month. He brought on a new campaign manager as his team works to build out what has been an underfunded operation with major organizational challenges -- despite a flurry of primary victories over the past two weeks.

Amid those successes, Mr. Biden has further intensified his focus on Mr. Trump, acting as if the general election were already underway. On Wednesday, his team announced the formation of a ''Public Health Advisory Committee'' studded with prominent health leaders and alumni of former President Barack Obama's administration -- a rollout that seemed intended to conjure the actions a president might take.

Members included Vivek Murthy, a former surgeon general; Ezekiel J. Emanuel, a prominent oncologist and a vice provost at the University of Pennsylvania; and Lisa Monaco, who served as a homeland security and counterterrorism adviser to Mr. Obama. And when he spoke on Thursday, he did so against a backdrop of American flags, reading from teleprompters to the click of cameras and beginning with a nod to his ''fellow Americans,'' a setting reminiscent of a White House address.

''No president can promise to prevent future outbreaks,'' he said. ''But I can promise you this. When I'm president, we will be better prepared, respond better and recover better. We'll lead with science. We'll listen to the experts. We'll heed their advice. And we'll build American leadership and rebuild it to rally the world to meet the global threats.''

Throughout his remarks, Mr. Biden nodded -- as he often does -- to what he cast as the resiliency and potential of the American people.

Mr. Biden, who is 77, did not stop to take shouted questions about his own health.

He has previously expressed shock and frustration at Mr. Trump's past skeptical remarks about the severity of the virus, and has sketched out other steps he would take as president to fight it, noting his work as vice president in combating Ebola. Ron Klain, who was Mr. Obama's Ebola ''czar,'' is a top Biden adviser.

Mr. Trump's own somber address Wednesday night, in which he announced he was blocking most travel from continental Europe and promised new aid for workers and businesses, was a break from his previous efforts to play down the effects of the outbreak. But he also mischaracterized some of his administration's new travel policies and described the threat as a ''foreign virus,'' though Americans are infected along with many in other countries.

The Trump campaign quickly issued a response to Mr. Biden's remarks on Thursday. ''In times like this, America needs leadership and Biden has shown none,'' said Tim Murtaugh, a campaign spokesman. ''President Trump acted early and decisively and has put the United States on stronger footing than other nations. His every move has been aimed at keeping Americans safe, while Joe Biden has sought to capitalize politically and stoke citizens' fears.''

As for Mr. Sanders, Mr. Murtaugh said in another statement, ''He's just another Democrat candidate for president trying to score political points by recklessly provoking anxiety and fear.'' He also argued that the proposal from Mr. Sanders, the Vermont senator -- who supports a sweeping single-payer system -- would ''drive doctors and other medical workers away from the profession, leaving America woefully unprepared for public health emergencies.''

Even as the candidates sought to project images of leadership, they are still politicians who face another debate and another round of primary elections in the coming days, and they are scrambling to adjust to a presidential contest now unfolding amid a pandemic.

In one sign of the major changes the virus is forcing on the presidential race, Mr. Biden's team on Wednesday announced that previously scheduled campaign events in Chicago and Miami would be transformed into ''virtual events'' ahead of next Tuesday's primaries in Illinois, Florida and several other large, delegate-rich states. And Mr. Biden -- whose famously tactile campaigning style is off-putting to some and delights others -- acknowledged the need for ''radical changes in our personal behaviors'' that could affect ''deeply ingrained behavior like handshakes and hugs.''

An internal campaign memo released Thursday instructed all staff members to begin working from home starting on Saturday, announced the closing of all offices to the public and said that the campaign would ''hold smaller events like roundtables, house parties, and press statements, as well as virtual events.'' Fund-raisers, the memo said, would ''become virtual fund-raisers indefinitely.''

Mr. Sanders likewise canceled a rally in Cleveland on Tuesday, and his campaign has not scheduled any new public events. Jane Sanders, Mr. Sanders's wife, told reporters on Thursday after he concluded his remarks that he would return to the Senate after the debate, and that he would stay in Washington.

Still, surrogates are continuing to make the rounds in key upcoming contests, and volunteers may be encouraged to head to states like Illinois and Georgia to help with activities like door-knocking, according to Dick Harpootlian, a South Carolina state senator and a Biden supporter who has been in touch with the campaign.

The remarks on Thursday were not the first time Mr. Biden has sought to assume the mantle of a sober, statesmanlike leader through a highly produced speech: In January, he delivered a sharp rebuke of Mr. Trump's stewardship of tensions with Iran against a backdrop that appeared reminiscent of the White House briefing room.

Yet that issue faded from the national forefront, and Mr. Biden went on to a fourth-place finish in the Iowa caucuses a few weeks later as he competed against what was, at the time, a crowded and competitive Democratic field.

He entered this speech, however, having amassed a big delegate advantage, and facing just one Democratic opponent, Mr. Sanders.

Katie Glueck reported from Wilmington, Del., and Sydney Ember from Burlington, Vt.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/us/politics/joe-biden-coronavirus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/us/politics/joe-biden-coronavirus.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Senator Bernie Sanders denounced President Trump's handling of the outbreak. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JACOB HANNAH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2020

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[***Bridging the Gaps in Time and Love***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XWX-8NP1-DXY4-X0XJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 2, 2020 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1441 words

**Byline:** By Viet Thanh Nguyen

**Body**

Now we have written a book together.

At the end of my 40s, I am a father again for the second time, when I never expected to be a father at all. My own father, 85, was elated when I told him of his fifth grandchild.

He was an unemotional man when I was growing up, focused on surviving as a newcomer to this country. We lived two typical American stories. For my parents, the story was the uplifting rags-to-riches narrative of the immigrant or refugee who finds success. For our family as a whole, it was the melancholic tale of two generations, foreign-born parents and American-raised child, separated by language, culture and emotion.

My parents saw me as the rebellious Americanized child who could barely speak his native language, Vietnamese; I saw them as fanatically conservative, intimate strangers who believed only in God, sacrifice and hard work.

They provided for all my needs -- food, shelter, education and religion -- which made me incredibly privileged in a country that does not supply these things for all its children. Yet what I wanted was what I saw on television, the expressive, affectionate nuclear families in ''Leave It to Beaver,'' ''Father Knows Best'' and ''The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet.''

But these stories could not be about Vietnamese refugee life, because, as the writer Lac Su titled his memoir, ''I Love Yous Are for White People.'' Miraculously, after decades in this country, my father is now unsparing in saying ''I love you'' -- in English -- to my firstborn son, Ellison, which amazes me and fills me with joy. My father has taught me that it is never too late to say, ''I love you.''

Getting older and becoming a father myself, I realize that time is elastic. My childhood, with its depths and peaks of emotion, has never gone away. My father is both the frail, sensitive and emotional octogenarian he is today and the stern, unexpressive parent of my youth. His attempts to bridge the gap between us rarely worked. He tried to bring music into our house, for example, but instead of giving me a cool guitar or a expensive piano, he brought home an organ, because he and my mother were devout Catholics who wanted to hear religious music.

I took one lesson and never wanted to play the thing again. It still sits in a corner of the dining room, a wooden relic of the early '80s that was unfashionable even back then, embodying a stifling and punitive Vietnamese Catholicism that I rejected.

What I could not see was that the organ was also the embodiment of something else in my father: a spirit of belief, creativity and art. He grew up poor, in a rural backwater of northern Vietnam. He is the definition of a self-made man, overcoming his limited resources and building two fortunes, once in Vietnam and again in America. Besides being an entrepreneur and businessman, he also had a love of music. He taught himself how to play that organ, partly to worship God but also simply to hear and play the religious songs he loved. Music played an important role in his life, as he lets me know by singing me the songs of his youth, which he learned in church and school seven decades ago. Time is elastic for him, too.

Now semiretired, he continues to play on an electric piano and has taught himself how to play the mandolin, simply for the joy of it. How I wish I had seen this side of him when I was living in his home. But history did not spare us, did not give us this opportunity to know and explore our creative and emotional sides with each other. He never told me of his love for music, and I never told him I wanted to be a writer. We did not have enough time to spare for each other.

I was terrified of becoming a father because I did not know whether I could find the time, or the love, to spare. All my extra time went to my writing, which was my act of creativity. I expected that a child would be an enormous consumer of both time and love. What I did not expect was that a child, my son, would do more than demand; he would teach me -- unintentionally, by his existence -- how to love and how to give of my time, the one thing I did not want to share.

I not only played a role in creating a child, I also discovered that fatherhood recreated me by forcing me to recognize that the creation of a child did not stop at birth. Every moment with my son is a part of this act of creation, and of creativity.

All the time that my father could not spend with me, I spend with my son. Perhaps it was predictable, being the son of a writer, that he became a strong reader. Far less predictable was that we would become a father-son duo.

When he was 5, I took him to a writers' residency, where he met Bao Phi and Thi Bui, the author and the illustrator of a children's book that he loved, ''A Different Pond.'' Inspired, he drew and narrated a comic book of his own (I wrote down his words). I posted it on Facebook and an editor at McSweeney's asked if the company could publish it. Hoping to recover some of the costs I had incurred from my very expensive son, I said yes.

More work needed to be done. I wrote additional words, while Thi enlisted her 12-year-old son, Hien, to draw new pictures. She colored his work, and this year, Ellison's book was published as ''Chicken of the Sea.'' The story is all his, the misadventures of bored chickens who run away from the farm to become pirates.

My adult mind could never have come up with this story. I think about adult things like war and refugees and modernism, not about dog knights and hidden treasures of gold. But once upon a time, when I was 7 or 8, I too, dreaming of escape, had written and drawn a book called ''Lester the Cat,'' about an urban cat suffering from ennui who ran off to the countryside and found love. The local library, in San Jose, Calif., gave me a prize, and I started to think of myself as a writer. My school librarian took me to the award ceremony. My parents were too busy at work. I never showed them the book. What was the point?

Now the point, as I study my new daughter, pink and asleep, her foot the size of my thumb, is that the relationship of parent and child is wrapped up in love, time and creativity. Money and the social resources to realize the potential of both children and parents are also part of the relationship. Though they hardly guarantee love, time and creativity, they at least make those things easier to share, for those who want to.

Paradoxically, some of my fondest memories of childhood were from our first few years in the United States, when my parents had not yet set out to rebuild their fortunes by becoming shopkeepers and, eventually, property owners. They were ***working class***, toiling in a nursing home laundry and a typewriter factory. They had extra time to spend with me. I wonder what they thought I would become, but I am absolutely certain that they did not expect me to become a writer.

The act of writing requires writers to give enormous amounts of time and love. Writers must love writing, must love their creations, must love their characters, no matter what they do. My children are my characters, and I am a character to them. They will tell stories about me, at least to themselves. I will be misunderstood, as I misunderstood my father, but perhaps I will be understood, too, as I hope I understand my father.

He and my mother named me after the Vietnamese people, about as patriotic of a name as one could imagine. The name turned out to be accurate, as I have done my best to stand up for Vietnamese people, even if they do not always like what I have to say. In that same spirit, my wife and I named our daughter Simone, after Simone de Beauvoir, Simone Weil, Nina Simone. Strong and creative women who were also risk-takers.

There is no creativity, or creation, including the making and raising of children, that comes without risk. I now understand what I never did as a child: that I was the product of my parents taking a risk. The risk that their gift of love would be rejected; the risk that they would be misunderstood; the risk that their creation would have a life of his own.

Authors can never predict the way their creations turn out, so the shape of Simone's life remains to be seen. But as for Ellison so far, after ''Chicken of the Sea'' was published, I told him that he is not just my son. He is also my co-author.

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**Graphic**

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